

The Forsaken One

Psalm 22

This is another long psalm, so rather than include it here, I encourage you to read it before continuing on with this devotion.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

These are the opening words of Psalm 22. You may recognize them. Matthew (27:46) tells us that Jesus spoke these words from the cross. In Aramaic. The language He would have spoken at home, when He probably learned this psalm from His parents. For when Jesus was hanging on the cross He bore the sins of all people of all times and place; all people who ever lived and ever would live, including you and me. All their sin and guilt were on Him and He was paying the price for it all, even to the extent of being forsaken by His Father.

Some scholars believe that even though only the first word of the psalm is included in Matthew, that Jesus prayed the entire psalm while on the cross. Including the first line was simply Matthew's way of shorthand. Kind of like if I were to say that in school, children say the Pledge of Allegiance every morning. I mean they say more than just those four words - but that they say the entire pledge.

That makes sense. And if you read through the entire psalm, it seems to fit with what Jesus is going through on the cross. **I am a worm and not a man. . . . All who see me mock me** (Matthew 27:41). . . . **My tongue sticks to my jaws . . . You lay me in the dust of death. . . . They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots** (Matthew 27:35). That's why the church often reads or sings this psalm on Good Friday.

But then in verse 19, as often happens in the Psalms, the psalm turns - there are words of hope and praise, confidence and the future. The struggle and death are not the end; there is more. More after death! Life. And then the

psalm ends with these words: **Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.**

Yes, through the crucifixion of Jesus on the cross, God has done it! He has accomplished the salvation of the world. He has provided the forgiveness of all sins. He has redeemed all people from the curse of sin. He has done it! And that's something Jesus said on the cross as well, with His dying breath: *It is finished* (John 19:30). And it was! Our sin was finished. Our death was finished. Our curse was finished. Our separation from God was finished. Now there was new life, as Jesus would show three days later as He rose from death to life again.

If you ever feel forsaken by God, this psalm is for you. For you to pray to give words to your doubts and fears, but also for you to pray to give you confidence! That you are not forsaken by God. Jesus was forsaken for you, in your place, so you will never be. Satan wants you to think you are forsaken, that God doesn't care about you, that God won't help you. This psalm helps us to remember that satan is a liar and not to listen to him. Sometimes we do go through hard times in this life, and sometimes our heavenly Father sends those hard times! But for our good. Not to hurt us, but to teach us. To strengthen us. To bring us back to Him and to rely on Him.

So go back now and read this psalm a couple more times. First, as if you were hearing Jesus speak these words from the cross. And then second, as your own words. See how despair is turned to joy, and how that's true for you. For as this psalm reminds us, God never promised that life would be easy; but He did promise to be with us through it all. And in Jesus, He is.

Heavenly Father, thank You for sending Your Son to take my sin and guilt from me and take my place on the cross where He was forsaken by You. Remind me when I feel forsaken that I am not! That You are with me always. Help me to pray this psalm when I have doubts and fears, and work through Your Word

with Your Spirit to give me confidence and faith in You, in all that You have done for me, and in all Your promises to me. Then help me to encourage others and be Your blessing to them. Amen.