

**Psalm 22:1-2, 6-8, 15-19 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? My groaning does nothing to save me. <sup>2</sup>My God, I call out by day, but you do not answer. I call out by night, but there is no relief for me...<sup>6</sup>But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. <sup>7</sup>All who see me mock me. They sneer. They shake their heads. <sup>8</sup>They say, “Trust in the LORD.” “Let the LORD deliver him. Let him rescue him, if he delights in him.”...<sup>15</sup>My strength is dried up like broken pottery, and my tongue is stuck to the roof of my mouth. You lay me in the dust of death. <sup>16</sup>For dogs have surrounded me. A band of evil men has encircled me. They have pierced my hands and my feet. <sup>17</sup>I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me. <sup>18</sup>They divide my garments among them. For my clothing they cast lots. <sup>19</sup>But you, O LORD, do not be distant. O my Strength, come quickly to help me.**

There are many places in the Old Testament that give us pictures of our Savior Jesus and what he would do for us. Last night we were reminded of how the Passover pointed ahead to him. Really every sacrifice showed what he would do for us. Those animal sacrifices really couldn't pay for any sins. As we see today, Jesus' one sacrifice paid for them all.

There are two places in the Old Testament that point so clearly to Good Friday that you would almost think that the author was standing there watching what was going on rather than writing many hundreds of years earlier. The first is Isaiah chapter 53. Among other things the prophet writes, **“He was crushed for the guilt our sins deserved. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup>We all have gone astray like sheep. Each of us has turned to his own way, but the LORD has charged all our guilt to him.”**

The other place is this Psalm, written by King David. The words he writes are personal even though he never experienced anything like what he describes. They are personal because the Holy Spirit enabled him to speak from Jesus' perspective on Good Friday. Everything he said came true. David foretells Good Friday in great detail, of a Savior rejected by people, and of a Savior rejected by God.

Let's take a look at some of the specific details that David talked about. He writes, **“<sup>15</sup>My strength is dried up like broken pottery, and my tongue is stuck to the roof of my mouth.”** You may remember the movie called The Passion of the Christ. Hard to believe it came out over 20 years ago. One thing the movie did well is picture how Jesus must have looked on Good Friday. It must have been brutal.

He had been flogged. They made a mocking crown out of thorns and pressed it into his scalp. If you've ever gotten a cut anywhere on your head, you know how it can bleed. They had put a rod in his hand as if it was a royal scepter. Then they beat him over the head with it. Normally a convicted criminal would drag his own cross to the site of his execution. Jesus was already so weak that he couldn't, so someone else had to.

David writes, **“<sup>16</sup>For dogs have surrounded me. A band of evil men has encircled me.”** This happened at multiple times over Maundy Thursday and Good Friday. Judas Iscariot led a group from the Jewish religious leaders to arrest him. They were armed to the teeth as if he was a violent criminal. He was brought to a meeting of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. Instead of giving him justice in keeping with God's Law, they set the Law aside to gain a conviction.

One thing that the Romans would not allow them to do is execute anyone. That's why they had to bring him to Pontius Pilate. When you read the Gospels it seems like Pilate really wanted to release him. That didn't stop him from beating him mercilessly. Rather than stand up for what was clearly right, Pilate decided it would be better for Jesus to die than there to be a riot in Jerusalem.

David's prophecy gets even more direct, **“They have pierced my hands and my feet.”** It's interesting that there is a variant reading that instead of reading “they have pierced” it reads, “like a lion.” That sounds crazy to us but in Hebrew it is the difference of one letter. Lots of people love grabbing on to this and claiming that Christians nefariously changed the Old Testament. Except the oldest Hebrew manuscripts that we have include “they have pierced.”

So we can be confident that this is a picture of our Savior's crucifixion. In Isaiah 53 the prophet there also adds, **“it was because of our rebellion that he was pierced.”** It's hard for me to even fathom what it would be like to be nailed to a piece of wood and suspended in the air. The Apostle Paul wrote about him, **“Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”** The crucifixion shows that Jesus was under God's curse for us.

David even writes, **“<sup>18</sup>They divide my garments among them. For my clothing they cast lots.”** The Apostle John, who was an eyewitness to the crucifixion, showed how those words were fulfilled, **“When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier. They also took his tunic, which was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. <sup>24</sup>So they said to one another, ‘Let's not tear it. Instead, let's cast lots to see who gets it.’”**

Casting lots would be similar to rolling dice for it. No detail was too small for the Holy Spirit. He wanted to make sure that when the crucifixion occurred, people would know for a fact that Jesus was fulfilling these words. This is all for our good so we can be certain that Jesus is exactly the Savior we need, the Savior God promised.

David Foretells Good Friday in great detail of a Savior rejected by people.

The Holy Spirit even enabled King David to hear some of the mocking words that people would say to Jesus while he was hanging on the cross. <sup>48</sup>**“They say, ‘Trust in the LORD.’”** The Hebrew there is interesting. It literally says, “Roll your troubles to the LORD.” Normally those might be words of encouragement that some people might say when a friend is hurting. This is sarcasm.

That’s clear from what they say next, **“Let the LORD deliver him. Let him rescue him, if he delights in him.”** Matthew records these words coming out of the mouths of the Jewish leaders which are almost verbatim from Psalm 22, **“He saved others, but he cannot save himself. If he’s the King of Israel, let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup>He trusts in God. Let God rescue him now, if he wants him, because he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’”**

When Matthew records Jesus crying out the first verse of the Psalm on the cross people reply, **“This fellow is calling for Elijah.”** That sounds kind of random, but it was just another form of mockery. Jesus said in Aramaic, **“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?”** Eli would be close to the name Elijah. God promised that Elijah would come before the Savior. That was fulfilled in John the Baptist. They are making it sound like Jesus is making a desperate plea for Elijah to come so he doesn’t appear to be a fraud.

Later in the book of Acts the Apostle Paul said, **“The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize [Jesus], and by condemning him they fulfilled the statements of the prophets that are read every Sabbath.”** These were men who should have known better. They should have known the prophecies. Unwittingly, they fulfilled them. God was not going to let their rejection stop his plan of salvation.

In the WELS Connection video last weekend an Australian believer described his country as “post Christian.” People have it too good so they don’t see a need for a Savior. You could say the same thing about our country. Oh, there’s still a paper-thin veneer of Christian over things. You hear it in the Pledge of Allegiance and see “In God We Trust” on our money, but there’s no depth there at all.

Complaining about the sin in our country and around the world is a little bit like shooting fish in a barrel. We need to remember that no one is born knowing or believing in Jesus as their Savior. Their rejection shouldn’t surprise us in the least. It’s easy for us to shake our heads at how hard-hearted the Jewish leaders were or how slow on the uptake that the disciples were.

We need to look closer to home. Jesus didn’t die just because of the hatred of the Jewish leaders. He didn’t die just because Pontius Pilate didn’t have enough of a spine to stand up for what is right. We are the ones with Jesus’ blood on our hands. We have failed God more times than we would ever care to count. Of all the people in the world, we know better. God gave us the ability to do better. But we don’t.

This day calls for repentance from all of us, myself included. Our hand swung the hammer that drove the nails into our Savior. We are just as guilty as and Israelites or Roman back then or anybody else today. Our sin made Good Friday necessary. So take all those sins and place them at the foot of the cross and let Jesus’ precious blood cover them over once and for all.

David Foretells Good Friday of a Savior rejected by people and finally of a Savior rejected by God.

At the beginning of the crucifixion the Roman soldiers offered Jesus wine mixed with myrrh. It would serve as a pain killer and to make them less aware of what was going on. No wonder Jesus refused to accept it. Don’t take this as an act of kindness on the soldiers’ part. The more numb a criminal originally is, the less they are going to fight back against being nailed to a cross. I can’t even imagine what words a condemn criminal would scream at them when that was happening.

But what does Jesus say? **“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”** He has been cruelly, unfairly, and illegally sentenced to death, but he prays for the ones who are executing them. The Jewish leaders should have known full well who he was. There was no reason to expect any of the Roman soldiers to. If you ever think you are really good at forgiveness, reread those words from Jesus again.

Fast forward to the end of the crucifixion. Jesus shows that even then he was in control of everything that was happening. His life would not be taken from him. He would give it up willingly. His last words before he died were, **“Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!”** He went to the cross because that was his Father’s will. Now everything was complete. The plan of salvation was accomplished.

Those words at the beginning and the end of the crucifixion make the words of the first verse of this text sound even worse. In the words we just heard, Jesus calls God **“Father.”** That love that he experienced with his Father and the Holy Spirit from eternity was still there and still strong. Not anymore. Jesus can only call him my God, **“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”**

I could live to be a billion years old and I will never be able to wrap my head around the full meaning of those words. Martin Luther said about them, “God is forsaken by God. Who can understand it?” We are hearing the words of one who is suffering Hell itself. Hell is a place, that’s true, but the essence of Hell is eternal separation from the love and concern of God. No human being on this earth knows what that feels like. I’ve made it my life’s work so nobody ever has to know.

What we see on the cross, what we hear in Jesus’ words are the wages of sin. That is what the world’s sin has earned. If you ever think that sin is no big deal, look at Jesus on the cross. There you see it. Part of me wants to cry out, “Stop! Just make it stop!” Thankfully God never gave me that opportunity. If he stops here, we are all still doomed. This day wouldn’t be good at all.

But on the cross we also see the full extend of Jesus’ love for us. It’s easy to do nice things for people if they love us first or if we won’t have to go too far out of our way. Jesus showed love for people who could not possibly choose to love him. He didn’t just go out of his way, he gave up himself, his life, his soul, to win forgiveness for every sin. Every single one.

I wish Jesus wouldn’t have had to cry out those words. I wish sin was never a thing. But I can’t even begin to express my thanks that he was willing to go through that for me. I look out at all of you and I don’t see faces. I see souls our Savior loves and for whom he died. We never have to worry that God is going to bail out on us during this life or even in the life to come. Jesus allowed him to forsake him so he won’t ever forsake us.

David Foretells Good Friday in great detail, of a Savior rejected by people, and of a Savior rejected by God. When you read these verses from this Psalm and see what Jesus went through on the cross there doesn’t seem to be anything good about today. But when we realize what he accomplished and look ahead to his resurrection on Easter we see that this day isn’t just good. It’s the best day ever.