

The Psalm of the Cross

3.29.24

Good Friday 2024

Psalm 22 And Matthew 27:46-50

Matthew 27:46–50 (CSB)

⁴⁶About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out with a loud voice, **“Elí, Elí, lemá sabachtháni?”** that is, **“My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”**,

⁴⁷When some of those standing there heard this, they said, “He’s calling for Elijah.”

⁴⁸Immediately one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and offered him a drink. ⁴⁹But the rest said, “Let’s see if Elijah comes to save him.”

⁵⁰But Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and gave up his spirit.

[Introduction: There are Seven Sayings of Jesus on the Cross.](#)

A. Mark and Matthew only record one.

1. It is the cry of abandonment we read in Matthew 27 and Mark 15.

2. This cry, “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me”, is powerful, memorable, confusing, and comforting.

B. Tonight, I lead us into Scripture in hopes of grasping part of the significance of these words.

1. Before we dig in, I want you to be aware that there are many arguments about this passage.

2. One argument is that Jesus was not abandoned, and God did not turn His back upon Jesus.

a. Others argue that God completely abandoned and forsaken Jesus at the moment because of the sin laid upon Him.

b. Both arguments are held by Jesus-loving, Bible-believing people with firm convictions.

3. Tonight, I intend to open our hearts and minds to this passage and its message.

1. Matthew 27 is the Great and Terrible Chapter.

A. Chapter 27 begins at daybreak, with Jesus tied up and taken to Pilate.

1. It ends with Jesus' burial.

2. The middle details the terrible suffering of Jesus.

B. We know many of the details:

1. Jesus is beaten viciously and murderously.

2. The executioners gamble for his clothes, a familiar bonus for those doing the killing.

3. This leaves Jesus (most likely) naked, exposed, and bleeding.

4. Many people were crucified lower to the ground so that people could easily spit upon them and insult them.

a. Even though Jesus might have been lifted higher than some, it is still reasonable that his head was about 7 feet off the ground.

b. This was high enough that a stick was needed to lift the sponge and wine to Jesus' mouth.

c. But it was also low enough that Jesus could hear every curse and accusation and feel every drop of spit sent his way. (**Think about that a moment**)

d. Certainly Jesus deserved none of this.

C. It is said that every ancient culture has a story of a righteous man suffering.

1. Every culture had a Job story; of a good man, who lost it all without explanation.
2. But nothing like Matthew 27 had ever happened, where the perfect, sinless Son of God who had put on human flesh dies for the sins of others.
3. Yet, this should not have been a complete surprise.
 - a. We see an Old Testament foreshadowing that Jesus quotes and Matthew records.
 - b. Throughout Matthew 27, Psalm 22 is woven as a golden thread.
 - c. In fact, Matthew and John feature many of the fulfillments of this passage.

Notice the Psalm and how perfectly it applies to Jesus:

Psalm 22

FROM SUFFERING TO PRAISE

For the choir director: according to "The Deer of the Dawn." A psalm of David.

¹My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Why are you so far from my deliverance

and from my words of groaning?

²My God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,

by night, yet I have no rest.

³But you are holy,

enthroned on the praises of Israel.

⁴Our ancestors trusted in you;

they trusted, and you rescued them.

⁵They cried to you and were set free;
they trusted in you and were not disgraced.

⁶But I am a worm and not a man,
scorned by mankind and despised by people.

⁷Everyone who sees me mocks me;
they sneer and shake their heads:

⁸“He relies on the LORD;
let him save him;
let the LORD rescue him,
since he takes pleasure in him.”

⁹It was you who brought me out of the womb,
making me secure at my mother’s breast.

¹⁰I was given over to you at birth;
you have been my God from my mother’s womb.

¹¹Don’t be far from me, because distress is near
and there’s no one to help.

¹²Many bulls surround me;
strong ones of Bashan encircle me.

¹³They open their mouths against me—
lions, mauling and roaring.

¹⁴I am poured out like water,
and all my bones are disjoined;
my heart is like wax,
melting within me.

¹⁵ My strength is dried up like baked clay;
my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.

You put me into the dust of death.

¹⁶ For dogs have surrounded me;
a gang of evildoers has closed in on me;
they pierced my hands and my feet.

¹⁷ I can count all my bones;
people look and stare at me.

¹⁸ They divided my garments among themselves,
and they cast lots for my clothing.

¹⁹ But you, LORD, don't be far away.
My strength, come quickly to help me.

²⁰ Rescue my life from the sword,
my only life from the power of these dogs.

²¹ Save me from the lion's mouth,
from the horns of wild oxen.

You answered me!

²² I will proclaim your name to my brothers and sisters;
I will praise you in the assembly.

²³ You who fear the LORD, praise him!

All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!

All you descendants of Israel, revere him!

²⁴ For he has not despised or abhorred

the torment of the oppressed.

He did not hide his face from him

but listened when he cried to him for help.

²⁵ I will give praise in the great assembly

because of you;

I will fulfill my vows

before those who fear you.

²⁶ The humble will eat and be satisfied;

those who seek the LORD will praise him.

May your hearts live forever!

²⁷ All the ends of the earth will remember

and turn to the LORD.

All the families of the nations

will bow down before you,

²⁸ for kingship belongs to the LORD;

he rules the nations.

²⁹ All who prosper on earth will eat and bow down;

all those who go down to the dust

will kneel before him—

even the one who cannot preserve his life.

³⁰ Their descendants will serve him;

the next generation will be told about the Lord.

³¹ They will come and declare his righteousness;

to a people yet to be born

they will declare what he has done.

2. David's Song.

A. What is David's occasion?

1. What caused this great agony that initiated this great Psalm?
2. It had to be rooted in some event.
3. David's pain, like all of our pain, has an origin.
4. Yet that origin could not fully encompass the depth of this Psalm.
 - a. In other words, David had no idea that his Psalm would foreshadow and be fulfilled in Jesus.
 - b. Even though David might have felt that his pain had no purpose, we see that God did use that pain to articulate the Messianic hope.

B. As centuries passed and Israel read this Psalm year after year, the people could not grasp its full meaning.

1. They connected with the message and felt it's anointed pull.
2. But all those years, they never imagined that there was coming the one who would fulfill the Psalms' depth at a level and degree like no one else.
2. Only Jesus could do that.

C. David begins with the fear or belief that he is or will be abandoned.

1. "My God..." is the opening lines to the song, but it isn't the chorus.
 - a. Verses are sung once, but choruses are repeated.
 - b. The repeated theme is not abandonment but the absolute confidence that God has not failed and will not fail now.
2. Yes, there is pain, and there is fear, and all of that is real.

3. But then, in verse 21, a pause—a glimmer, a catch of his breath, so to speak—a spark of hope, a reminder.

4. Just as a child calms down when his parents' soothing voice alters the rhythm of his tears, so does David have his tears interrupted long enough for God to speak.

3. God's Answer

A. David's lament is stopped by the Lord's answer.

1. An answer that comes from heaven.
2. The answer moves David from pain to worship.
3. The pain is still there, but hope has arrived.
4. Hope is required for worship.

B. The whole mood of the Psalm is changed because God has answered.

1. David proclaims the Lord and invites others to join in.
2. He says, "I will proclaim, and you who fear the Lord, praise Him with me."
3. What David does is lead others in the worship.

C. Notice Vs 24.

*For he has not despised or abhorred
the torment of the oppressed.
He did not hide his face from him
but listened when he cried to him for help.*

1. For the Lord has not despised or abhorred the oppressed, of which David is one.
2. God did not hide his face from him but listened when he cried to him for help.
3. The pain is real, the anxiety is real, the darkness is real, but so too is the Lord's help.

- a. And, "because of you vs 25," David will fulfill his vows.
- b. The promise he had made will be kept, the duty fulfilled, the sacrifice will be given, and the offering will be paid.
- c. Yes there is pain, there is fear, there is darkness BUT David will not turn back now!
- d. **What began in misery ends in praise.**
- e. And as accurate as this was for David, it is perfectly fulfilled in Jesus.
 1. Jesus was going to fulfill everything he set out to do.
 2. He would fulfill the vow to the Lord.

4. One commentator says:

The shape of this psalm is straightforward. The first half is Jesus' cry for help (22:1–21); the second half is Jesus' song of praise (22:22–31). The center point or hinge is at the end of verse 21, "you have rescued [esv margin, answered] me." God did not abandon Christ to the grave. After Calvary comes Easter.¹

4. On the cross, Jesus quotes the only fitting words.

A. What began as King David's psalm now becomes the Psalm of the Cross.

1. The Second David, the Greater David, the Son of David, the Hope of David, takes up David's words and gives them depth of meaning.
2. In Psalm 22, King David expresses his pain and distress.
3. What is happening isn't clear, but his pain is.
 - a. He feels abandoned.
 - b. He feels defeated.

¹ James A. Johnston, *Preaching the Word: The Psalms: Rejoice, the Lord Is King—Psalms 1 to 41*, ed. R. Kent Hughes, vol. 1, *Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 234.

c. He feels pain.

B. Jesus picks up these words.

1. Whether Jesus was actually forsaken at that moment or not, he certainly feels this way.

a. Jesus feels something he had never felt before.

b. No one had felt what Jesus felt in this moment.

2. The cries of the crowds were the echoes of Satanic mockery, foreshadowed in Psalm 22.

a. Psalm 22: ⁸“He relies on the LORD; let him save him; let the LORD rescue him, since he takes pleasure in him.”

b. This echoes the twisting of the Word that Satan tempted Jesus with at the beginning of Jesus’ ministry.

1. If you are the Son of God...

2. If you are who you say you are...

c. If you are who you say you are, then do something about it.

d. Surely the King of Israel and a Son of God would not go like this.

C. But Jesus knew the rest of the Psalm.

1. David wasn’t abandoned.

2. David wasn’t alone.

3. And now the promised Son of David echoes the refrain.

4. Jesus knew that, as terrible as the next moments were, that He would not be cast aside, forsaken, or forgotten.

5. For the same God who guided the descendants of Abraham and spoke to David in David’s pain would not fail Jesus now.

E. The crowd missed the significance of the moment.

1. They thought Jesus was calling for Elijah, whom the Jews believed would come and rescue them if they called.
2. Jesus isn't calling for Elijah; He calls for the Father.
3. The Father was in charge, the Father was the only one who could help, the Father was whom Jesus set His eyes upon.

Apply: Because of Jesus, we can call upon the Father.

A. This is a weekend of sorrow and hope.

1. Jesus' agony did not lead to despair but to glory.
2. Because of what He endured, we can cry out with the Psalmist and bless the Lord in the midst of trouble.
3. Our pain and trouble does not lead to despair but to glory.

B. Tonight, I remind you that God is with you in your pain.

1. I remind you that because Jesus endured the Cross, you and I can endure here on Earth.
2. We are not left alone, nor are we abandoned or forsaken.
 - a. Deut. 31:8, God says he will never leave or forsake us.
 2. Even when we feel forgotten or abandoned, God has not left us.
3. Even better, Jesus has given us access to the Father that David could not imagine.

C. Tonight, may we meditate and think upon what Christ endured and achieved through the Cross.

Prayer for this Good Friday:

Jesus, we meditate upon your suffering. You endured the Curse so we could have life. Your body was broken, so that we might be healed. Your blood was shed in place of mine. All for the glory that was set before you, you endured the cross, scorned its shame, and now are seated at the right

hand of the Father. By your Spirit, may we never forget how great was our sin and how terrible the sacrifice. May we never forget how boundless your love, and how deep the mercy.

Through these elements, the bread and the cup, we declare your sacrifice, your power, and your love till we eat it with you in the Kingdom.

May thine be the Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory, forever and ever,
Amen.