

# Psalm 22 Richly Pictures Christ's Death on the Cross

by Tim Conway

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*This sermon delves into Psalm 22, highlighting how it vividly portrays the suffering and crucifixion of Christ, emphasizing the transition from darkness to light on the cross. It explores the deep agony and abandonment Jesus experienced, yet His unwavering trust in God's holiness and past faithfulness. The sermon reflects on the intense suffering Christ endured, being forsaken by God for a time, and the profound loneliness and torment He faced. It concludes with a focus on Christ's victory over death and His desire to proclaim God's name to His brethren, emphasizing the significance of His sacrifice for believers.*

**Scripture:** Psalm 22:1, Psalm 22:16, Psalm 22:18, Hebrews 2:12, Hebrews 2:14, Hebrews 2:17, Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:24, John 19:23, Romans 5:8, 1 Peter 2:24

**Topics:** "Suffering of Christ", "Victory through Sacrifice"

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## Description

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## Transcript

I'd like to shift gears a second while these guys distribute the elements. Turn over in your Bibles to Psalm 22. This is definitely one of my favorite psalms.

I don't believe that there is a psalm that is more rich in picturing the cross for us than what we have right here. Psalm 22. I think probably that if we read this, you can read this right at the beginning, to the choir master according to the dough of the dawn, a psalm of David.

But I think for those of us that have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, when we begin to see Jesus Christ in this psalm, David just kind of disappears. And if you have any doubts, you know when Spurgeon did his treasury of David, he quoted one guy that said he believed that every single psalm basically expressed some aspect of Christ's thinking in Christ's ministry. Spurgeon said he didn't know if that was exactly true, but I'll tell you if ever there is a psalm that expresses the cross, you don't want to see David in

this, you want to see Christ.

And I believe what's captured here is there's aspects of the cross that are captured here that we actually do not have in the New Testament. Now if you have any doubts about this being Christ, we just pick up right in verse 1, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? You know that Jesus uttered those words on the cross. And if you go down to or flip over to verse 16, the dogs encompass me, a company of evildoers encircles me, they have pierced my hands and feet.

Now that never happened to David. David never had his hands and his feet pierced. And go a little further, 18, they divide my garments among them, and from my clothing they cast lots.

And you know the thing is, when this thing moves off of the suffering of the cross, you see there's a transition. The transition takes place between verses 20, 21, and 22. You go from the sufferings and the darkness of the cross, and it transitions.

And do you know what the author of Hebrews does in Hebrews 2? He quotes this as being Christ. And so all the evidence is, every bit of this points to Christ. So as we read, I'm not going to read the whole thing, just about half of this.

Just a little more than half. But this is the cross. Now hear it.

My God, my God. Go back to verse 1. Why? Why? You know how children sometimes, you tell them to do something, and they're like, why? But that's not what this is. There's no rebel heart behind this.

You know what this is. This is a father and a son who love each other, and the son lovingly trusts his father, and suddenly his father is gone. The father who he loves, the father who he delights in, and everything he's ever known is that the father delights in him.

And now he's gone. That's where this why comes from. Why? And you know, there was a reason.

And those of us that have been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, we know what the reason is. We know that there was a very good reason. Why? Why? My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Why are You so far from saving me from the words of my groaning? And you think of it, because he was forsaken for a time.

Think of the value of that. What would the value have been in God forsaking you for an eternity? But I'll tell you, this is far more priceless that God forsook His Son for a season. And there was a very good reason.

And the thing is, this is Christ who's having to put the cup, the anger of His Father is in this cup, and He puts it to His lips. This is God's rod on His back. And think about, this isn't just abandonment.

This is suffering and this is wrath and this is torment so much so that we're going to get to it in just a second. His soul is poured out like water. I mean, He's just withering.

He's like a pot sure that's had every bit of moisture squeezed out of it in the furnace of God's wrath. And you see what He's doing? It's God's wrath. And yet the very God who blows these winds of wrath in His face, that's the same God He's reaching.

He's clinging to this God with both hands. If anything jumps out again and again through this, it's where are You? Where are You? He's clinging. He's crying.

He's calling. Oh my God, I cry by day. I cry by night.

And look what He says. Verse 3, Yet you are holy. I mean, the reality is this, the storms may howl at Him and men, you see what they're doing, the men may despise Him and the devil may be tempting Him and all these things may be coming upon Him and God may abandon Him.

But you know what? He says there is no unholiness in God for all of this. Because righteousness is being fulfilled. And it's on our behalf.

Yes, if He was just up there suffering and we had nothing to do with it, it would not be a holy thing. But He's recognizing in the midst of all this, even though I can't find my God, I know that holiness is being upheld and thrown on the praises of Israel. And you see where He goes here.

In your holiness, in the way you've acted in the past, Israel has praised you. Our fathers trusted you. See what our Lord's doing? He's pleading the past dealings of God with His people.

But that in itself to me is incredible. Because you know what Jesus is doing? He's saying, look, when Abraham was in need, you helped him. When David was in need, you helped him and they praised you.

And you recognize God is saying to him, I've got to blow my wrath hot in your face for the very fact that I did rescue those sinners. How could I have ever shown kindness to them? How could I have ever done that unless my justice be satisfied? That's exactly what's happening here. To you, they cried and they were rescued.

Those ancient saints, they trusted. They cried. And you know the thing was, they weren't confounded.

And you know what? Even though they lived before the cross and Jesus is appealing to them, we've got the same appeal ourselves. Because the same reality that's behind why God could help them is behind why God will help us. They trusted.

You delivered them. To you, they cried and they were rescued. In you, they trusted and were not put to shame.

Do you know what Jesus is saying? Why am I left with no help when they got help? Now listen, you have to recognize that Jesus came as a man to die as a man. And He lived by faith. That's what Hebrews 2 says.

Hebrews 2 that quotes right from this psalm. He lived by faith. He trusted His Father.

You know what? He had never known this before. Every time He had called on His Father, His Father was there. And now His Father's not there.

You talk about the art of pleading in prayer. He's pleading the life of these guys. You help them.

Lord, why are You not helping me? They were never put to shame. And then He says, Spurgeon says that this verse is a miracle in language. I am a worm and not a man.

Scorned by mankind, despised by the people. I mean, you think about that. Scorned by mankind, despised by the people.

He was despised by the people. He was despised by the priests. He was despised by the Gentiles, by the soldiers, by Herod, by Pilate, by the civilians.

I mean, everybody. Everybody was united. They were all against Him.

He had no friend. And then God has abandoned Him. He says, all who see Me mock Me.

They spit in His face. They mocked Him. Angels shield their faces before Him.

Man is so bold. It's almost like, what's more shocking? Just man's brashness to do this to his Maker? Or Christ's willingness to suffer it? He could have incinerated them. And He tolerates this.

They mock Him. They make mouths at Me. They wag their heads.

He trusts in the Lord. Let Him deliver Him. Let Him rescue Him if He delights in Him.

Yet, you are He who took Me from the womb. See, now he begins to plead God's own mercies in his own life. You made me trust You at my mother's breast.

On You was I cast from my birth. From my mother's womb, You've been my God. Be not far from Me.

Now you see, this has been the thing that he's wanted the whole time. Jesus was able to suffer. He was able to be mocked.

He was able to be a man of sorrows. But see, he had never known this absence of this presence of God. And that's what he's after.

I want a sense of Your presence. Don't be far from Me. Brethren, isn't that the case with us even? We get in a trial.

If we could just have a sense that God is there. A sense of His presence. I mean, that puts a rock under your feet.

Even when everything is shaking. He says trouble's near. There's none to help.

Now see, Charles Leiter preached a message on the loneliness of Christ. To be in a place where there's none to help and not even God. I mean, that's hell.

That's what hell will be like. Just to be in a place where nobody pities you, nobody shows kindness. Just to be friendless.

There's no help. And he had to suffer that and he had to be in that place. Many bulls encompass me.

Strong bulls of Bashan surround me. I mean, you've seen some of these. Buffalo out in the Serengeti plain.

You ever seen them toss lions around? Lions like to eat them. But oh, if they get within the reach of their horns, it's all over. You can be a big male lion.

And that's like where he's at here. He's in the midst of these strong bulls of Bashan surround me. They open wide their mouths at me like a ravening, roaring lion.

It's like they couldn't vomit out their blasphemies fast enough just mocking him and ridicule him. And then he says this, out of all the verses in the Bible, this is one that stands out above all the others to me. I think of it often.

I'm poured out like water. You know what happens when you pour out water? It falls. You see, it's got no substance to it because it's liquid.

And the pieces and particles and molecules of the water, they don't have a bonding substance to them. They just fall. You see, the waterfall, when it goes over, it begins to lose form.

Why? Because it just kind of breaks apart. It's got no ability to return to where it was. It's got no strength.

There's no bond. There's no solidity to it. He says, my bones are out of joint.

My heart is like wax. It's melted within my breast. I mean, you think about this.

The fire of God Almighty is melting Him. Him, the Son of God. What would it do to us? Can you imagine five minutes in hell and Christ, He came from glory and He emptied Himself.

I mean, look, if the heart of Christ, what do we call Him? We sing it. The Lion of the tribe of Judah. If it melts His heart, oh, what would it do to us? We can think so lightly about what Christ suffered on that.

My strength is dried up like a pot sherd. And you think about that. This is like you smash a pot.

You've got this earthenware vessel. You've got pieces of it and you cook it. Listen to what He says.

My strength is dried up like a pot sherd. My tongue sticks to My jaws. You lay Me in the dust of death.

It's like you bake this thing in the fire until you cook out of it every little bit of moisture. And you just throw it in the dust. And there He is in the dust.

He's just like wrestling with death. Isn't that what He overcame? And He went to that cross to conquer death and hell and Satan for us. And the dogs encompassed Me.

It was bulls, lions, it's dogs. A company of evildoers encircled Me. They've pierced My hands and feet.

I count all My bones. They stare and gloat over Me. They divide My garments.

They gloat over Him. They're dividing His garments. Why were they dividing His garments? Because the guys hanging on the cross are Messiah.

He's hanging on the cross naked. His clothes have been stripped off of Him and now are being divided. And they just gloat at Him.

Can you see? That's us. The first Adam. He made us all naked.

And there now our Redeemer comes. He makes Himself naked to clothe our naked souls. He says, I can count all My bones.

They stare and gloat over Me. They divide My garments among them and for clothing they cast lots. But You, O Lord... See, He keeps coming back to this.

He wants nothing but His God. Don't be far off. You're My help, My strength.

Come quickly to My aid. Deliver My soul from the sword. My precious... You know, the word there is actually lonely or only or solitary.

There's a loneliness of Christ and there's a solitude on that. There's a solitariness on that cross. None of us will ever experience.

Even if you die and go to hell, you will not experience what happens there. The cumulative wrath of God. Save me from the mouth of the lion.

You've answered Me from the horns of the wild oxen. My precious life, He says, from the power of the dog. That's the dog of hell, you can be sure.

But, notice this. What you want to see is it seems like some of these, even though we can't look at the Gospels and see that the Lord Jesus spoke these words specifically from the cross, I think what you want to see here is these are things that were going... obviously, a whole stream of thoughts were moving through His mind all the time on that cross. This is showing us.

I think what you want to see here is you want to still regard verse 21 as the words of the Lord there uttered in His own mind during those last few moments before His death. And notice what we have. We followed Him through all the darkness and now out into the light.

And He says, I will tell Your name to My brothers in the midst of the congregation, I will praise You. Like I said, Hebrews 2 cites that as being a quote of the Lord Jesus Christ. But I want you to see this, brethren, because we're observing this right now.

And He specifically told us that this was done for us. This is for you. And I want you to recognize something.

As you break out into the light of this psalm, where does Jesus' mind go? Isn't it amazing He came out of that tomb? One of the first things He said to those ladies is go to My brothers. Right here, it's like Jesus comes out in the light and He wants to announce God to His brethren. That's what we're doing.

That's what we're remembering. That's where He goes here. I will tell of Your name to My brothers.

It's like the delights of Christ's heart are with His people. That's immediately where He goes. He suffered for us.

He died for us. He shed that blood for us. Brethren, we want to do this in remembrance of Him.

And also, take the juice. Lord Jesus, we just want to thank You. Being poured out like water, cooked in the furnace, dried out like a potsherd, hanging naked, the dogs, the bulls, the lions, weathering just the fury and the wrath of God in our place, we thank You, Lord.

Thank You. And in as much as You've done that for us, it makes us bold to ask You, Lord, because You didn't fail to offer Yourself up, we would ask You also to grant us every other good thing. Please, Lord.

Please. You suffered like that for a people. And Lord, we pray that we would all, those of us that You died for, we would just taste of the great benefits of that.

Lord, please, having paid such a price for us, we ask You, while on others You're calling, please, don't pass us by. Lord, we can't live on yesterday's manna. We need help today and tomorrow.

And we look to You. Work among these people that You've bought at such a high price. Lord, we pray that You'd remember us and help us.

We pray that You'd empower us. We pray that the power of the cross, the power of that death, the power of resurrection would course through this church, through us. Help us, Lord.

Remember us. Having died for us, Lord, help us live well. We pray in Christ's name, amen.

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