

PASSION WEEK DEVOTIONAL

NOT FORSAKEN

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Overview

Passion week in Psalm 22 is going to reveal much about the Cross, Jesus and the Father and you and me...How Jesus felt...How He dealt with those feelings...and What He saw from the cross...What He said from the cross...and Something that happened at the cross that I learned for the very first time. Join me at the cross...We all need Fridays.



Psalm 22

Psalm 22 (ESV)

Why Have You Forsaken Me?

22 To the choirmaster: according to The Doe of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.

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

Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?

2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.

4 In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.

5 To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

6 But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.

7 All 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!"

9 Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.

10 On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God.

11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.

12 Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me;

13 they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.

14 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; **15** my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.

16 For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet—

17 I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me;

18 they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

19 But you, O Lord, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid!

20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog!

21 Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!

22 I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

23 You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

24 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.

25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him.

26 The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.

28 For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.

29 All 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.

30 Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;

31 they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.



DAY ONE

Psalm 22:1-2

Did Jesus Feel Forsaken by the Father?

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?” “Why are you so far from saving me...so far from the words of my groaning?”

When I read this Psalm, I immediately think of Jesus suffering upon the cross. I hear Jesus crying out to the Father...as he hung between heaven and earth on that Roman made cross...as recorded in Mark’s gospel chapter 15. “Yes, this must be a Messianic Psalm,” I say to myself. And then it dawns on me...Jesus is quoting an Old Testament song and prayer of David that he grew up on at the knees of his mother and father.

For ten years David was pursued by Saul’s henchmen who had sworn an oath to kill David or kill themselves. David felt like God had forsaken him. Had God forgotten his promise to make him king in Judah? Why was God so slow in rescuing him? Sound familiar?

Was Jesus struggling with the thought of being the Forsaken One too? I think so. But I notice the words, “My God”. Though Jesus struggled in his suffering, He never doubted the Father. And he never swerved from his commitment to the Father. This passion week was the Father’s plan. Jesus was committed to the Father’s plan for saving His people from their sins. All the struggle...all the suffering was the Father’s will. And Jesus had said the night before, “Father, let this cup pass from me...but not my will but your’s be done.”

On Monday, Jesus cursed a fig tree, pointing to God’s judgment upon spiritually unbelieving and unfruitful Judah. And then he chased the money changers from the Court of the Gentiles in the Temple, making sure that everyone knew that his mission included saving Jews and Gentiles in every nation, not just Jews in Israel. Those were some important lessons to learn on Monday, but everything was pointing toward Friday.



DAY TWO

Psalm 22:1-3

How Did Jesus Deal with It?

"My God, why have You (emphasis on YOU) forsaken me?...because You are holy...you who are enthroned on the praises of Israel."

There were many times in David's spiritual life where he might have written such an agonizing psalm, poem, or song. For instance...

King David learned that his rebellious son, Absalom, was marching swiftly with many soldiers toward Jerusalem. Assassination of the King and a political take over of the throne of David was the plan. That strategy was hatched by David's good friend and counselor, Ahithophel, who had secretly betrayed David and put his influence and skills behind the treasonous son. Maybe the song went like this..."I can almost understand why my angry son has taken up arms against me. But you, dear friend, why have you forsaken me?"

Some Bible students imagine Jesus meditating on this song of David as he hung on the cross, bearing the pain and the shame that was ours to bear. I can imagine him quoting scripture to himself in a time like this. Personally, I have laid on a gurney, quoting God's words to myself, awaiting my turn for surgery after signing the waiver that seizures, heart attacks, kidney shut down, and even death were possible outcomes during and after the surgery. So yes, Jesus meditating on Ps. 22 while on the cross is a definite possibility to me. And as he suffered perhaps he whispered to the Father, "I know why Judas is not here. I know why fearful Peter is not here. I know why John is here, to take care of my mother. But Father, why have you forsaken me?...I've cried in the night and I have cried in the day to You and you have not answered me yet...but I know that you are holy and your decisions are always righteous and on top of that I chose to be made sin, one who knew no sin, so that they, your chosen ones, the faithful ones could be made righteous in me forever.



DAY TWO

Psalm 22:1-3

What a life given to us....but what a cost...praise you Jesus!

On Tuesday of that passion week, Jesus taught several lessons to his disciples and some lessons to enquiring and challenging scribes and pharisees. But the first message that Jesus shared with his friends that morning was perhaps the most important one all day long. "Have faith in God and don't quit praying to Him." Friday was coming.



DAY THREE

Psalm 22:4-7

What did Jesus See from the Cross?

"In You our fathers trusted...in You our fathers were rescued and were not put to shame. But I am a worm and not a man...despised by the people...all who see me mock me..."

David was telling the truth when he said that Israel's fathers trusted in God and were not put to shame. Those fathers were Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, and Samuel to name a few. These men were far from perfect, but they knew God and trusted Him more times than not. But David said about himself and even more so prophesied of his great son, Jesus Christ, "I am a worm and not a man."

When David was running for his life from Saul, no one was singing songs about him and his victories in battle. They didn't even think of him at all. Just like people don't consider worms at all. David felt totally insignificant. At best, people despised him and made fun of him.

But these verses in Ps. 22 bespeak also of how Jesus saw himself as he hung on the cross. Remember brethren, this man on the cross in the middle was I am...before Abraham was...I am...who spoke to Moses from a burning bush...who delivered Israel from Egyptian bondage...who divided the Red Sea and conquered the Egyptian army and the Moabite and Ammonite armies...Jesus was the God of Mt. Sinai and the Ten Commandments. But listen to him on the cross..."from I am to I am a worm and not a man. Look at my body torn to shreds by Roman whips. My flesh dangles from my bones. I look like a worm that has been crushed and disfigured almost beyond recognition....but you are my God from my earliest days on earth. And I will trust you no matter what! What a savior...on Wednesday heading toward Friday.



DAY FOUR

Psalm 22:12-19

What did Jesus Say from the Cross?

"Many bulls have surrounded me", wrote David. These men are strong and intimidating with clear intention of killing me...brutally killing me.

I wonder if God let David know that his personal description of confronting his enemy would be prophetic for the One Forsaken at the cross someday. Well, it was. Spurgeon put it like this: "...the priests, elders, scribes, Pharisees, rulers, and captains bellowed around the cross like wild cattle, fed in the solitary pastures of Bashan, full of strength and fury. They stamped and foamed around the innocent One, and longed to gore him to death with their cruelties." Imagine being hated that much.

Psalm 22:14,15..."I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax and it is melted within me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, my tongue cleaves to my jaw, and You, Father, lay me in the dust of death."

What a declaration of the agony of the Christ on the cross. Of course he was dehydrated. The blood loss from the 39 lashes would have done that...and the water loss from hours of hanging on the cross at mid day...no wonder he said, "I thirst." And yet they gave him no water to quench that thirst. Not just his shoulders, not just his wrists, not just his spine, but all of his bones seemed out of joint. Oh the pain of bearing my sin and the sins of millions more of the chosen that day. Jesus said, "my heart is not working right...my strength is dried up like broken pottery found in an archeological dig. And I can't keep pushing myself up on the pain of my nail driven feet and my nail driven hands. And because of that I can't breath right...Im suffocating to death. "Oh Lord, be not far off."



DAY FOUR

Psalm 22:12-19

Thursday, Jesus celebrated Passover with his friends, and at the end of that feast Jesus initiated the Last Supper...we call it Communion, the Lord's Supper. He took bread and prayed and said, "This is my body which is broken for you. Take and eat in remembrance of me. Then Jesus took some wine and prayed and said, "This is the new covenant in my blood. Take and drink in remembrance of me." And after that, Judas betrayed the Lord and he was arrested in the garden where he prayed, "Father don't be far off...but not my will but yours be done." Friday was here...



DAY FIVE

Psalm 22:22-31

What Happened at the Cross?

"I will tell of your name to my brethren in the midst of the congregation...you who fear the Lord, praise Him...to the coming generations who will declare his righteousness that He has done it!"

There is no longer a complaint or a lament from the Suffering One. Jesus is giving praise and honor to the Father, even from the cross. And he is encouraging his disciples to do the same...yes even at the place of death...the foot of the cross.

"All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him...stand in awe of Him. For He has not despised the affliction of the afflicted. Neither has He hidden His face from him. For when he cried to Him for help, He heard...He heard!"

Wow...The Father and the Spirit were right there on Golgatha's hill as Jesus was lifted up on that cross. They did not abandon the Son and the terrorized Son would come to experience it and to declare it. And joy and peace sprang up from the soil into which hurt and sorrow had been sown. The Father heard the Son's cries and gave him just enough to endure to the appointed end. That's all Jesus needed. And that is all that we need in our hour of distress and prayer. Our God is listening. Our God cares. And that's the truth. He heard! That is awesome but there is more.

The Father not only heard, but HE and the Spirit were there to witness the completed work of Christ in saving his people from their sins.



DAY FIVE

Psalm 22:22-31

Psalm 22:27-31. "All the ends of the earth will remember this (passion week). Jesus did it...It's done...He died for my sins and for the sins of all who believe Him. So that we wouldn't have to...but have eternal life instead. Awesome indeed. Praise His Name!

What a Friday...a salvation bought and paid for...could it get any better than this? Sunday's coming.

