

True and Greater Sacrifice

Psalm 22; July 9, 2017

As you turn to Psalm 22, I want to share with you a little bit more about my spiritual journey. Many of you know, I grew up as a pastor's kid and so church was a big part of my life from the beginning. In particular, I was a part of program as a kid that focused on Bible memorization. I was always really great at memorizing things. For example, I have a vivid memory of arriving for a psychology class in college and finding out right before the class started that we had a test that day. There was a girl who was one of my friends and sat behind me, so I asked to borrow her notes real quick. I read through her notes and ended up doing better than she did on that test (she was so mad!). Always, I progressed through that Bible memory program as a kid and won the highest award possible. It was called the "Timothy Award." I had memorized hundreds of verses from the Bible...but I didn't see the picture. I couldn't put all of the pieces of the puzzle together. To be honest, I probably thought I was putting multiple puzzles together: one for the OT and one for the NT. It wasn't until later on in my life, in college, that I realized that all of those verses were pieces of a puzzle, of ONE puzzle, and the picture became clear. Here are some of the verses that helped me on this journey:

You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, (John 5:39 ESV)

For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me. (John 5:46 ESV)

How is this possible? This is possible because over and above all of the human authors is the Spirit of God inspiring them. Viewed this way, the Bible isn't just a collection of writings from many authors, but a unified story of one author and that story is the story of God's redemption found in Jesus Christ (this is the picture that's painted on the puzzle box). It's about what God is doing through Jesus Christ. Thus, the OT must be read in some sense as a witness to Christ. This is the lightbulb that went off for me in college and it completely changed my pursuit of God.

Context:

- Psalm 22, like many of the psalms in Book 1 of the Psalter (1-41), is a psalm of David. It's a psalm that David alternates back in forth between a sense of God-forsakenness and expressions of trust and confidence in God. David cries out for deliverance from his enemies who have surrounded him to take his life. He is confident that the Lord will hear his cry and intervene and as a result vows to praise the Lord publicly and he even anticipates a time when all people will acknowledge and worship God. But we can't just stop here. Given the big picture of the Bible, this psalm prepares us for God's provision of Jesus, the innocent sufferer par excellence.

The Point: David's suffering points to a true and greater sufferer whose sacrifice enables global worship.

I. Find Salvation in the True and Greater Sacrifice (1-21).

David's Experience:

- Abandonment and Anguish
 - 1-2
 - Why has God forsaken me, made no attempt at saving me and has not listened to my groaning?
 - God's absence has become unbearable. "Abandonment or alienation is the experience of suffering, when one hopes for deliverance but not help is forthcoming" (William A. VanGemeren, 200).
 - David is not silent but God is (v. 2).
 - Sidebar: be honest with God about your feelings. He already knows them anyways.
 - 6-8
 - "But I..."
 - "Am a worm and not a man": This expresses his feeling of being less than human. He is...
 - Scorned
 - Despised
 - Mocked
 - Where's your God now? Let's see if he will save you. If God really cared for you, you wouldn't be suffering.
 - 12-18
 - His enemies are described as:
 - Bulls of Bashan (12; cf. Amos 4:1; Micah 7:14).
 - Strength and deadly intent
 - A roaring lion (13)
 - Cruelty, abuse of power, and hatred of godliness
 - Peter uses this language to describe the devil (1 Pet. 5:8).
 - Dogs (16)
 - Fierce and powerful, evildoers
 - They attack him and gnaw at his hands and feet (most likely not pierce).
 - His anguish is described as:
 - Poured out like water (14)
 - Bones are out of joint (14)
 - Heart is melted like wax (14)
 - The impact of alienation has impacted deep in his inner being.
 - Strength is dried up like potsherd (15; sherds are pieces of broken pottery)
 - Tongue sticks to his jaws (15)
 - Laid in the dust of death (15)

- He is prepared for death.
- Garments are divided and lots are cast for his clothes (18)
- He is close to death.

A sidebar on depression:

- Ed Welch in his book on depression asks this, “How can I do anything when I don’t feel anything?...Most people do things because they *feel* like doing them. They get up in the morning because they feel like going to work, or they feel like avoiding the boss’s questions when they are late, or they feel like avoiding poverty...But in depression, you don’t feel (Or, whatever you *do* feel isn’t going to motivate you to do anything profitable. It’s more likely that you feel like dying, crying, running, disappearing, avoiding). How can feeling-driven people set goals, have purpose, or get motivated when they don’t feel?”
- The answer: “[Y]ou will have to learn another way to live.”
- Illustration: “You will have to be like the woman whose muscles still worked but they stopped giving her information about her limbs. She wasn’t paralyzed, but if she closed her eyes she couldn’t tell if she was standing, reaching, or resting. She couldn’t walk because she didn’t know where her legs were. Gradually, by looking in mirrors and seeing her body rather than feeling it, she began to walk again. After much practice, walking began to feel natural again. But she had to learn a new way to live and move.”
- Conclusion: “In depression, the new way of living is to *believe* and act on what God says rather than *feel* what God says. It is living by faith...In other words, when there is a debate between what your feelings say and what Scripture says, Scripture wins.”
- Trust and Prayer
 - 3-5
 - He then reflects on who God is. He is holy in his kingship (v. 3) and the object of Israel’s constant trust and praise (v. 3b-5).
 - David was familiar with God’s glorious acts of deliverance for Israel:
 - The Exodus in Egypt
 - The Wilderness (Manna)
 - Periods of Conquest
 - He’s saying, “God, you delivered Israel often in the past but I still feel left abandoned.”
 - 9-11
 - “Yet you...”: again, there’s this reflective and retrospective look to the character of God. He takes his eyes off of his mockers and places them on God. Follow his example: discouragement, frustration and fear are crushed when we take our eyes off of our selves and our surroundings and fix them on God.
 - He’s saying, “God, you not only showed yourself faithful to Israel, you’ve been faithful to me from the very beginning of my existence.”
 - God’s sovereignty and providential love and care are great cures for

suffering.

- Since God was “close” with him previously (vv. 9-10), he now prays that he would experience his closeness now.
- 19-21
 - “But you...”
 - His prayer is for God’s presence, deliverance, salvation and rescue. His only hope left was in the Lord.
 - The dog, lion and oxen are now listed in reverse order.
 - “You have answered me!”

Rescue me from the mouth of the lion, and from the horns of the wild oxen! You have answered me! (Psalm 22:21 NET)

- This is to be understood as a triumphant shout which marks a sudden shift in tone and introduces the next major section.

Jesus’ Experience:

And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, “He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit.

- Abandonment and Anguish

- Jesus’ executioners divided his garments and cast lots for his clothes like David’s enemies did for him (Matt. 27:35; John 19:24; Ps. 22:18).
 - John 19:24 is an explicit quote of Ps. 22:18 and mentions that Jesus “fulfilled” Scripture.
- Jesus experiences mocking and insulting like David did (Matt. 27:39; Ps. 22:7).
- Jesus is mocked with similar language as David was (Matt. 27:43; Ps. 22:8).
- Jesus cries out with a question to God as David did (Matt. 27:46; Ps. 22:1).

- Ps. 22:14-18 mentions even other similarities that aren't explicitly noted.
 - A near-death experience described as being poured out like water with all his bones out of joint, his heart melted like wax, and his strength dissipated (22:14-15)
 - He is surrounded by wicked onlookers (22:16a)
 - His hands and feet are pierced (22:16b)
- Like David, Jesus experienced physical agony but also the spiritual absence of the Father.
 - Rick Gamache describes the crucifixion this way:

"Then Jesus is startled by a foul odor. It isn't the stench of open wounds. It's something else. And it crawls inside him. He looks up to his Father. His Father looks back, but Jesus doesn't recognize these eyes. They pierce the invisible world with fire and darken the visible sky. And Jesus feels dirty. He hangs between earth and heaven filthy with human discharge on the outside and, now, filthy with human wickedness on the inside. The Father speaks:

- Son of Man! Why have you sinned against me and heaped scorn on my great glory?
- You are self-sufficient and self-righteous.
- You rob me of my glory and worship what's inside of you instead of looking out to the One who created you.
- You are a greedy, lazy, gluttonous slanderer and gossip.
- You hate your brother and murder him with the bullets of anger fired from your own heart.
- You oppress the poor and deal slaves and ignore the needy.
- You love money and prestige and honor.
- You have no self-control.
- You're an anxious coward.
- You do not trust me.
- The list of your sins goes on and on and on and on. And I hate these things inside of you. I'm filled with disgust, and indignation for your sin consumes me.

Now, drink my cup! And Jesus does. He drinks for hours. He downs every drop of the scalding liquid of God's own hatred of sin mingled with his white-hot wrath against that sin. This is the Father's cup: omnipotent hatred and anger for the sins of every generation past, present, and future — omnipotent wrath directed at one naked man hanging on a cross. The Father can no longer look at his beloved Son, his heart's treasure, the mirror-image of himself. He looks away. Jesus pushes himself upward and howls to heaven, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" Silence. Separation. Jesus whispers, "I'm thirsty," and he sags. The merciful centurion soaks a sponge in sour wine and lifts it on a reed to Jesus' lips. And the sour wine is the sweetest drink he ever tasted. Jesus pushes himself up again and cries, "It is finished." And it is. Every sin of every child of God has been laid on Jesus and he drank the cup of God's wrath dry" (A Crucifixion Narrative).

- Jesus became the propitiation for our sins. He became sin for us on the cross (Rom. 3:25;

2 Cor. 5:21; Col. 1:20; Heb. 5:7-10; 7:27; 9:11-14).

- Trust and Prayer
 - Jesus still cries out to the one he no longer senses. Even in our worst moments, we should do the same.
 - Given our understanding of the entire psalm and the expansive allusions to it throughout the crucifixion accounts, Jesus, though really experiencing the forsakenness of God, was confident that God would raise him from the dead.

II. Worship the True and Greater Sacrifice (22-26).

David's Response:

- The psalm veers sharply in a new direction starting in 22:22.
- God has responded and removed the suffering from the servant and his response is now praise.
- “The taunts of the mockers are thus drowned out by the songs of the faithful” (William A. VanGemeren, 209).
- What does this worship look like (22-23):
 - Tell of his name
 - Praise him
 - Fear him
 - Glorify him
 - Stand in awe of him
- There’s an affirmation of the importance of public worship (25-26).
- He shares the votive offering (cf. Lev. 7:16-21) with the poor and afflicted to give them relief. Their bodies are strengthened and their hearts shall be strengthened by the Lord.
- The motivation (24):
 - He has not despised us
 - He has not hidden his face
 - God will never completely hid his face from his covenant children and he will rescue those who trust in him (22:8).

The Response that Jesus Demands:

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. (Romans 12:1 ESV)

III. Proclaim the Good News of the True and Greater Sacrifice (27-31).

- David calls his hearers to join an "everwidening circle of praise" and worship. The entire earth is to know what God has done so that they might worship him. God's deliverance is so great that all the earth will turn to the Lord and worship him. This deliverance is clearly pointing to the future and beyond anything David ever experienced.
- This language echoes the Abrahamic covenant:

I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonors you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." (Genesis 12:3 ESV)

- The nations worship because God is king over all.

"As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill." (Psalm 2:6 ESV)

Ask of me, and I will make the nations your heritage, and the ends of the earth your possession. (Psalm 2:8 ESV)

- This global worship includes the rich (the prosperous) and all the dying (those who are fainthearted, sickly, dying, filled with anguish). Both the well-fed and the poor will join in the worship of God. There is no distinction (29).
- The praise of God extends even to future generations. Each generation will tell the story of redemption and add what God has done for them.
- The beginning of the ingathering of the nations is when the Roman Centurion, after seeing Jesus give up his life, confess: "Truly this was the Son of God! (Matt. 27:54).