

Summer Sermon Series: It's Worth Repeating

“My God, My God”

(Psalm 22:1 and Matthew 27:46)

Introduction

- As we continue in our summer sermon series on consecutively repeated words in Scripture (there are only about fifteen of them in all of Scripture, not counting the twenty-five “Truly, truly” statements from Jesus recorded in John’s Gospel), we come this morning to a most difficult expression. So far in this study, we have seen these relatively few emphatic statements of these repeated words coming from God to a certain person (“*Abraham, Abraham*”, “*Moses, Moses*”, “*Simon, Simon*”), from angels about God (“*Holy, Holy, Holy*”), from God about God (“*the LORD, the LORD*”), from people about other people (“*Absalom, Absalom*”), and from people to God (“*Lord, Lord*”).
- This morning we are going to look at the emphatic statement of “*My God, my God*” which is used as an exclamation from humans to God, but ultimately expresses the depth of anguish – the excruciating pain and horrific shame – that Jesus Christ suffered on the cross as suffered and died in our place for our sins.

The repeated expression of “*My God, My God*” occurs three times in Scripture – Psalm 22:1; Matthew 27:46, and Mark 15:34 (with Matthew and Mark being parallel accounts). In these Gospel accounts, we find Jesus – hanging on the cross, being crucified – quoting from the account in Psalm 22. For this reason, we are going to examine this Psalm as we seek to understand what Jesus meant when He cried out, “*My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?*”

- The word “forsaken” is an ugly word. Its synonyms are words like abandoned, deserted, isolated, discarded, neglected, and forgotten. The word forsaken brings to mind painful and horrific experiences. Experiences like divorce, unfaithfulness, and betrayal.

✓ Illust: Best known for betraying his country to the British during the American Revolution. Benedict Arnold was born on January 14, 1741, in Norwich, Connecticut, of a prominent family. He was a very successful soldier, who won a number of campaigns. He was advanced to major general on May 2, 1777, but he remained below five others in seniority largely due to the accusations of using his military office for private gain.

By this time, however, Arnold had already started on the road to treason. Personally hurt by Congress's treatment and sorely in need of money, he had begun to funnel information on troop movements and strength of units to the British in exchange for money as early as May or June 1779. Early in the summer of 1780, he conceived the idea of turning over the strategic post at West Point, N.Y., to the English for £10,000 (pounds). He persuaded Washington to place him in command there, but Arnold's plan fell through when his contact, Major John Andre, was captured on September 21st with incriminating documents, in Arnold’s own handwriting, kept in his sock. Andre was executed and Arnold fled to the British lines.

Arnold spent the rest of the war in a British uniform fighting his own countrymen. The British provided handsomely for Arnold, but never completely trusted him. He was never given an important military command. They moved to London where he found no job, some admiration and even some contempt. He moved his family to Canada where he reentered the shipping business. The Tories there disliked him and had no use for him, and eventually he returned his family to London. When the fighting began between France and England, he tried again for military service, but to no avail. His shipping ventures eventually failed and he died in 1801, virtually unknown, despised in America and forgotten in England. He died as he lived, a man without a country.

Arnold had forsaken his country and, in return, his country had forgotten him.

➤ With the intensely negative and hurtful connotations to word “forsaken” it is hard to imagine the word used to describe an action (or inaction) by Almighty God. But that is in part what Psalm 22 is about (and why Jesus quoted from it while He hung on the cross). As the title of this Psalm indicates, Psalm 22 is a Psalm of David. However, unlike most of David’s Psalms, this Psalm has no known setting or circumstance to link it to David’s life. If it is indeed written by king David, we know for certainty that it was not written strictly about king David.

While Psalm 22 is applied immediately to David it is applied ultimately to Jesus Christ – the Messiah (i.e., a Messianic Psalm). The clearest understanding of this Psalm does not come historically from the personal experience of king David, but prophetically from the personal experience of King Jesus. The New Testament contains 15 messianic quotations of or allusions to this psalm, leading some in the early church to label it “the fifth gospel.”

➤ What can we learn from this great Psalm? This Psalm takes us deep into the heart of the Gospel. We know, from the Gospel accounts, that Jesus’ crucifixion last six hours (from 9am-3pm). We also know that during that time Jesus was amazingly compassionate and concern about others. During this time, He prayed for His murderers, “*Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*” (Lk.23:34). To the thief on the cross Jesus said, “*Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise*” (Lk.23:43). He entrusted His mother to the apostle John’s care by saying, “*Woman, behold your son*” and to John, “*Behold, your mother*” (Jn.19:26-27).

Yet, unlike the Gospel accounts, from Psalm 22 we see the cross of Christ from the perspective of Christ Himself. Psalm 22 prophetically (and uniquely) gives us insight into Jesus’ final moments on the cross – just before His death.

➤ This Psalm is divided into three distinct parts, each acting like a window with which we can see the personal anguish and perfect attitude of our Lord Jesus Christ in His final hours on the cross. Most likely, Jesus was not merely quoting the first line of Psalm 22 but referencing the whole Psalm. Encouraging those who were surrounding Him, and all those who would read the biblical account of His crucifixion, to read the entire (Messianic/prophetic) Psalm as substantial evidence that He indeed is the Christ.

For this Psalm, written over 1,000 years before Christ was born (as noted by David’s authorship), explicitly (unmistakably) depicts the events of Jesus’ crucifixion. It is as if the Psalmist pulls back the curtains – one by one – in order to let us see the crucifixion through the eyes and thoughts of the suffering Son of God. This Psalm unfolds in three dramatic scenes.

1. The PAIN of God’s Absence (Psalm 22:1-10)

➤ In verses 1-10 we see the pain of the perception of God’s absence. Whenever we speak of the “absence” of God we are speaking figuratively. In other words, we know that God is never not-present. In fact, theologians refer to this understanding as the omnipresence of God. That God is all places at all times.

Jer 23:23-24 ~ “Am I a God at hand, declares the LORD, and not a God far away? ²⁴Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declares the LORD. ‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’ declares the LORD.”

Ps 139:7-8 ~ “Where shall I go from your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from your presence? ⁸If I ascend to heaven, you are there! If I make my bed in Sheol, you are there!”

➤ Since we know that God is everywhere at all times, how then can He ever be absence? To put it another way, how can anyone claim to be forsaken by God when God has never left them in the first place? In this Psalm, when we speak of the absence of God we are referring to two things: 1) The silence of God, and 2) The stillness of God.

A. The silence of God (vs.1-5)

- Notice the language in verses 1-5. The Psalmist (Jesus) is crying out to God, but God is not answering him. He is calling to God “*by day*” and “*by night*”, with “*no rest*”, but God does “*not answer*” (vs.2). The only natural conclusion is that God had “*forsaken*” him (vs.1; ‘*āzab*, OT; *enkataleipō*, NT).

Psalm 22:1-5 ~ “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? ²O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. ³Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. ⁴In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. ⁵To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*”

- This “silence” from God can be deafening; spiritually debilitating. When we ask God for something – e.g., healing, wisdom, protection, comfort – and He does not (or seems not to) respond (see Ps.18:41; Prov.1:28; 1Pet.3:7; 4:7).

Ps 28:1 ~ “To you, O Lord, I call; my rock, be not deaf to me, lest, if you be silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.” (see Ps.83:1)

Ps 42:3 ~ “My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, ‘Where is your God?’”

Ps 44:23-24 ~ “Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever! ²⁴Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?”

- Have you been there? I think most of us have at one time or another, maybe some of you are there now. When it seems that God is not answering your prayers. When you feel that He has turned a “dear ear” to your needs, to your cries for help.
- This is one reason why Jesus cried out, “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” (vs.1). He truly experienced the pain of God’s absence. He knows what it feels like to find no relief for His pain, no comfort for His sorrow, no rescue from His enemies, and no answer to His prayers.

Heb 4:15 ~ “For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.”

Matthew 27:46 ~ “And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?’” (see Mk.15:34)

- Some three hours after He was nailed to the cross, Jesus cried out “*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*” Jesus is quoting the first verse of Ps.22:1 and it is often misunderstood. Was Jesus *really* forsaken (abandoned) by God while He was on the cross? While Jesus never ceased to be God, and though He committed no sin, He did – for a moment – cease to know the intimacy of fellowship with His Heavenly Father during the time when God’s wrath was poured out on Him for the sins of the world (Is.59:2; Jn.17:11-15; 2Cor.5:21; Gal.3:13).
- On the Thursday evening before His death, at about midnight, Jesus would be praying at the Garden of Gethsemane. Three times, in agony and sorrow to the point of death, Jesus prayed (with His face to the ground) that the cup of God’s wrath be taken away from Him (see Matt.26:36-46). Being tempted by Satan to walk away from the hour that was to come, Jesus prayed (and received) strength from God to do His will. God *sent* Jesus to die on the cross, but He did not *force* Him to go. Jesus willingly went to the cross to be our Savior.

Matt 26:39 ~ “And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.’”

John 10:16-18 ~ “For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

John 12:27-30 ~ “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour. ²⁸‘Father, glorify your name.’ Then a voice came from heaven: ‘I have glorified it, and I will glorify it again.’ ²⁹The crowd that stood there and heard it said that it had thundered. Others said, ‘An angel has spoken to him.’ ³⁰Jesus answered, ‘This voice has come for your sake, not mine.’”

➤ However, in the anguish of His humanity and temptation He asked if there was another way to redeem mankind. For in His substitutionary death, He would experience the wrath of God for every wicked, every unrighteous, and every unholy thing by everyone whom He would save.

The sins of the world – every repulsive impurity and iniquity – would be on His back as God’s wrath would bear down on Christ the punishment of us all. He truly came to “*taste death for everyone*” (Heb.2:9). Scripture tells us that, “*For our sake*”, God made Jesus “*to be sin who knew no sin*” (2Cor.5:21). The apostle Paul wrote that Christ became “*a curse for us*” (Gal.3:13). In Luke’s Gospel, Luke (the physician) recorded that Jesus prayed in such anguish that “*his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground*” (22:44).

✓ **Illust:** “That describes a rare but well-documented malady known as *hematidrosis* that sometimes occurs under heavy emotional distress. Subcutaneous capillaries burst under stress and the blood mingles with one’s perspiration, exiting through the sweat glands” (John MacArthur; *The Murder of Jesus*, p.68).

➤ On the cross, Jesus died for all the sins of everyone who would ever believe. In that moment, God’s wrath was poured out on Him as Jesus hung in our place. In the anguish of those hours, experienced and fully satisfied God’s wrath for our sin.

Rom 6:23 ~ “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (see Eph.1:7; Heb.9:22; 10:4; 1Pet.1:19)

2 Cor 5:21 ~ “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

➤ Notice, in verses 3-5, Jesus’ understanding of God through this whole incomprehensible experience. He recalled the sovereignty of God by proclaiming Him as “*holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel*” (vs.3). He also remembered that God is always true to His promises, and has always delivered His people (vs.4-5). Even though He was suffering intense agony, and feeling the silence of God, He trusted in God’s character.

✓ **Illust:** “Trust the heart of God, even when you cannot see the hand of God.”

✓ **Illust:** Corrie ten Boom, whose family hid Jews from the Nazis during WWII (which resulted in the entire family being killed, except for Corrie), once said, “When the train goes through a tunnel and the world gets dark, do you jump out? Of course not, you sit still and trust the engineer to get you through.”

B. The stillness of God (vs.6-10)

➤ At the moment, the manifest presence of God is absent. God is not only silent, but still. That is, from a human perspective, God is neither answer prayers nor acting on behalf of the one praying. The Psalmist (David) gives a graphic and poetic portrayal of the sufferings he was enduring.

Psalm 22:6-10 ~ “*But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. ⁷All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; ⁸‘He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!’ ⁹Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother’s breasts. ¹⁰On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother’s womb you have been my God.*”

➤ This was never more poignant than at Christ’s crucifixion. It appeared as though God had completely ignored and abandoned Jesus (see “*cursed*” Gal.3:10-14). God is not actively rescuing Jesus from this peril – the torment of crucifixion. While God is still, the mouths of sinful men are not. They mock,

scorn, despise, and blaspheme the Lord. The one who professed to be the One and Only Son of God hangs there dying and God is still. It was too much for their carnal minds to grasp. They assume that God has forsaken Christ; then wrongly conclude that Jesus' claim to be the Messiah was a lie. So, they shake their heads in derision and condemnation.

Once again these words (written over a thousand years before Jesus was born) prophetically scripted what would happen to Jesus as His crucifixion.

Matthew 27:39 ~ “And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads” (see Mk.15:29; Lk.23:35)

Matthew 27:43 ~ “He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”

➤ In the midst of it all, Jesus is treated not like a man but “*a worm*” (vs.6). This is in reference to His humiliating circumstances – being crucified like a heinous and infamous criminal – being “*cursed*” by God for us (Gal.3:13). This was the hour of Christ's greatest humiliation that was prophesied long ago by the prophet Isaiah (written about 700 years before Christ was born):

Isa 53:2-6 ~ “For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. ³He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ⁴Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned – every one – to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” (see 2Cor.5:21; Eph.5:2; 1Pet.3:18; 1Jn.2:1-2).

➤ Through it all God is both silent and still, or so it would appear. The Psalm, however, does not end here. At the point of Jesus' greatest agony, where does He turn? What does He do? His trust in God compels Him to turn to God in His hour of greatest need.

2. The PRAYER for God's Presence (Psalm 22:11-21)

➤ Notice that, in the midst of excruciating agony and sorrow, David (and ultimately Jesus) does not curse God; he does not rebuke God; he does not reject God; he does not say to God, “I don't believe in you anymore.” What does he do? He prays. Even though it seemed that God was both silent and still, David continued to pray to Him; continued to trust in Him. Likewise, we need to be faithful in prayer – no matter our circumstances, no matter our perception of God's response (see Lk.18:1-8).

This prayer encompasses both the human perspective of helplessness and the divine perspective of hopefulness.

A. The human perspective of helplessness (vs.11-18)

➤ The hopelessness of the Psalmist's situation is graphically clear:

Psalm 22:11-18 ~ “Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help. ¹²Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; ¹³they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. ¹⁴I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; ¹⁵my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. ¹⁶For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet – ¹⁷I can count all my bones – they stare and gloat over me; ¹⁸they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.”

- His death is imminent, violent, and excruciating. Two phrases immediately stand out: *“for trouble is near”* and *“there is no one to help”* (vs.11). This is truly a helpless situation. One that we might be able to personally relate to, but one that none of us has personally experienced.
- While the Psalmist may be speaking figuratively, we know that this accurately depicts what happened to Jesus during His crucifixion. No situation seems more helpless than being nailed to a cross. People are not just rescued out of crucifixion. In fact, in Jesus’ case, death was certainly imminent; and He knew it. The imagery of the language used in this prayer is rich and deep.
 - ◆ *“Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me”* (vs.12) ~ Bashan was a fertile country and the cattle that were raised there were fat, healthy, and strong.
 - ◆ *“they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion”* (vs.13) ~ “Like roaring lions they [the priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, rulers, and captains] howled out their fury, and longed to tear the Saviour in pieces, as wild beasts raven over their prey” (Charles Spurgeon; *The Treasury of David*; Ps.22:13).
 - ◆ *“I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast”* (vs.14) ~ Jesus’ eye turns (for the moment) away from His enemies to look at His own dreadful condition. Physically, He is completely spent, and His body is utterly dying.
 - ◆ *“my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death”* (vs.15). “Most complete debility is here portrayed; Jesus likens himself to a broken piece of earthenware, or an earthen pot, baked in the fire till the last particle of moisture is driven out of the clay” (Charles Spurgeon; *The Treasury of David*; Ps.22:15).
 - ◆ *“For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet”* (vs.16) ~ Perhaps Jesus is now describing the more ignoble people around Him. The “dogs” most likely, is not descriptive of the religious leaders, but the crowd of people around Him. However, those who *“have pierced [His] hands and [His] feet”* were definitely the Roman soldiers who crucified (Matt.27:35; Jn.19:18-23; Acts 2:23; 4:10).
 - ◆ *“I can count all my bones – they stare and gloat over me”* (vs.17) ~ This picture is truly horrifying. Jesus, naked and bleeding, was so brutalized that He could literally see the bones in His body through His semi-transparent skin (perhaps even bone that has been exposed). All the while, the people are staring at the gruesome sight of the Son of God be crucified by sinful men.
 - ◆ *“they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots”* (vs.18) ~ Quoted in all four Gospels and referred to as the fulfilling of Scripture:

Matthew 27:35 ~ “And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots.” (see Mk.15:25; Lk.23:34; Jn.19:24)

- This prayer reveals the utter helplessness of the situation. Truly the only one who can save is God. All have forsaken Him – including, for the moment, God – and all are seeking His death. In the midst of it all, and in spite of it all, this Psalm turns to prayer.

Jesus pled for God to be with Him during His suffering and death. But how does Jesus’ prayer end? After crying out to God, from the agony of His pain and suffering, what does Jesus ask from God?

B. The divine perspective of hopefulness (vs.19-21)

- In verse 19, Jesus’ prayer takes an abrupt and radical turn in perspective. Jesus had not forgotten God’s power to save. His prayer is concise but profound. What does He ask for in His moment of greatest distress and pain? He prays that God would *“be not far off”* (vs.19). He prays for God’s strength to come to Him, for God to deliver Him, for God to rescue Him, and for God to save Him.

Psalm 22:19-21 ~ *“But you, O LORD, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid!
²⁰Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog! ²¹Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!”*

- In the midst of it all, Jesus has not forgotten God and knows that God has not forgotten Him. He does not merely *hope* God can save, He *knows* God can save. He is all too aware that God is His only hope. He is the only one who can give Him strength, deliverance, rescuing, and salvation. He does not ask for riches, comfort, or the destruction of His enemies. He simply wants God near Him – near Him to save Him – for in God lies all His hope and salvation.

3. The PRAISE for God's Deliverance (Psalm 22:22-31)

- From eyes that are fixed on God comes the praise from God's people. Jesus, knowing God power to save and knowing God's faithfulness to His promises, praises Him even before He is saved!
 - ✓ Illust: "The transition is very marked; from a horrible tempest all is changed into calm. The darkness of Calvary at length passed away from the face of nature, and from the soul of the Redeemer, and beholding the light of his triumph and its future results the Saviour smiled. We have followed him through the gloom, let us attend him in the returning light. It will be well still to regard the words as a part of our Lord's soliloquy upon the cross, uttered in his mind during the last few moments before his death" (Charles Spurgeon; *The Treasury of David*; Ps.22:22-31).
- Again, by proclaiming "*My God, my God*" Jesus was likely drawing us to the entirety of Psalm 22. The ultimate outcome of this Psalm is not despair but praise. Jesus knows that God is not a God who has altogether forsaken Him, but a God who is forever faithful and altogether loving, gracious, and kind!

A. Praising God in the present (vs.22-25)

- Anticipating God's ultimate deliverance, the Psalmist is resolved to praise God. Even though God has yet to rescue him; even though he is still in the midst of his sufferings and sorrows, he is resolute to trust in God and to praise His name.

This must be true for us as well. God has not promised to quickly deliver us from every human trial; nor has He promised us an easy or comfortable life. He has actually promised that we will experience suffering in this life, and trials that come directly from our belief in and devotion to Him.
- Even though the Psalmist is in unspeakable misery, he has not lost in faith in God nor his passion to praise the name of God.

Psalm 22:22-25 ~ "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you: ²³You who fear the LORD, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! ²⁴For 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. ²⁵From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him."

- When we look closely at verse 23, we can see several groups that are called upon to praise God: "*You who fear the Lord*", "*your offspring of Jacob*", "*all you offspring of Israel*" (vs.). Not only is the Psalmist praising God in the midst of his sufferings, but he is also (in the midst of his sufferings) calling upon all of God's people to praise the LORD!

Eph 5:20 ~ "giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ"

1 Thess 5:18 ~ "give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you." (see Acts 5:41; Phil.3:8-11; Col.1:24; Jms.1:2-4; 1Pet.4:12-14)

- Why are we called to be thankful in and for all circumstances? How can we praise God in the midst of pain and sorrow? "*For [God] 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*" (vs.24). Not matter how things may appear, Christians can know for certain that God will never fail nor forsake those who belong to Him.

Rom 8:28-30 ~ “And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. ²⁹For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ³⁰And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.”

➤ Of course, Jesus is the epitome of this truth. Even before God even delivered Him, Jesus was praising God for His deliverance. Jesus knew that God loved Him and that God would not hide His face from or ignore His cries. He was confident to know that what He was going through was being allowed by God under His sovereign purpose and plan (Acts 2:23).

✓ Illust: “It is true that justice demanded that Christ should bear the burden which as a substitute he undertook to carry, but Jehovah always loved him, and in love laid that load upon him with a view to his ultimate glory and to the accomplishment of the dearest wish of his heart. Under all his woes our Lord was honourable in the Father's sight, the matchless jewel of Jehovah's heart” (Charles Spurgeon; *The Treasury of David*; Ps.22:24).

✓ Illust: In his biography on Charles Spurgeon (who suffered from gout, rheumatism, and Bright's disease (inflammation of the kidneys) which eventually combined to take his life at the age of 57), John Piper said: “What comes through again and again is Spurgeon's unwavering belief in the sovereignty of God in all his afflictions. More than anything else it seems, this kept him from caving in to the adversities of his life. He said,

‘It would be a very sharp and trying experience to me to think that I have an affliction which God never sent me, that the bitter cup was never filled by his hand, that my trials were never measured out by him, nor sent to me by his arrangement of their weight and quantity.’

This is exactly the opposite strategy of modern thought, even much evangelical thought, that recoils from the implications of infinity. If God is God he not only knows what is coming, but he knows it because he designs it. For Spurgeon this view of God was not first argument for debate, it was a means of survival. Our afflictions are the health regimen of an infinitely wise Physician. He told his students,

‘I dare say the greatest earthly blessing that God can give to any of us is health, with the exception of sickness ... If some men, that I know of could only be favoured with a month of rheumatism, it would, by God's grace mellow them marvelously’” (sermon: “Charles Spurgeon: Preaching Through Adversity”; 1995).

➤ Jesus praised God before His deliverance, even in the midst of His most painful trial, because He knew God! He knew that God would not ultimately forget nor forsake Him. He knew that God is compassionate, gracious, loving, and kind – worthy of all praise at all times – regardless of our circumstances.

Dan 3:16-18 ~ “Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, ‘O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter. ¹⁷If this be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. ¹⁸But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up.’”

Job 1:20-21 ~ “Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped. ²¹And he said, “Naked I came from my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.”

➤ The author of the book of Hebrews, quoted Psalm 22:22 to show that through Christ’s substitutionary death on the cross, all believers can praise God for the fact that they are now all brothers and sisters in Christ and with Christ. For all those (and only those) who put their faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, can truly call God their Father.

Hebrews 2:11-12 ~ “For he [Jesus] who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹²saying, ‘I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise.’”

B. Praising God for the future (vs.26-31)

- Not only does Jesus praise God in the present, but He declares God praises in the future too. Because He knows that God is good, He knows that good things will eventually, and eternally, come to those who know God. He knows that all people will eventually bow down before God *“For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations”* (vs.28). He knew that God will be praised by all people forevermore even by *“a people yet unborn”* (vs.31).

Psalm 22:26-31 ~ *“The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the LORD! May your hearts live forever! ²⁷All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. ²⁸For kingship belongs to the LORD, and he rules over the nations. ²⁹All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. ³⁰Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord [Adonay] to the coming generation; ³¹they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.”*

- The last words of this Psalm reflect the final words of Jesus on the cross. Prophetically put down hundreds of years before Christ’s birth and death, the Psalmist writes these amazing words from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: *“He has done it”* (vs.31) Who has done what? God has accomplished what He has promised. Specifically God has saved all who would ever believe in Him through the substitutionary death of His Son Jesus Christ!

John 19:30 ~ “When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, ‘It is finished’ [*teleō*], and he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.”

Conclusion

- Why did Jesus cry out from the cross, *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* In that moment, Jesus was experiencing the wrath of God for our sin. He died on the cross in our place and for our sins. God treated Jesus as if He lived our unrighteous lives, so that He could treat us as if we lived Christ’s righteous life (see 2Cor.5:17-20; Is.53:4-6; 1Pet.2:22-24).

✓ **Illust:** “On the cross Jesus was guilty of nothing, but God treated Jesus as if He had committed personally every sin ever committed by every person who would ever believe. Did you grasp that? God treated Him personally as if He had committed every sin ever committed by every person who would ever believe, though in fact, He committed none of them. That’s what substitution means. And then God exploded the full fury of His wrath against all the sins of all who will ever believe, against Jesus, and exhausted His wrath on Him. He was no sinner. God treated Him as if He was” (John MacArthur; sermon: “Who Chose Whom?”; Dec. 1, 1997).

- Let me put it another way: The reason Jesus was forsaken by God is so that we would not have to be. Jesus died in our place and for our sins. He bore God’s wrath for all the sins of all those who would ever believe. He was temporarily forsaken by God so that we could live with God forever!

Heb 13:5 ~ “... [God] has said, ‘I will never leave you nor forsake you.’” (Josh.1:5)

- Jesus experienced God wrath so that we (as true believers) never would. Jesus paid the full penalty of our unrighteous, so we could receive the full reward of His righteousness. Jesus died in our place and for our sins, so that we could become children of God. Jesus was forsaken by God so that we would never be forsaken by God. Praise the Lord!