

“Jesus’ Resurrection is the Answer to ‘Why God?’”

Psalm 22:22-31

We’ve been looking at Psalm 22 from the perspective of the prophets who Peter said in 1 Pet. 1:10-11,

Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow.

What they couldn’t quite grasp, we now know because we have 20/20 hindsight vision and the finished canon of Scripture to help us see clearly what they could only see dimly. Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 are the two ‘eyewitnesses’ the Old Testament contains that show us that the Messiah would suffer for the sins of the world and yet somehow come back to life. Our focus is Ps. 22, a psalm that David wrote under the Spirit’s guidance in which he asked God why God was not answering his prayer from the attacks from his enemies who wanted him dead. We saw last week that Jesus, the Son of David, takes David’s words many of which were metaphorical descriptions of his suffering, which were literal descriptions of Jesus’ sufferings on the cross. Jesus cried out ‘My God, my God why have you forsaken me?’ Jesus’ attackers hurl their insults at him saying to Him trust the Lord to deliver you from the cross.’

David expressed great thirst; Jesus cried out ‘I am thirsty’. David said they are going to divide my garments up as if I have already died; of Jesus the soldiers divided His garments up while He hung from the cross. And David said that dogs were getting ready to pierce his bones, while Jesus’ bones were literally pierced with the nails.

But the psalm isn’t over. Vv.1-21 contain the sufferings of the Messiah; the prophetic Good Friday crucifixion while vv.22-31 contain the glories, the answer to His prayer of help, the joy and purpose of what resurrection life does for those who put their trust in Jesus, the One whom Isaiah said in Is. 53:10,

Yet it was the LORD’s will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, he will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.

A guilt offering is when an animal is put to death to cover the sins of a human. Jesus was put to death for all humanity’s sins and yet lived! His days were prolonged and the will of the lord would and continues to prosper in His hand. And David shows us the same hope and joy here in vv.22-31. At the end of v.21 David said God had heard him and answered his prayer, and now he declares in v.22

I will declare your name to my brothers; in the congregation 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 disdained the suffering of the afflicted one; he has not hidden his face from him but has listened to his cry for help.*

In case we need more convincing that the rest of the psalm points to Jesus’ resurrection we only have to go to Hebrews 2:12, whom the author of Hebrews says of Jesus,

¹⁰ In bringing many sons to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering. ¹¹ Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers. ¹² He says, "I will declare your name to my brothers; in the presence of the congregation I will sing your praises."

And in Heb. 5:7, he also writes of Jesus,

⁷ During the days of Jesus' life on earth, he offered up prayers and petitions with loud cries and tears to the one who could save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverent submission.

And not surprising we read here in v.24,

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

God answered David's prayer when he was suffering, which led to saving his life. Whereas God answered Jesus' prayer which led to death but resurrected life for Him and all Jesus followers too. So, we can look at the rest of this psalm through the lens of resurrection hope. How does that change us? What should our life look like if we have trusted Jesus' death as the guilt offering of our sins and have received resurrection life through the Spirit?

Resurrection Hope Results in a Life of Praise **(vv.22-24)**

Praise permeates the rest of this psalm, especially in vv.22-24

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David vows to return to the tabernacle and praise God to his fellow Jewish community who share his faith in God. Why? Because God heard his prayer and spared his life. He now wants to share how God has worked in his life. That's something we should always want to be doing when we're walking with God, praising Him and gathering with God's people to share what God did. Why?

Because hope inspires hope (v.24)

If you're going through something difficult, waiting on God to answer and He 'appears' to be absent, we need encouragement. We want to be reminded through each other's life experiences that there is hope and God does come through. Jesus prayed on the Friday for God to hear Him. Then He died. But this was all God's plan to answer Jesus on Sunday and not just spare Him from the cross but to prove Him victorious over the cross. Because only then can we find real hope.

We will all face death one day. We will even pray for deliverance and temporary delays before it comes. God will answer some of those but eventually our time runs out. Yet death for the believer is new life with God and Jesus and all the heavenly assembly. In 1 Cor. 15 Paul says if there is no resurrection we are people without hope.

²⁰ But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the first fruits of those who have fallen asleep. ²¹ For since death came through a man, the resurrection of the dead comes also through a man. ²² For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive

“First fruits” meant, you offered God your first and best and God would provide the rest. First fruits means there is more to follow. Our hope is the resurrection as well. And we need to remind each other of that as much as possible because life is not easy. We need to share our God-stories when we get together so we don’t lose hope. And then we will praise God too and glorify Him, standing in awe of Him because of His marvelous works in our life.

Because the feeling of God’s absence is not true (v.24)

Earlier David & Jesus prayed,

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?

² *O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, and am not silent.*

God wasn’t absent; it just felt like it because His answer had not arrived. But now, v.24

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

Satan is the deceiver. He wants us to feel like God is absent, doesn’t care about our situations. But when we return to the Word regularly, we reassure ourselves of what is true. God is always with us but His answers to our prayers have greater purposes we can’t see at the moment. To hide the face means to withhold favour. That’s not what God did here nor is it His intent to withhold His favour from us. And when we share this with each other, not surprisingly

Resurrection Hope Draws God’s People Closer **(22:25-26)**

David’s desire is to go to the tabernacle and worship God, telling his fellow worshippers what God has done. Because

Sharing our stories together (v.25)

... is how God draws us closer to one another. When we share personal experiences of how God is working in our life, we show that we’re vulnerable, we’re not perfect and that encourages the rest of us to hear that so-and-so needed prayer, guidance, help or my fellow sister/brother in the Lord was struggling the same way we had. When we never share these stories we don’t grow together. How many of us, when God answers our prayers, one of the first things we think about is sharing that blessing with another believer or with our church family in a worship service? This is what David was looking forward to doing.

Because when we share our stories together we also will share our needs. David says here,

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

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

Resurrection hope draws us together, sharing our stories which can lead to

Sharing God's blessings to meet needs (v.26)

David made a vow to God, most likely that he will bring sacrifices into the tabernacle as a thank offering to God that will be shared with his fellow believers. I'm going to elaborate on that during communion, showing that what David was talking about in the sacrificial system is actually the background for the Lord's table or communion/eucharist.

But when we fellowship we share what God is doing in our lives and we will often be in the place where we feel comfortable to share our needs with His people. We can't know what needs you have if you don't share them with others, whether with one person or a few people in a worship context.

David sees God's work in his life is not just a message of comfort for fellow believers but a testimony to unbelievers that God is a personal, loving God who cares about each person and you also can find your hope in Him. So the rest of the psalm's focus is outreach:

Resurrection Hope Needs to be Spread to Those Without Hope (22:27-31)

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 to a people yet unborn— for he has done it.*

David under inspiration of the Holy Spirit tells us that the news of God's rescuing him will reach the ends of the earth. Which is literally true because the Bible has reached almost every corner of the earth. But what he didn't know at the time was that the One whom this psalm would prophecy about – Jesus – that people from every nation on the earth hear the gospel and many receive the gospel. And if God said this 3000 years ago and we're still here today then

God is saying there are more people yet to be saved (vv.27-28)

And that's certainly true. We looked not that long at 2 Pet. 3:9 when we wondered why Jesus hasn't returned yet,

The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

God's loving heart desires more people saved. And specifically Paul tells us in Romans 11:25

²⁵ *I do not want you to be ignorant of this mystery, brothers, so that you may not be conceited: Israel has experienced a hardening in part until the full number of the Gentiles has come in.*

Jesus hasn't returned yet because there are more people in some of these nations whom God has yet to save before Jesus returns. "All the families of the nations" sounds reminiscent of God's promise to Abraham in Gen. 12:3 that 'all peoples on earth' will be blessed through his seed, another prophecy about Jesus. And if the gospel is going to reach all the nations, then obviously

Everyone needs the Lord (vv.29-30)

The "rich of the earth" need to hear about what God has in all of us as we tell our story of how God rescued us from eternal death (separation from God due to sin) and the Son of David in death, who rose and now offers life from the dead hope. But so do the poor and dying, 'those who go down to the dust,' whose lives end because of hardship – the gospel is for all because all need it. And all those who respond to the good news of God's rescuing work will "*proclaim His righteousness to a people yet unborn*" [you and me today since when this was written!] *for he has done it.*" David's story of rescue from death foreshadows Jesus' story of rescue in death. Since God did that then

Only God can save us because of what Jesus did (v.31)

The sufferings of David and subsequent rescue here in Ps. 22 prefigure and prophesy about Jesus' sufferings and glories that followed His resurrection. I mentioned Is. 53 as the main other witness of Jesus' sufferings and glories. Listen to Is. 53:10-11

¹⁰ *Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, we will see his offspring and prolong his days, and the will of the LORD will prosper in his hand.*

¹¹ *After the suffering of his soul, he will see the light of life and be satisfied; by his knowledge my righteous servant will justify many, and he will bear their iniquities.*

A guilt offering is an animal that is out to death for one's sins. Ultimately, the blood of goats and bulls cannot forgive sins, but God allowed it as a downpayment because Jesus would pay the full price owed for our sins. Yet, He would see His offspring' His offspring being His sons and daughters who accepted Him as their Saviour and Lord.

If David could happily declare what God had done for him (answered prayer from a difficult moment) to his people in his day, how much more should you and I be telling God's stories of how He rescued us through faith in Jesus, giving us a eternal life and true hope to each other and people who still need Jesus today?

If we're saved, shouldn't praise and thanks about eternal life be a consistent part of our daily vocabulary, or do we grumble more about our temporal life, showing our thoughts are more on things below than things above?

If we're saved, shouldn't we be hanging out more often with God's people so we can draw closer to Him, or are we so caught up in the things that won't last here that we're barely able to get together once a week, and even then we get here late and leave quickly because fellowship and growing together is not a priority?

And if we're saved, is resurrection hope changing our attitudes producing the fruit of love, joy, peace, patience and kindness so that our unsaved neighbours want to know how they can get what we got, and so we're telling them?

Please don't think that resurrection is something we only celebrate once a year, but that we live it out every day. We're not saved because of our own goodness but because God laid on Jesus the iniquity of us all, and He alone has done it; saved us by His grace.

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