

Psalm 22:22-26

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 02 April 2017

Preacher: Tim Foster

[0 : 00] Well, good morning. It's great to see you all here this morning. We're in Psalm 22, and if you have a Bible in front of you, that would be helpful. Psalm 22. But I don't know if perhaps some mornings you wake up and you're a little bit groggy.

Maybe this is a common occurrence for you, like it is for people like myself. Perhaps some of you, this is a rare occurrence. But you wake up groggy, and it's dark, and you don't quite manage to open your eyes before you stumble into the bathroom.

And then you do the most foolish thing you could possibly do. You pull on the light cord, and suddenly you are utterly astounded by what happens next.

The light comes on, and it is the most disorienting thing that you can possibly imagine. And this has happened to me far too many times for me to say, and perhaps that just shows you what sort of character I am.

But as we're in Psalm 22, it's a psalm of two very different halves. And we've been in an incredibly dark place for the last couple of weeks.

[1 : 14] The psalmist has written about forsakenness, about mockery, about being completely surrounded by enemies, about being weak and at the very door of death.

And as we step into this second half, we could almost become very disoriented. Because there is a massive change, an astounding change.

You see, David has been saved from his distress. It happens there at the end of verse 21. You've rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen.

David has been saved from his distress, and now there's a rousing anthem of praise and celebration. From the intense darkness of verses 1 through 21, we come into the incredible light of verses 22 to 31.

Like the first half of the psalm, this half falls into two sections. This week we're dealing with verses 22 through 26. And next week we'll deal with the remainder of the psalm.

[2 : 19] So just as we begin, let's pray, then let's read what this psalm has to say to us, and then we'll see. So let's pray as we come together this morning.

Father, you are the God of our salvation. You are the one who has saved us from all of the distress, all of the affliction that we righteously deserve for our sin.

And yet this morning we still live in this sin-stained world. We still struggle with hard news and with sadness and with grief.

And so, Father, as we read your word, would you minister to us? Would you bind up our broken hearts? And would you release from us a song of praise?

Because we see your incredible nature, your wonderful work, and who you really are. Father, help us to see your Son this morning.

[3 : 31] And by your Spirit, open our hearts, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Verses 22 to 31, they'll be on the screen behind me as well, if you don't have a Bible in front of you.

I will declare your name to my brothers. In the congregation, I will praise you. You who fear the Lord, praise Him.

All you descendants of Jacob, honor Him. Revere Him, all you descendants of Israel. For He has not despised or disdained the suffering of the afflicted one.

He has not hidden His face from Him, but has listened to His cry for help. From you comes the theme of my praise in the great assembly.

Before those who fear you, I will fulfill my vows. The poor will eat and be satisfied. They who seek the Lord will praise Him.

[4 : 37] May your hearts live forever. To begin with, we have the celebration after salvation.

That's point one. To begin with, we have celebration after salvation. And then we have the reason for the celebration. Fairly simple, and so we'll keep going.

The psalmist has been saved from his distress. And now comes the time for celebration. See the total reversal of what has gone before.

And you really can't understate this. Where he has been surrounded by the enemy, by these animals of men, now he's in the middle of a congregation.

Now he's surrounded by brothers, by family in the faith. No longer are his ears subjected to the mockery of God.

[5 : 39] Now his tongue is free to proclaim the goodness of God. And he isn't content just to sing or to cry aloud himself.

He incites all around him to offer their praises to God. Look at what God has done for me. Praise God. That's the psalmist's cry this morning.

This is an incredible challenge to me as I was preparing this week. You see, I will readily pray in desperation. And I'm sure many of you are like me in that regard.

We will readily pray when we have no other recourse. When something cannot be solved any other way, we'll turn to God.

But how often do we take time to praise God when he answers us? So often we cry out to God in our distress, but we forget to praise him when he comes through for us.

[6 : 44] We're creatures with short memories for God's mercies. And we need to be often reminded of all that he has done for us.

A phrase that has been indelibly printed in my mind. We leak the gospel. And we need to so often be reminded of what God has done for us.

That's why as a church family, we regularly celebrate communion. We'll celebrate it here this morning again. To remember what Jesus has done for us and to praise God for his salvation that he has given us.

That's why some Christians advocate keeping a prayer journal. It's a thing that I am hopeless at keeping up with. But it's a record of all your prayers.

And then when God answers, you make a note of it. So that you have these little books filled with God's answers that you can praise him for at a future date.

[7 : 46] Maybe that's something you should try if you struggle with this like I do. If you struggle to think of what God has done in answer to your prayers, maybe write a prayer journal.

But even more challenging is that the psalmist tells other people to praise God because of what's happened to him. How rarely do I share with others my personal struggles?

And that leaves me no opportunity. It leaves me no opportunity to tell others the great ways that God has worked in my life. Because encouraging other people to praise only works if I am in real relationships with you, my brothers and sisters in Christ.

So much so that when the trial comes my way and when God steps in, then I can encourage you to praise God. And when the trials come to you and when God steps miraculously into your situations, then I will be overjoyed and I will be able to praise.

But all too often we live in anonymity. We struggle away in silence. And we rob God of the honor he deserves. Isn't that a sad thing?

[9 : 11] We need to learn to share life with each other. To be honest with one another. To realize that we're a family. A new family.

And we have responsibility to one another. To encourage one another to praise God. Just like the psalmist is doing here. David calls the people to praise God for the salvation that has been accomplished.

And here is a great opportunity to notice what has happened through this psalm already.

Remember back to verse 1. To these heart-wrenching words.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Remember that terrible cry of verse 2. O God, I cry day by day, but you will not answer.

But now the forsakenness of those first verses are replaced with something so very different. God has drawn near. See what's said in verse 24.

[10 : 20] God has not turned away. He hasn't turned tail to flee the horrors of this evil world. God has heard.

God has shown up. And He's saved. And there's been a progression going through this psalm. In verse 1, God begins as a distant deity.

But here He is now identified as the present Yahweh. It's like you're looking at a person coming from a far distance.

And to begin with, you can't really see who it is. You can't really recognize who they are. But as they come closer, very quickly you recognize the friendly face.

Very quickly you see who it is. The first people in this psalm to mention God by name were the mockers.

[11:27] Isn't that odd? It turns out that these mockers weren't unthinking or unknowing people. They had their theology right. But they considered the psalmist's real trust in God to be a foolish thing.

They knew about God, but they weren't trusting in Him. And they're shown to be fools when their jeers and their mockery turns on their heads.

See, because by verse 19, David calls out to this God of ours, Yahweh. And here in verse 23, we now see that it is Yahweh who has rescued.

It probably reads in your Bible, the Lord in small capitals. That's how many Bibles translate the name of God. But given how our text began this morning, we need to make so much of this name of God.

You see, this is not one of the fickle gods of the Greek pantheon. This isn't the deist cosmic creator who has walked away to leave us to our own devices.

[12:35] This isn't Allah who will leave you to fate or Brahma who requires karma of you or any of the other false gods of this world. This God is identified as Yahweh, the one true God.

He is a covenant-keeping God. He's true to His Word. He's a merciful and a gracious God. He cares for us, for people beyond what we deserve.

He's a holy God. He's pure and without fault. He's a loving God, caring for us more than we can even dare to hope. And this is the God who is worthy of our worship.

Don't think that we come to a vague shadowy figure as we praise on a Sunday morning. We come to the God who has revealed Himself in His Word and who has shown Himself to be glorious above all others.

We come to our God who is without rival or peer in all the religions or philosophies of this world. And I wonder, have you come to know and to trust this God?

[13:57] Perhaps you need some proof of all that I've just said about Him. And maybe if you haven't heard the last couple of sermons on Psalm 22, I strongly suggest that you go and you hear what this God has done for us.

When you get a spare moment, go to the website and listen to the last few recordings. Because although this psalm was written a thousand years before Jesus came, yet it tells us exactly what would happen to Him.

300 years before anyone thought up crucifixion, it shows us exactly what would happen to Christ. For us, Jesus felt the terrible separation of all our wrongdoing and our wrong thinking that we deserved.

Because of our need to be saved, Jesus took on Himself all of our sin. And God gave to Him all of the punishment that we deserved.

Because of our helplessness, Jesus stepped uninvited into this world. And He worked out this incredible salvation plan.

[15:12] And all that we have to do is to trust in Him. And now we can join in this celebration. Because Jesus has gone through that incredible pain in our place.

This is our God. And He's drawn near to us. The same God who David called on here, we see proved reliable in Jesus.

And we have seen this incredible celebration after this salvation. Let's see again what David has to say about the reason for the celebration.

Look with me at verse 24 again. For He has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted. And He has not hidden His face from Him, but has heard when He cried to Him. You see, Yahweh, He is the champion of the weak.

[16:21] Our God, He isn't a betting man. And He doesn't support the pundit's choice in a fight. This God of ours, He doesn't choose based on the probability of success.

Thank God. Because if He did, He would never have chosen me. I wonder if He would ever have chosen you. He's never picked His people based on their strength or their breeding or their ability to pull themselves up by their bootstraps.

This God of ours, He has always looked kindly on the weak, the broken and the helpless. And that's no different now than it ever was.

God has seen me in all of my neediness. And He has extended His love to even me.

God sees you in whatever situation you are in. And He can extend His love to even you. Perhaps this morning you feel afflicted.

[17 : 32] You feel like you are under this weight. And for whatever reason, perhaps you think that God wouldn't have you. But this is the incredible good news about our God.

This is the incredible good news of the Christian faith. God does not despise affliction. He doesn't hide His face from people who are under darkness.

But He hears and He will answer. Perhaps you're here as a Christian, but you still feel that affliction. Perhaps you feel, as I have felt, that you can't worship today. Today I am under a weight and I just can't get out from it. Not today.

Not with the news that you've had. Not with the stress or the pressure that you are under. Not with the hurt and the pain that you face. But notice in verse 25 that God is the one who creates praise within His people.

[18 : 53] From you comes my praise in the great congregation. From you, from God. He is the one who enables us to worship.

If you're among the afflicted this morning, call out to God. Trust Him with what you're going through. And do not fear if you feel that you cannot praise.

Worship comes from God. Now maybe that doesn't put your mind at ease. Nothing that I have just said perhaps helps you in how you feel.

But see the confidence that David has in verse 26. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied. This is certain. This is sure.

Those who seek Him shall praise the Lord. This is dead cert. This isn't up to chance. David knows this. He's been in this number.

[20 : 05] Those who seek God will praise Him. David's proved it. And this is a constant theme of the Bible.

almost anywhere you go, you will find this call to seek the Lord and that He will answer you.

Whether you go to Deuteronomy 4 or Isaiah 55, you will find this call to seek the Lord, to call on Him whatever circumstance, whatever hardship.

I could make these sorts of statements, but it wouldn't do you any good. But this is coming from a man who saw God at work. This is written by a man who has been proved right time and again through millennia.

And it's been proved right most clearly in the experiences of Jesus. As we begin to come to the end this morning, we see that Jesus went through the horrors of verses 1 to 21.

We've already seen that Jesus is the one who fulfills all that these verses say. But according to Hebrews, the words of verses 22 to 31 are also Jesus' experience.

[21 : 37] I'd never seen this before I started looking into the psalm for this morning. Jesus didn't just go through the pain, but He is also part of the celebration.

Jesus is now exalted in heaven, the one who has gone through unimaginable anguish, and He is praising His Father among all those who are there with Him.

Jesus will lead worship and will stir us to praise God for the rest of eternity. And this was the aim all along, to bring us into a real relationship with God and to be united with His people as a family.

In Hebrews 2.12, we get a glimpse into that heaven, and we see Jesus surrounded by all those who have put their trust in Him.

And He is urging all of us to worship His Father with Him. We are brought into the family of God as adopted children, and Jesus, His eternal Son, is not ashamed to call us family.

[22 : 57] Jesus is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. Isn't that an incredible reason to praise Him this morning?

Whether you are in the middle of the storm, or whether you are enjoying a peaceful season of life, we can all look into the beginning of the psalm and see the lengths to which Jesus went to bring us into this relationship.

And as that reality sinks in, as we consider the depths of the cross, we can come into this second half of the psalm and come to the very heights of praise, and we can join with the anthem of Psalm 22.

Let's praise God together this morning.