

Psalm 22 The God-forsaken Innocent

'My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?'

- What an incredible Psalm we are looking at today
- It is very clearly a prophesy, pointing forward to Jesus' crucifixion.
- Written hundreds of years before the events of Jesus' death, incredible details are included.
- But there is more here than simply a prediction of the events. We have here, as we did last week, a window into the heart of Christ and also see something of the meaning and significance of the cross.
- The Psalm splits into 2 parts – the God-forsaken King v1-21 and Global Praise v22-31

1. The God-forsaken King v1-21

This section alternates between a focus on 'I/me' and 'you' (God).

I/me – the agony

- v1-2 – Rejected by God
 - Words quoted by Jesus on the cross (see for instance Matt 27:46)
 - Above all else this was the greatest agony for Jesus, that His father had rejected him.
 - His prayers unanswered and his cries ignored.
- V6-8 – Hated by all
 - He is a worm – worthless and despised
 - Mocked even for his trust in the Lord.
 - Matthew 27v39 and 43 – this is exactly what happened to Jesus.
- V12-18 – Surrounded and Spent
 - Like he is surrounded by wild animals moving in for the kill – bulls, lions, dogs.
 - And we see he is at the extremes of suffering v14-15
 - John 19:28 we hear Jesus experiencing those extremes.
 - v16 – the piercing of Jesus' hands and feet
 - v18 – the soldiers gambling for Jesus' clothes written about in all 4 gospels.

All these details of Jesus' crucifixion, written hundreds of years before the event.

- Evidence for the truth of Christianity
- Gives us a window into Jesus' agony, not something focussed on in the gospels
- We know the reason why he went through it – for us and for our salvation
 - 'God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God' (2Cor 5:21)

'You' (God) – Prayer

- The God-forsaken King alternates descriptions of agony with prayers to God
 - V3-5 – Starts with a declaration of God's holiness
 - Both a reminder and praise – in the light of circumstances which seem to suggest the opposite.

- Then he looks back to God's past deliverances of his people.
- The fathers cried out and were rescued (v5)
- Something for us to imitate in our prayers when we suffer – to look back to God's past work. We shouldn't come to conclusions about God's character based on our interpretation of our current experiences but based on God's revelation.
- V9-11 – He looks back on his life-long faith
 - Again – something for us to learn is to look back on God's past work in our lives to bring about faith.
 - Then he starts to make his plea v11
- V19-21
 - Now the pleading is put to the Lord
 - Do not be far off, come quickly, deliver my soul, save me.

Jesus in his extreme suffering shows us that even in the darkest of hours we too are to pray and not give up.

2. Global Praise v22-31

There is a big change at the end of v21 – in some translations it ends with 'You answered me!'

- There then builds up a fountain of praise to the Lord – led by the afflicted one.
- V22 – he starts by telling his people – more literally 'my brothers and sisters'
 - Picked up in Hebrews 2:12 – that Jesus is not ashamed to call us his brothers and sisters (notice in Hebrews who is said to say these words – Jesus)
- And why is he praising the Lord? – verse 24 tells us...
 - Not so much for the rescue – but because the Lord has not despised the 'suffering of the afflicted one'.
 - It is the Lord's accepting of Christ's sufferings that are the cause of praise.
- The result of this is that more afflicted people will be satisfied – v26.
- The praise spreads from the congregation v25
 - to the ends of the earth v27
 - and down through the generations v30-31
- And the Psalm finishes with the words – He has done it! Close to Jesus' last cry on the cross 'it is finished' (John 19v30)
- This fountain of praise spreading through the world and down through history is what we see starting in the book of Acts
 - the message of the crucified, risen Jesus is declared starting in Jerusalem and then spreads out.
 - More and more nations hearing of the crucified King and worshipping him
 - It has continued to spread through every generation as children are told of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection.
 - And it continues today as we praise the Lord for Jesus' death

The Psalm starts with the King in agony and God-forsaken, but it ends with global praise of God. The 2 halves of the Psalm go together – it is because of the suffering of the King that God is praised and will be forever.