

Exposition on Psalm 22

by St. Augustine

This sermon is an exposition of Psalm 22, which speaks of Christ's crucifixion and his experience of God's abandonment, but also of his faithfulness and his trust in God, which ultimately leads to his deliverance and his glory.

Scripture: Psalm 21:1, Psalm 22:17-18, Matthew 27:39, John 17:6, John 20:1, Romans 6:9

Topics: "Christ's Suffering", "Salvation Through Faith"

Description

St. Augustine preaches on Psalm 21, reflecting on the words spoken by Jesus Christ Himself during His resurrection. The psalm portrays the suffering and humility of Christ, from being forsaken to being mocked and crucified, emphasizing His ultimate sacrifice for humanity's salvation. It delves into the deep spiritual significance of Christ's journey, from His birth to His crucifixion, highlighting the rejection and persecution He faced. The psalm also points to the future generation that will serve the Lord and declare His righteousness, symbolizing the spread of the Gospel and the establishment of a new people born through faith.

Transcript

To the end, for the taking up of the morning, a psalm of David.

1. To the end, for His own resurrection, the Lord Jesus Christ Himself speaks. John 20:1-17 For in the morning on the first day of the week was His resurrection, whereby He was taken up, into eternal life, Over whom death shall have no more dominion. Romans 6:9 Now what follows is spoken in the person of The Crucified. For from the head of this Psalm are the words, which He cried out, while hanging on the Cross, sustaining also the person of the old man, whose mortality He bare. For our old man was nailed together with Him to the Cross. Romans 6:6

2. O God, my God, look upon me, why have You forsaken me far from my salvation? Psalm 21:1. Far removed from my salvation: for salvation is far from sinners. The words of my sins. For these are not the words of righteousness, but of my sins. For it is the old man nailed to the Cross that speaks, ignorant even of the reason why God has forsaken him: or else it may be thus, The words of my sins are far from my salvation.

3. My God, I will cry unto You in the daytime, and You will not hear Psalm 21:2. My God, I will cry unto You in the prosperous circumstances of this life, that they be not changed; and You will not hear, because I

shall cry unto You in the words of my sins. And in the night-season, and not to my folly. And so in the adversities of this life will I cry to You for prosperity; and in like manner You will not hear. And this You do not to my folly, but rather that I may have wisdom to know what You would have me cry for, not with the words of sins out of longing for life temporal, but with the words of turning to You for life eternal.

4. But You dwell in the holy place, O Thou praise of Israel Psalm 21:3. But You dwell in the holy place, and therefore will not hear the unclean words of sins. The praise of him that sees You; not of him who has sought his own praise in tasting of the forbidden fruit, that on the opening of his bodily eyes he should endeavour to hide himself from Your sight.

5. Our Fathers hoped in You. All the righteous, namely, who sought not their own praise, but Yours. They hoped in You, and You delivered them Psalm 21:4.

6. They cried unto You, and were saved. They cried unto You, not in the words of sins, from which salvation is far; and therefore were they saved. They hoped in You, and were not confounded Psalm 21:5. They hoped in You, and their hope did not deceive them. For they placed it not in themselves.

7. But I am a worm, and no man Psalm 21:6. But I, speaking now not in the person of Adam, but I in My own person, Jesus Christ, was born without human generation in the flesh, that I might be as man beyond men; that so at least human pride might deign to imitate My humility. The scorn of men, and outcast of the people. In which humility I was made the scorn of men, so as that it should be said, as a reproachful railing, Be His disciple: John 9:28 and that the people despise Me.

8. All that saw Me laughed Me to scorn Psalm 21:7. All that saw Me derided Me. And spoke with the lips, and shook the head. Matthew 27:39 And they spoke, not with the heart, but with the lips.

9. For they shook their head in derision, saying, He trusted in the Lord, let Him deliver Him: Matthew 27:43 let Him save Him, since He desires Him Psalm 21:8. These were their words; but they were spoken with the lips.

10. Since You are He who drew Me out of the womb Psalm 21:9. Since You are He who drew Me, not only out of that Virgin womb (for this is the law of all men's birth, that they be drawn out of the womb), but also out of the womb of the Jewish nation; by the darkness whereof he is covered, and not yet born into the light of Christ, whosoever places his salvation in the carnal observance of the Sabbath, and of circumcision, and the like. My hope from My mother's breasts. My hope, O God, not from the time when I began to be fed by the milk of the Virgin's breasts; for it was even before; but from the breasts of the Synagogue, as I have said, out of the womb, You have drawn Me, that I should not suck in the customs of the flesh.

11. I have been strengthened in You from the womb Psalm 21:10. It is the womb of the Synagogue, which did not carry Me, but threw Me out: but I fell not, for Thou heldest me. From My mother's womb You are My God. From My mother's womb: My mother's womb did not cause that, as a babe, I should be forgetful of You.

12. You are My God, depart not from Me; for trouble is hard at hand Psalm 21:11. You are, therefore, My God, depart not from Me; for trouble is near unto Me; for it is in My body. For there is none to help. For who helps, if Thou helpst not?

13. Many calves came about Me. The multitude of the wanton populace came about Me. Fat bulls closed Me in Psalm 21:12. And their leaders, glad at My oppression, closed Me in.

14. They opened their mouth upon Me Psalm 21:13. They opened their mouth upon Me, not out of Your Scripture, but of their own lusts. As a ravening and roaring lion. As a lion, whose ravening is, that I was taken and led; and whose roaring, Crucify, Crucify. John 19:6

15. I was poured out like water, and all My bones were scattered Psalm 21:14. I was poured out like water, when My persecutors fell: and through fear, the stays of My body, that is, the Church, My disciples were scattered from Me. Matthew 26:56 My heart became as melting wax, in the midst of my belly. My wisdom, which was written of Me in the sacred books, was, as if hard and shut up, not understood: but after that the fire of My Passion was applied, it was, as if melted, manifested, and entertained in the memory of My Church.

16. My strength dried up as a potsherd Psalm 21:15. My strength dried up by My Passion; not as hay, but a potsherd, which is made stronger by fire. And My tongue cleaved to My jaws. And they, through whom I was soon to speak, kept My precepts in their hearts. And You brought Me down to the dust of death. And to the ungodly appointed to death, whom the wind casts forth as dust from the face of the earth, You brought Me down.

17. For many dogs came about Me Psalm 21:16. For many came about Me barking, not for truth, but for custom. The council of the malignant came about Me. The council of the malignant besieged Me. They pierced My hands and feet. They pierced with nails My hands and feet.

18. They numbered distinctly all My bones Psalm 21:17. They numbered distinctly all My bones, while extended on the wood of the Cross. Yea, these same regarded, and beheld Me. Yea, these same, that is, unchanged, regarded and beheld Me.

19. They divided My garments for themselves, and cast the lot upon My vesture Psalm 21:18.

20. But You, O Lord, withhold not Your help far from Me Psalm 21:19. But You, O Lord, raise Me up again, not as the rest of men, at the end of the world, but immediately. Look to My defence. Look, that they in no wise hurt Me.

21. Deliver My soul from the sword. Deliver My soul from the tongue of dissension. And My only One from the hand of the dog Psalm 21:20. And from the power of the people, barking after their custom, deliver My Church.

22. Save Me from the lion's mouth: save Me from the mouth of the kingdom of this world: and my humility from the horns of the unicorns Psalm 21:21. And from the loftiness of the proud, exalting themselves to special pre-eminence, and enduring no partakers, save My humility.

23. I will declare Your name to My brethren Psalm 21:22. I will declare Your name to the humble, and to My Brethren that love one another as they have been beloved by Me. John 17:6, 21 In the midst of the Church will I sing of You. In the midst of the Church will I with rejoicing preach You.

24. You that fear the Lord, praise Him. You that fear the Lord, seek not your own praise, but praise Him. All you seed of Jacob, magnify Him Psalm 21:23. All you seed of him whom the elder shall serve, magnify Him.

25. Let all the seed of Israel fear Him. Let all who have been born to a new life, and restored to the vision of God fear Him. Since He has not despised, nor disregarded the prayer of the poor man Psalm 21:24. Since He has not despised the prayer, not of him who, crying unto God in the words of sins was loath to overpass a vain life, but the prayer of the poor man, not swollen up with transitory pomps. Nor has He turned away His face from Me. As from him who said, I will cry unto You, but You will not hear. And when I cried unto Him He heard Me.

26. With You is My praise Psalm 21:25. For I seek not My own praise, John 8:50 for You are My praise, who dwellest in the holy place; and, praise of Israel, You hear The Holy One now beseeching You. In the great Church I will confess You. In the Church of the whole world I will confess You. I will offer My vows in the sight of them that fear Him. I will offer the sacraments of My Body and Blood in the sight of them that fear Him.

27. The poor shall eat, and be filled Psalm 21:26. The humble and the despisers of the world shall eat, and imitate Me. For so they will neither desire this world's abundance, nor fear its want. And they shall praise the Lord, who seek Him. For the praise of the Lord is the pouring out of that fullness. Their hearts shall live for ever and ever. For that food is the food of the heart.

28. All the borders of the earth shall remember themselves, and be turned to the Lord Psalm 21:27. They shall remember themselves: for, by the Gentiles, born in death and bent on outward things, God had been forgotten; and then shall all the borders of the earth be turned to the Lord. And all the kindreds of the nations shall worship in His sight. And all the kindreds of the nations shall worship in their own consciences.

29. For the kingdom is the Lord's, and He shall rule over the nations Psalm 21:28. For the kingdom is the Lord's, not proud men's: and He shall rule over the nations.

30. All the rich of the earth have eaten, and worshipped Psalm 21:29. The rich of the earth too have eaten the Body of their Lord's humiliation, and though they have not, as the poor, been filled even to imitation, yet they have worshipped. In His sight shall fall all that descend to earth. For He alone sees how all they fall, who abandoning a heavenly conversation, make choice, on earth, to appear happy to men, who see not their fall.

31. And My Soul shall live to Him. And My Soul, which in the contempt of this world seems to men as it were to die, shall live, not to itself, but to Him. And My seed shall serve Him Psalm 21:30. And My deeds, or they who through Me believe in Him, shall serve Him.

32. The generation to come shall be declared to the Lord Psalm 21:31. The generation of the New Testament shall be declared to the honour of the Lord. And the heavens shall declare His righteousness. And the Evangelists shall declare His righteousness. To a people that shall be born, whom the Lord has made. To a people that shall be born to the Lord through faith.

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