

## The Dirtiest Job

Psalm 22

John 19: 23-37



A couple months ago, I was asked to be a last-minute fill-in at the New Castle Christian Academy for their Wednesday chapel service. As I was putting this together, I couldn't help but think, "Hey, this would be a great sermon for Sunday morning!"

So today, you're getting a sermon designed for elementary and middle school kids. Some of you might feel that's a little beneath you. Others might be thinking, "Finally! I'm in!" Regardless, I want you to know I have fleshed it out a bit since then.

But we're still going to have some fun. In fact, I hope this sermon has a little something for everyone.



If you've watched television sometime in the last 15-20 years, you have probably seen Mike Rowe before. He hosted a popular show on Discovery Channel called "Dirty Jobs."

The premise was simple. There are people across the world that do jobs most of us wouldn't do, but those jobs still need to be done. So Mike decided to film himself learning more about these people and the work they do, and it became a hit television show.

I want to share with you a few of the jobs Mike has said were the dirtiest he ever worked.



The first took him to Lake Erie in Michigan. On this episode, he became a water snake researcher.

I don't know how much you know about snakes, but they don't particularly like to be caught. Still, he had to reach down and grab those snakes, and he said he was bitten no less than three dozen times that day.

But that wasn't even the gross part about the job.

The gross part is the research. The research was to make the snakes vomit, so they could study the vomit and learn what they were eating and analyze their overall health.

Now, if that was icky for you, buckle up because I've got two more that get progressively worse.

The second of Mike's dirtiest jobs was a sewer inspector.



I don't think I have to give you a whole lot of detail here. What I will tell you is that Mike inspected the sewer system in San Francisco – a large city, with lots of people. And lots of people mean lots of...well, you get the idea.

It was also very hot and uncomfortable down there, and that's not to mention the cockroaches the size of your thumb and rats the size of a loaf of bread.

But the sewer needs to be inspected for any damage or cracks in the walls that would lead catastrophic breakdown – especially in a city the size of San Francisco.

The last of Mike Rowe's worst jobs takes us to the Bracken Cave system in Texas. Mike said this one is up there as one of the absolute worst.



The cave is home to 40 million Mexican free-tail bats. The people who work there need to inspect the cave once every month, and (this probably goes without saying) it's miserable.

First of all, it's over 100 degrees inside that cave. Not only that, but 40 million bats have to go to the bathroom somewhere, don't they?

Indeed, the apparent floor of that cave isn't actually the floor at all. The actual floor is buried beneath three feet of bat droppings. To inspect the cave, workers have to wade through all of it.

To make it worse, within that sludge are millions of flesh-eating beetles that normally eat dead bats, but and are now working their way inside the workers' pants.

They need to do this work because they need to check on the general health of the colony. The bats are vital to the ecosystem in the area, and if something should happen to the colony, it would be terrible for that ecosystem.

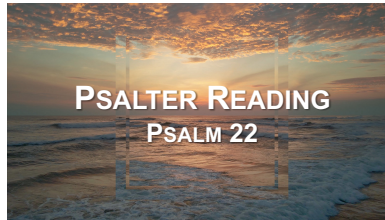
Now, take a breath. You've made it through the Mike Rowe dirty jobs portion of the sermon.



But there is one more dirty job we need to talk about today. We need to talk about the dirtiest job that has ever been carried out in the history of the world.

Of course, today we're talking about Jesus and the cross.

And to show you just how dirty this job was, I want to look at Psalm 22. If you were with us on Good Friday, we read Psalm 22 at the foot of the cross. I don't usually like to re-use scripture this quickly, but there's a reason for this.



Let's read Psalm 22 in its entirety:

*<sup>1</sup> My God, my God,  
why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?  
<sup>2</sup> My God, I cry out by day,  
but you do not answer,  
by night, but I find no rest.  
<sup>3</sup> Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One;  
you are the one Israel praises.  
<sup>4</sup> In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.  
<sup>5</sup> To you they cried out and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.  
<sup>6</sup> But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by everyone, despised by the people.*

<sup>7</sup> All who see me mock me;  
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.  
<sup>8</sup> "He trusts in the Lord," they say, "let the Lord rescue him.  
Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."  
<sup>9</sup> Yet you brought me out of the womb;  
you made me trust in you,  
even at my mother's breast.  
<sup>10</sup> From birth I was cast on you;  
from my mother's womb you have been my God.  
<sup>11</sup> Do not be far from me, for trouble is near  
and there is no one to help.  
<sup>12</sup> Many bulls surround me;  
strong bulls of Bashan encircle me.  
<sup>13</sup> Roaring lions that tear their prey  
open their mouths wide against me.  
<sup>14</sup> I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.  
My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me.  
<sup>15</sup> My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
you lay me in the dust of death.  
<sup>16</sup> Dogs surround me,  
a pack of villains encircles me;  
they pierce my hands and my feet.  
<sup>17</sup> All my bones are on display;  
people stare and gloat over me.  
<sup>18</sup> They divide my clothes among them  
and cast lots for my garment.  
<sup>19</sup> But you, Lord, do not be far from me.  
You are my strength; come quickly to help me.  
<sup>20</sup> Deliver me from the sword,  
my precious life from the power of the dogs.  
<sup>21</sup> Rescue me from the mouth of the lions;  
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.  
<sup>22</sup> I will declare your name to my people;  
in the assembly I will praise you.

*23 You who fear the Lord, praise him!  
All you descendants of Jacob, honor him!  
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!*

*24 For he has not despised or scorned  
the suffering of the afflicted one;  
he has not hidden his face from him  
but has listened to his cry for help.*

*25 From you comes the theme of my praise  
in the great assembly;  
before those who fear you I will fulfill my vows.*

*26 The poor will eat and be satisfied;  
those who seek the Lord will praise him—  
may your hearts live forever!*

*27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord,  
and all the families of the nations will bow down before him,  
28 for dominion belongs to the Lord  
and he rules over the nations.*

*29 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;  
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—  
those who cannot keep themselves alive.*

*30 Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord.*

*31 They will proclaim his righteousness,  
declaring to a people yet unborn:  
He has done it!*



Psalm 22 is actually my favorite of the Psalms. I know, that might be an odd choice – but let me explain.

Did you know that there are over 300 Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled in his earthly ministry? Actually, some have been able to count over 500 prophecies fulfilled by Jesus.

Psalm 22, this one Psalm, contains over a dozen of those – up to 17 in fact.

Add to that the fact that this Psalm accurately describes the crucifixion when it was written 400 years before crucifixion was even invented! Nobody should have been able to describe this before they even knew what a crucifixion was.

To me, a re-read of Psalm 22 is exactly what I need in those moments when my faith needs some reassurance. It stands as my favorite because to me it indisputably proves that Jesus was who he said he was: the Messiah, the Savior, the one and only Son of God.

It's awe-inspiring that this one Psalm, written hundreds of years before crucifixions took place and over 1,000 years before Christ's in particular, would describe his experience on the cross so accurately.

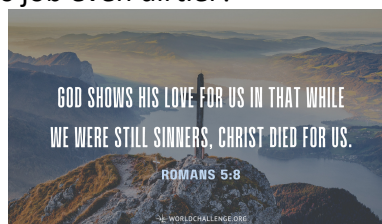
And with that accuracy comes the sobering knowledge that this was indeed the dirtiest job that anyone has ever had to do.

The crosses we usually see today that commemorate this event are hardly ever representative of what Jesus would have been nailed to.

Our crosses are usually smooth and finished beautifully. Maybe they're shiny and gold. His would have been rough and full of splinters.

We think we have an idea of how gruesome and torturous this experience would have been, but really, we can only imagine. Psalm 22 paints us a pretty complete picture, though. It's even more of a clear picture than some of the Gospels.

But do you know what makes this job even dirtier?



Jesus did this job for us when nobody else would have considered it. He did this job for a thief that was hanging next to him so that thief could experience paradise. He did this job for a man named Saul so that he could give that man a new name and a new purpose.

He did this job for people that nobody else would have wanted to save.

He did this job for you and for me.

He did this job for us when we did nothing at all to deserve it. I know I certainly don't deserve it.



And so this morning, I think we can just be thankful. I say we take a moment and think about all the people that do all the jobs we don't have the stomach or the desire to do. We mentioned some of them at the beginning.

But most of all, I say we think about the worst job that has ever been known to man. I say we think of the physical pain and agony that went along with it. I say we think of the spiritual and emotional anguish that was involved.

Let's spend today appreciating the fact that our God, that our Lord and Savior, would love us so deeply that he would take up that job...that he would take up that cross...and that the only reason he would do that is for you and for me. For our salvation. When we didn't deserve it.

What Christ did for us was a terrible, dirty job. It was the dirtiest job.

And he was the only One for that job. Thanks be to God that he has done it.

And all of God's people said...