

Psalm 22

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good evening. It's lovely to be back with you here in Aberdeen. I'm sorry I was slightly late. The A96 is challenging on a Friday. I burnt off some boy racers at the Hadigan, so it was a challenging thing. Walking down Rosemount with a big black Bible is also challenging.

I don't know if you've ever done it, you young folk have got all these digital things in your phones, but it's an old school big black Bible, so people look at you as if you're a serial killer, and they kind of drag their children away from you. So as an astute observer of human life, try it one day, walk down Rosemount with a big black Bible. So let's open that Bible as we read in Psalm 22. Let me just read the first two verses again to set the scene.

My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from the cries of anguish? My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer by night, but I find no rest.

A bit of knowledge I received in Facebook the other day was that someone was writing a very famous Christian organization. I don't know the name of it, but all I know is that they were involved in rehabilitation of drug addicts, and this particular person was engaging with this organization, and they noticed one thing that the organization seemed to be reluctant to talk about the cross.

And the person, you know, asked a little bit more, and sure enough, the CEO was, he said, very, very cagey and reluctant to talk about the cross specifically, and when pushed, saying that it really was very, very bad for the image of that organization.

[2 : 2 2] I wonder to what extent subliminally also we are going away from the cross as a major issue or a major theme of the Christian faith. And of course, if that is the case, it is absolutely bizarre, because the cross is at the very center of what we believe. The cross, in fact, defines the very nature of the nature of the Christian faith, and the cross as even the dominant symbol of Christianity.

So here we have this psalm, Psalm 22, talking very clearly about the cross. Back in the day when I was a lad, one of the dominant speakers at Christian Union, or just before my day, was Professor Finlayson.

And he really was seriously old school. And Finlayson's got a great book, one of the best books on the cross I've ever read, and it's called *The Cross and the Experience of Our Lord*. And so you see, the cross can be dominant in our experience, but here in Psalm 22, we see the cross in the experience of our Lord.

So this weekend, not surprisingly, I'm taking this as our theme, and why is that the case? Going back longer than Finlayson was a very well-known congregationalist minister. I think he might even have been born in Aberdeen. He was called P.T. Forsyth. And he said that the cross was, quote, the soul's magnetic north. And you get that picture, don't you, that the soul is always automatically, it's got a bias, if you like, towards the cross. The cross, the story of the cross begins right at the beginning of the Bible. The seed of the woman will bruise the head of the serpent.

And in doing so, the Bible says that the heel of that woman, or that seed rather, will itself be bruised. So right there at the beginning of Genesis, you've got an allusion in the early verses of the Bible to the bruising, to the conflict of the cross. And again, just to expand the introduction, I think I've got a couple of worries about the church in our own contemporary society.

[5 : 01] Probably two. And it's all relevant to this psalm. The first one is that I think Calvary is being replaced by Pentecost in our affections and in our desires. And one writer has in fact written this.

He says, experience of the Spirit has become for many more central than faith in the crucified, so that the Christian center has moved from Calvary to Pentecost.

And you can see that there's this almost obsession about the gifts of the Spirit, the obsession with the power of the Spirit. Again, you can understand that because arguably since the Puritans were forgotten about, there was a kind of binatarian view of God, not a Trinitarian view of God.

Binatarian in that folks spoke of the Father and the Son, but the Spirit was what someone called the Cinderella of the Trinity. And now they're getting the Spirit back. But then I think there's a forgetting about the whole Calvary experience. The cross isn't stage one and Pentecost stage two. There's a close relationship between power and pardon. So, Calvary is being replaced by Pentecost. And that's also true in the expectations of the church, because the dominant theme today in evangelicalism are things like healing. Even more than that, I was in a meeting with some church leaders two weeks ago. David Robertson and I were in a room with two church leaders. And this guy said that he believed in the United Kingdom today, folk were raised from the dead. And I says, hold on, can we take an example of, say, someone who's been dead for three days? Rigor mortis is set in, there's decomposition.

Are you saying in the United Kingdom that that's going to happen today? And the guy says, of course, it's happened. And I says, can I ask you a question? Why isn't that in the news? Is it not kind of newsworthy? Someone dead for three days? Well, he says the newspapers aren't interested in that sort of stuff these days. So, is there that sense of, as it were, what we call over-realized eschatology?

[7 : 52] The idea that Pentecost has come, the idea that the last days have come? And so, I think there is, in contemporary evangelicalism, even this neglect of the cross. And so, Calvary has been replaced by Pentecost, and people are seeking power more than pardon. And so, we're seeing the atonement as being replaced by even the incarnation or creation. That's the end thing in theology these days. Folk are talking about, you know, the impact of creation in the way in which we live.

And so, the argument really stops with Paul. He says, may I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me and I to the world.

And so, folks, while we're looking tonight at the cross, this is our theme for the weekend, the communion, which culminates in the celebration of the Eucharist, of the remembering of the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. So, that's a kind of general introduction, if you like, to the whole idea of the cross. What about another introduction here to Psalm 22? Well, in Psalm 22, I think we see here part of the psychology of Christ. And that, for me, is one of the interesting things about the book of Psalms, certainly the Christology that we find in the Psalms. The New Testament, of course, shows a different aspect of our Lord, but there is nothing to beat the Psalms for showing the inner psyche of the Lord Jesus Christ, how His soul, how the very depths of His being approach the whole of the cross experience. Someone says about the wonder of the Psalms, and that the rest of the Bible speaks to us, but the Psalms speak for us. And that's so true, especially when we're in a hard place, when it's difficult to articulate the pain, and yet, as the genre suggests, it's a poem, and very often poetry can bring out, and we say, I wish I could have said that, or that speaks of my experience far better than I could ever speak. So, in Psalm 22, we're, as it were, taken inside of the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ, as He is looking forward to Calvary, what's going on inside His soul. Now, it's a remarkable Psalm for many reasons. First of all, it's a remarkable Psalm in terms of prophecy. Here we've got a detailed account of crucifixion, long before crucifixion was even brought about as a means of execution, and the detail in it is quite extraordinary. Someone has said it is writing about the assassination of

JFK a thousand years, even before the USA was discovered, right down to the detail of the Grassy Knoll, those of you who are enthusiasts and conspiracy theories will know all about that. In the JFK assassination, there's all sorts of interesting little details where the shooting was supposed to have taken place, and who was where, and what was what. And so, we see that in Psalm 22. We have an extraordinary level of detail there. So, even as a prophecy, it is interesting, and it's difficult to explain away. So, it's interesting in terms of prophecy. It's interesting, as I said, in terms of psychology. We see here the inner feelings of our Lord. But it's interesting also in terms of relevance.

I have read, reading this Psalm again this afternoon. I've been struck of the relevance for so many people, because many folk here scream, nobody understands me. There's the pain of a young teenage girl who's into self-mutilation, cutting herself, letting the blood, as it were, take her pain away.

[12 : 23] Why does he or she do that? Because out there, nobody knows the pain. Out there, there are people who judge.

And there is all this internal pressure. And especially religious types don't understand. There's the abandoned wife, bereft of any sense of emotional intimacy. The man struggling with an illness, which is making him weak. The believer who's struggling with a gap between their own experience and reality. Reality is here. Their experience is there. And so, it's very, very difficult.

We'll see in the Psalm all these things are addressed. It's a Psalm also, Psalm 22, with a long connection with the Lord's Supper. And it's been part of the Scottish church liturgy since the Reformation.

People often laugh at liturgy and laugh at things which are repeated over the years. But one cannot think of a Scottish Presbyterian communion service without an allusion or a reading or a reference to Psalm 22. It's part of what we are. And it really is quite remarkable. Well, what's happening here in this Psalm? Many of you will be familiar with the famous quote of Augustine, the new is in the old, old concealed. The new is in the old, concealed. The old is in the new, revealed.

So, in here, we see very clearly the Lord Jesus Christ. So, folks, what we see here in this Psalm is the experience of our Lord. And I hope that perhaps like the disciples, you remember the disciples when the Lord Jesus Christ opened up the Scriptures? They said, did not our hearts burn within us as He walked with us as He walked with us and opened up the Scriptures? And don't we desire this heart-warming experience? Don't we desire not just to know about God, but the sense of God? What an older generation used to call experimental Calvinism, not simply hearing about God, but knowing God and feeling God, that as we are taken through the Scripture, that we realize that this is no mere abstract thinking, that this concerns us, and that our hearts are in some, perhaps a little way, warmed on the journey?

[15 : 12] Well, what we have here in Psalm 22 goes beyond the description of Jesus, of David, rather, because in David, even with all the things that he went through, it's hard in David's life to find an incident which is as traumatic as the one described here. He was surrounded by evil men in the cave, and Absalom rebelled against him. When he was exposed as an adulterer, he felt guilt, but he didn't feel insult, and there's never a hint of such loneliness of spirit as spoken of in this Psalm as seen in the life of David. So, what we have here is a sea of suffering, and in that sea of suffering, we know that David only dipped his toll, and yet this Psalm speaks to someone who swam in it.

This word speaks of someone who tasted it to its most extreme. So, this evening, we will look at it, and we will look at it like a symphony. There is a reasonably famous composer, Henry Gorecki, and he's got one of his best-known compositions, is Symphony No. 3, and it's called A Symphony of Sorrowful Songs. YouTube it, buy it when you get home, Gorecki, a symphony of sorrowful songs.

It was written for Holocaust Day. Very, very melancholic, very, very moody. This is Psalm 22. It's written for Holocaust Day. It's got that moodiness about it. It's got that darker side.

But the thing about this symphony in Psalm 22 is it is unfinished. The final movement draws together all the motifs and the themes, but it seems to lack a final consummation. There is no consummation here in Psalm 22. There is a consummation, which we'll see, but it's not here in the Psalm.

And so, let's look at the movements of this particular symphony, and let's notice one or two things. The first movement I've entitled here, Abandonment.

[17 : 40] And so, in this Psalm, in the psychology of our Lord Jesus Christ, the first thing that He is feeling and He is experiencing is abandonment.

Look at verse 1, Abandon my God. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Look at verse 2, The silence of God. I cry out to you, but you do not answer.

Look at 4 and 5, there's a past tense. Folks experience something in the past to which He is no longer involved. He's yesterday's man.

It doesn't get much lower in abandonment terms than verse 6. Boy, I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everybody, despised by the people.

You know, when we were young, folk used to sing that rhyme, Nobody loves me, everybody hates me, think I'll go and eat worms. Well, I'm sure in today's age of curriculum for excellence, you've never even heard of that old rhyme.

[18 : 48] Nobody loves me, everybody hates me, think I'll go and eat worms. Here, the Lord Jesus Christ is so utterly abandoned that He becomes a worm.

He feels that. He feels nothing. His self-esteem has been ripped from Him. His sense of identity has gone away. He feels at this moment utterly lonely and abandoned.

We speak of the presence of God. And that's a reality. The presence of God in our lives, when God's presence has been so tangible and near, when His Spirit has been so close to us, and the sense of God has been so palpable that we can feel it, and we feel that if it were possible, we could almost touch Him.

Heaven has come down sometimes, and glory has filled our souls. Yes, we know about the presence of God, but there is also the sense of the absence of God.

I wonder, has that been a reality of many of you tonight? That sense that the circumstances of life seem to contradict the promises of God?

[20 : 04] And indeed, there are times when the promises of God seem to mock us. Deuteronomy 33, 29. Remember God's great promise to His people.

He says, Blessed are you, O Israel, who is like unto you, a people saved by the Lord. He is your shield and your helper and your glorious sword.

Your enemies will cower before you, and you will trample down their high places. See these words. He is your shield and your helper. What? In the midst of Psalm 22, I feel like a worm.

In the midst of Psalm 22, people mocking me. In the midst of Psalm 22, we feel that God is so far, He's crying out, and He doesn't answer. God, are you trying to mock me?

So we've got all these great words. Psalm 46. God is our refuge and our strength. In straits of present aid. Therefore, although the earth remove, I will not be afraid.

[21 : 10] We sing it so often. You sing it to shroud water and the sense of conviction and power. Who will be against us? God is our refuge. Contrast that with the language of abandonment in this psalm.

Someone says that Psalm 23, the Lord is my shepherd, seems to mock Psalm 22. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Psalm 23 no longer applies. God is enthroned, verses 3 to 5, but He is enthroned for others. Yet you are enthroned as a holy one. You are the one Israel praises.

It's a kind of third-person experience, isn't it? And so the psalmist here is abandoned. All that surrounds him is the sheer silence of God.

Again, are there folks here this evening who have experienced that in their own lives? The silence of God at that point when you have been in greatest need.

[22 : 28] Remember the words of C.S. Lewis in his book, A Grief Observed. It happened in the death of his mother. He wrote these words.

Where is God? Go to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain. And what do you find? A door slammed in your face.

And a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. You may as well turn away, Lewis writes.

The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become. There are no lights in the windows. It might be an empty house. Was it ever inhabited? It seemed so once.

And that seeming was as strong as this. What can this mean? Why is He so present, a commander, in a time of prosperity, and so very absent in a time of need?

[23 : 33] Abandoned by God. Silent. Have you ever had that dream or nightmare?

Maybe you don't have the same imaginative nightmares as I have, when you're an astronaut, and you go for a spacewalk, and the rope or whatever the oxygen is cut off, and you find yourself floating away, away, away, away, away, into nothingness.

Spiritually, have you been there? You've just felt that God is an illusory beam, far, far, away, and you are moving farther and farther into the darkness, and being consumed by that darkness, abandoned.

Two things seem to exacerbate the problem. Verse 4, the memory of God's past goodness. In you our ancestors put their trust.

They trusted, and you delivered them. You see, there's almost that sense of jealousy. You delivered them. You know that others are filled with rapture in God's Word, but you know.

[24 : 54] And then there's a mocking, isn't there, of verse 7 and verse 8. The mocking. All who see me, mock me. They hurl insults, shaking their heads. He trusts in the Lord, they say.

Let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him. Abandon. What's going on here? Well, there are three explanations.

One is, he just felt forsaken. He was so overcome with fear that he just felt that.

Feelings aren't everything. They are something, but they aren't everything. So, some say he just felt forsaken.

That folk kind of have a Freudian interpretation of Psalm 22, projecting their own inadequacies onto the psalmist, whoever he is. It was a kind of Freudian angst, this just sense of being cut off from everything else.

[26 : 00] He felt forsaken. Another explanation is, it really was, and this is, a lot of Old Testament scholars will say, it's really a cry of victory. Huh? My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

It's really a cry of victory, they say. What do they say? The argument is, in Hebrew poetry, when someone is quoting a poem, they point out that this last psalm ends strongly.

They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn, he has done it. See there? And they say, well, when you're quoting Hebrew poetry, you quote the first verse.

So, he was really meaning the last verse when he quoted the first verse. Interesting theory. I think the reality was that it was real abandonment.

Abandonment. The Lord Jesus Christ abandoned for me. Folks, bearing the sin of the world is no light thing.

[27 : 08] What Christ endured on Calvary's cross was not something that we can dismiss. He was incurring the wrath of God.

He was paying the price of sin. I was doing a wedding recently, and at the wedding, there was a bishop.

And the couple had opted to sing in Christ alone. And of course, the lyrics of that song talk about Christ bearing our sin.

And the bishop come up to me afterwards over canopies. and said, David, I just can't sing that song. I can't sing it.

It's blasphemous. The idea that Christ died for our sin. It's just ridiculous.

[28 : 16] Bishop, it's the gospel. It is what it's all about. I think it was Don McLeod says, the fatherlessness of the son is matched by the sonlessness of the father.

That's what's going on here in 22. The fatherlessness of the son. He feels his father has gone. He feels he is bearing so much sin.

He feels that the sin-bearing experience is so intense that it's alienated him from his father. The fatherlessness of the son is matched by the sonlessness of the father.

There is real abandonment here. Did God suffer? Of course, the theologians discuss this and debate this.

Did God suffer? And that's a big question. But this is one of the only places where the Lord doesn't call him father. Jesus suffered.

[29 : 21] Is he God absolutely? Abandonment. That the son of God was abandoned for you and for me.

So that's the first movement of this symphony. Abandonment. The second movement is from verse 12 to 21.

I'm going to call it opposition. So if the first movement, 1 to 10, is abandonment, 12 to 21 is opposition. Now, there is more than a hint in this psalm that the opposition is more than human.

I think it is. I think it refers here to opposition beyond that which is human, which maybe started off as human, but it's now demonic. Because in verse 6, the men who scorned him, scorned by everyone, despised by people.

So the people of verse 6 have turned into animals. Do you see that? 12, 13, and 16. The animal references there. Many bulls surround me, roaring lions that tear their prey.

[30 : 28] Verse 16, dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me. I think there are parallels here with Genesis 3 where you have enmity with the animal kingdom standing on the snake.

Is this what Peter means when he talks about going about, the devil going about like a roaring lion? Opposition. The dogs of verse 16 are not nice dogs.

They're not corgis. I don't particularly like corgis all that much, but they're not kind of nice, furry dogs. They're horrible dogs.

They're hyena-like. They're menacing. They're Rottweiler. They're pit bulls. They're really menacing character. And again, apologies if you own a lovely pit bull, but they're perceived to be not nice.

This is the power of the demonic. And so we see here abandonment. We see here opposition. How we experience the powers of the demonic.

[31 : 38] I don't mean playing with a Ouija board and stuff like that. No, that's very, very dramatic, isn't it? Very, very exotic.

I think we see the power of the demonic here in two areas. First of all, intimidation. Look at verse 12. Many bulls surround me, strong bulls of Bashan and Sarkomene.

Intimidation. The devil tries to intimidate us sometimes. He tries to block our view of Christ. He tries to block our view of the throne. The devil tries to intimidate us.

He intimidates us this weekend saying, how dare you take communion? How dare you? I'm reminded in a great passage in Pilgrim's Progress, Pilgrim, I don't know again if your generation read Pilgrim's Progress, but it really is one of the classics that you must, you must read.

There was life before Tim Keller. There were books written more than five years ago which are of some value. There are even books which are hundreds of years old which are of some value.

[32 : 54] Mix your reading, old and new. Pilgrim, as I made the point, he's climbing this hill, Hill Difficulty. And it says this, Bunyan writes, however, it was at this point that the Christian saw a stately palace before him which was called Palace Beautiful.

You get the picture? Pilgrim is on the way to heaven and he's seeing this picture it's called Palace Beautiful. There was situated a little beyond the top of the Hill Difficulty.

And when Christian saw it, he decided it would be a good place to lodge. So, metaphorically speaking, it's the presence of God, it's palace beautiful, it's resting in God's presence.

However, he came across two lions which had previously been seen by two other characters, mistrusting Timorous. And then he says this, unaware of the fact that they were chained, Christian hesitated.

But watchful, the porter of the lodge called to him and said, Is thy strength so small? Fear not the lions for they are chained and are placed there for trial of faith where it is where there is faith and the discovery of those who have not.

[34 : 21] Keep in the midst of the path and not hurt shall come unto thee. So, we read about the dogs and there are times that we are intimidated and yet, folk, the devil cannot have you.

The dogs may bark, the bulls may look awful, but they are all in chains. Don't be intimidated tonight.

So, we have intimidation, we also have humiliation. Look at verse 18. They divide my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.

That there is a reference to the nakedness of Jesus on the cross. Not simply the fact that they, again, the wonderful prophecy that they divided his garments and cast lots for them, that's there clearly, but this sense of nakedness and humiliation.

This is not the description of an illness. This is not the description of a setback. Psalm 22 is the description of an execution.

[35 : 30] We see abandonment. We see here intimidation. And it seems to be quite a dark psalm. The other movements are a lot quicker than these first two, by the way.

It seems to be a very dark psalm. But notice how it turns, verse 20 to 21. I pray that the NIV says, rescue me from the mouth of the lions, save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

In this occasion, I prefer ESV. I normally prefer NIV to ESV, but in this occasion, ESV is far better. Save me from the mouth of the lion.

And then the next phrase, you have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen. And so, there's this description of the abandonment of the Lord Jesus Christ.

There's this description of the intimidation of Jesus. And then suddenly, it turns. Third movement. The third movement, very, very quickly, is deliverance.

[36 : 30] You see, what happens here is that the loneliness has been reversed. All shall be well. It's a famous expression, isn't it?

All shall be well. And yet, it can be a meaningless platitude. And yet, because of the cross, it is a truism.

That at the end of the day, when all is said and done and all the threads have been brought together, it will be seen to be good. And the abandonment of Jesus and the intimidation of Jesus means not just that he understands our abandonment and intimidation, but that he has died so that ultimately, ultimately, we will be delivered from these two things.

So, the third movement is that of deliverance. And what's happened here is that the loneliness has been reversed. In fact, this man has taken into leadership. Look at verse 22.

Say, rescue me from the mouth of the lions, save me from the horns of the wild oxen. 22, he's in leadership. I will declare your name to my people in the assembly. I will praise you.

[37 : 43] This man's leading the praise now. 23, he's an encourager of others. You who fear the Lord, praise him. Folks, isn't that amazing that sometimes the hardships of our lives, the purpose for these hardships is that we can become an encourager of others.

There's John Piper's famous essay, Thank God for Your Cancer. It's a kind of John Piper-ish outlook in life, isn't it?

There's a story told in a little digression. John Piper lives in downtown Minneapolis and he lives in a really rough place and his wee boy had been asking his dad for a bike for years and his dad finally bought him a second-hand bike for which he was very, very proud and the next day it was stolen and he says, Dad, my bike's been stolen and Piper says, Praise God!

You have been counted worthy for suffering for Jesus. That's kind of John Piper's outlook. But there's an element of truth there. Praise God for your cancer because out of that he becomes an encourager of others.

He uses his darkness. He uses his experience. Ultimately, Jesus does that. He's not just a moral example. He's our Savior. And he becomes, this man here becomes a motivator for world mission.

[39 : 20] You who fear the Lord, praise Him, all you descendants of Jacob on Him. And revere Him, all you descendants of Israel. Why? Because He has done it.

What about the final consummation and our time is going? Our time is gone. I said this was the unfinished symphony. And in Psalm 22 it is unfinished.

But the final part is clearly the Garden of Gethsemane. the cross itself. You read about it, for example, in Mark 14.

I was reading again this afternoon Mark 14, 65 when I discovered who the bulls were. Then some began to spit at Him. They blindfolded Him, struck Him with their fists and said, prophesy.

And the guards took hold and beat Him. The psalmist speaks of an experience beyond Himself.

[40 : 27] It speaks clearly of the Lord Jesus who went further than any man went. Martin Luther says that no man ever feared death as much as this man. You see, Jesus did not go into the cross stoically.

Someone said the bill was presented to Him. I don't know if you've ever been to a restaurant or something like that and you receive a bill or you get work done in your house or in your car and you nearly have a heart attack.

You say to the garage owner, I thought I was paying a bill not buying your business. It's so shocking. Sometimes you get a bill that is so staggeringly frightening that you wince.

On Calvary's cross, the Lord Jesus Christ received a bill which was so staggeringly evil and so weighty and so awful rather that He went He shed drops of blood.

He went through the agony of the cross. The bill was presented to Him and He paid it. The result of that is that there is nothing for us to pay.

[42 : 11] Notice how the psalm ends these words. They will declare His righteousness declaring to a people yet unborn, He has done it.

Posterity will serve Him. Verse 29, all the rich of the earth will feast and worship. Verse 27, the internationalism of it. All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nation.

A friend of mine a couple of weeks ago had a very, very bad fall. He's got various things wrong with him.

There was an underlying heart condition. He fell and because of what was wrong with him he couldn't protect himself. fell to the ground. Ten days afterwards he got the job of his life.

The job he's always dreamed of. And he said, I cannot believe the turnaround in my life. Ten days the worst day of my life within ten days the best day of my life.

[43 : 28] life. Within Psalm 22 you've got a worm, someone who's cursed, someone who's abandoned, someone who's spat on, someone whose mouth is so dry that it's like a dry pot, someone who feels the ignominy and acrimony of humanity, someone who is despised.

and then all the rich of the earth will feast and worship, posterity will serve him, future generations will be told about the Lord, they will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn, he has done it.

from becoming the object of scandal and derision, he becomes the center of our worship. So, folks, over the next couple of days, the center of our worship, I hope, will come in to focus more and more as we revel in the fact that we are not abandoned because he was, and on the last day, we will not hear words of derision and condemnation, but rather words, well done, faithful servant.

Why? For he has done it. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for your word, for its depth.

We sense a psalm of paradox. We sense that in the words we've just read, the Lord Jesus at his depths and yet the Lord at his heights.

[45 : 22] Bless us in all that we say now. Be with this congregation today. Forgive us all our sins. Amen.