

My God, My God why Have you Forsaken me?

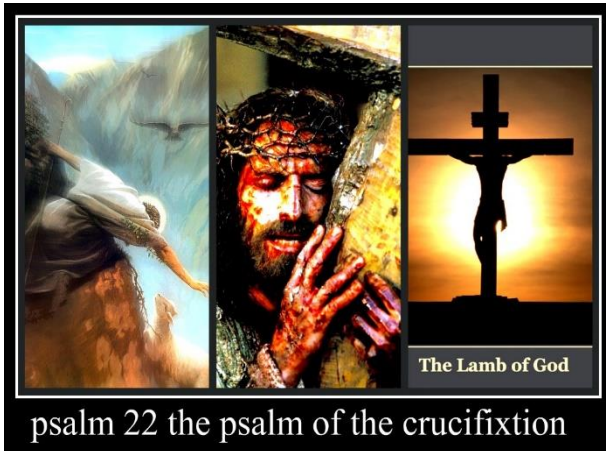
Psalms 22

Online Sermon: http://www.mckeesfamily.com/?page_id=3567

45 From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land.
46 About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?*” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?**”).**

Matthew 27:45-46

Ever since Jesus uttered His infamous words, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” they have echoed the halls of humanity’s hearts, especially on Good Friday and Easter morning. As our sympathetic high priest hung upon the cursed tree, numbered with the transgressors and bearing our sins, one can’t help but wonder what were His final thoughts? While one cannot know with certainty all His thoughts during these dreadful hours, Christ’s direct quotation of Psalms 22 suggests that He was simultaneously crying out in anguish over God being silent and at the same time rejoicing that His atonement would provide the means of salvation for generations to come! While many scholars treat this Psalm as a Messianic prediction of the crucifixion, one must not forget that it was originally

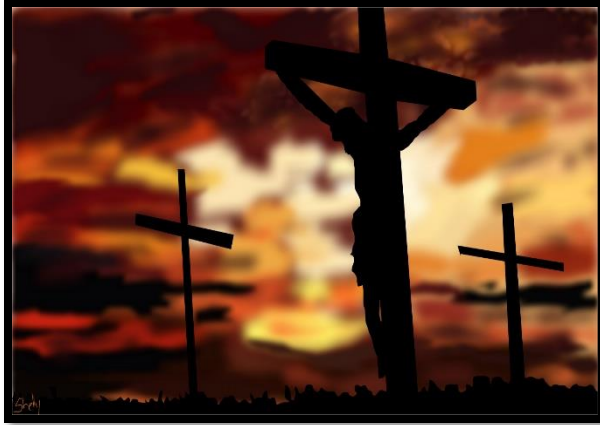


written by king David who at the time was either suffering at the hands of king Saul or his son Absalom. The following sermon is going to review how both Christ and David handled silence from God in the face of anguish so that we might learn how to remain steadfast in the faith and in all circumstances.

The Cry of Anguished (verses 1-2)

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? ²My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest.

The first two verses of this Psalm relate to a lament in which the psalmist pours out his heart in prayer to the Father to be heard!¹ The anguish Christ felt in His final hours upon the cross was due to not only bearing the “wrath of God against sin for us”² but also due to



experiencing for the first and only time “the light of God’s countenance and presence eclipsed” from His being!³ While before the foundation of the world Christ knew He would die (Revelation 13:8) for us the agony and pain of the atonement was so intense that He could not help but cry out. In the context of David this Psalm could relate to his unanswered prayers during one of the times he was fleeing from King Saul (1 Samuel 19-30) or Absalom (2 Samuel 15-17).⁴ David cried out to God for deliverance during these times and yet God remained silent as to when and how He was going to provide

deliverance.⁵ David wondered why had God removed His hand of protection the very moment that his enemies were closing in? Overwhelmed with grief and terror David cried out to God day and night and even though there was no response he prayed more earnestly.⁶

Does this sound familiar? It should for there are many times in our lives when we go



through a “dark night of the soul.” What does one do when one is going through trials and tribulation so intense that it is crushing one’s soul only to find that one’s desperate cries to Christ appear to have been ignored? Surely, He who was tempted and went through the agony of the cross is not only sympathetic with our weaknesses (Hebrews 4:14-16) but also the crushing weight of our infirmities? What are our prayers of anguish but the weary and burdened coming to Christ to receive rest (Matthew 11:28-30)? And

¹ Willem A. VanGemeren, “[Psalms](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 200.

² James Montgomery Boice, [Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 194.

³ James Montgomery Boice, [Psalms 1–41: An Expository Commentary](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 194.

⁴ D. A. Carson, ed., [NIV Zondervan Study Bible: Built on the Truth of Scripture and Centered on the Gospel Message](#) (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 1002.

⁵ Derek Kidner, [Psalms 1–72: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 15, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1973), 123.

⁶ Matthew Henry, [Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible: Complete and Unabridged in One Volume](#) (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994), 770.

how is one to reconcile the “silence of unanswered prayers” considering God’s promises to never leave nor forsake us (Deuteronomy 31:6), to draw nearer as we draw nearer to Him (James 4:8) and to always do good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28)? The remainder of this sermon is going to look the way in which Christ and David handled unanswered prayer in a manner that is not only acceptable to God but also provides comfort in the difficult times of life.

Unwavering Faith in God

It is only through faith in God that one can persevere amidst the most difficult trials and tribulations of life!⁷ In response to the anguish of the soon to be atonement, Jesus’ prayers in the



Garden of Gethsemane were so intense that “His sweat was like drops of blood.” And yet Jesus never waived from His mission to do the will of God the Father in heaven (Luke 22:3-46). Even on the cross when Jesus was separated from the Father in those final hours His cry “My God” reflected a unified love and sense of purpose never wavered within the Trinity.⁸ From Jesus we learn the importance of having faith and trust in God both in the good and especially the bad times of life. The feelings of abandonment from unanswered prayers⁹ can be replaced with pure joy when we

remember that in the perceived chaos of our circumstances our God remains firmly in control. The same Spirit whom raised Christ from the dead (Romans 8:11) will raise those who love Him from the ashes of despair and enable them to persevere and feel the unspeakable joy that comes from being spiritually mature in Christ (James 1:2-4).

Remembering the Past (verses 3-5, 21-24)

³ Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One; you are the one Israel praises. ⁴ In you our ancestors put their trust; they trusted and you delivered them. ⁵ To you they cried out and were saved; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

⁷ C. H. Spurgeon, “[Unanswered Prayer](#),” in *The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit Sermons*, vol. 59 (London: Passmore & Alabaster, 1913), 110.

⁸ Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyrburn, *A Translator’s Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 214.

⁹ Willem A. VanGemeren, “[Psalms](#),” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 200.

In verses three to five the Psalmist reflected on how God has saved Israel in the past. Since Israel was delivered time and time again from calamity by putting their trust in God then why had He not yet delivered him, a child of the same covenant?¹⁰ In the face of overwhelmingly bad circumstances should not one stand on the promise that God who is holy and righteous will not remain indifferent too¹¹ but will do good to those who love Him?¹² Later in the Psalm David answers this question:



21 Rescue me from the mouth of the lions; save me from the horns of the wild oxen. 22 I will declare Your name to my people; in the assembly I will praise You. 23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, honor Him! Revere Him, all you descendants of Israel! 24 For He has not despised or scorned the suffering of the afflicted one; He has not hidden His face from him but has listened to his cry for help.

Those who revere the Lord are to praise Him for His deliverance in the past can and will be received in the present! God did not abandon Christ on the cross but allowed Him to fulfill His heart's desire to accept all His Father's wrath for our sins so that we who could not bear such punishment might have a pathway from death to life! From Christ we learn that God never hides His face from His covenant children whom put their faith and trust in Him.¹³ When anguish overwhelms your soul remember all the times God has saved you in the past and rejoice for, He is about to do it again!

Persevering the Present by Looking to the Future (verses 14-15, 27-31)

The suffering and pain that we go through in the present is nothing in comparison to glory that will one day be revealed in us (Romans 8:18). No one has ever suffered more than Jesus did upon the cross! If Psalms 22 is truly a Messianic prediction of the crucifixion, then listen to His agony:

¹⁰ Willem A. VanGemeren, "[Psalms.](#)" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 200.

¹¹ Robert G. Bratcher and William David Reyburn, *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Psalms*, UBS Handbook Series (New York: United Bible Societies, 1991), 214.

¹² James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 1-41: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 194.

¹³ Willem A. VanGemeren, "[Psalms.](#)" in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelain, vol. 5 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1991), 209.

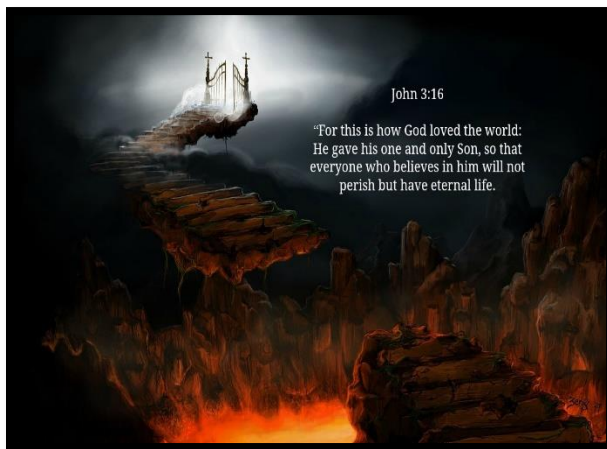


¹⁴ I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within Me. ¹⁵ My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue sticks to the roof of My mouth; you lay Me in the dust of death.

He who was separated from God and received His wrath for our sins felt anguish beyond anything we could ever imagine!

Surely one whose heart turned to wax and melted, whose tongue stuck to the roof of His mouth and was laid in the dust of death can teach us much about making it through trials and tribulations! Again, listen to Jesus' words:

²⁷ All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations will bow down before Him, ²⁸ for dominion belongs to the LORD and He rules over the nations. ²⁹ All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before Him — those who cannot keep themselves alive. ³⁰ Posterity will serve Him; future generations will be told about the Lord. ³¹ They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!



From these words of our Savior we learn that intense agony can only be persevered by those who remember God is sovereign and firmly holds onto their future. Whether God chooses to save one from the calamities of life while on this earth or upon one's death one can feel unspeakable joy in the present by remembering the glorious future one is about to receive! Until that day may we go out into this world and tell everyone the Good News this Easter morning, Christ is alive and while He does not promise an easy life on this earth He does promise those

whom have faith in His atonement will one day know the joy of dining in His presence as His children!