

Psalm 22
"Our Lord Did This for You!"
Good Friday

March 30, 2018
First Lutheran Church, Glencoe, Minn.
Pastor Peter Adelsen

Grace, mercy and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord Jesus Christ! Amen!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

[Devotion, Not Despair]

"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" These are the first words of Psalm 22. These are also the words spoken by Jesus Christ as He took His last breaths while being nailed unto the cross.

These are words that imply devotion instead of despair, because while being forsaken by God the Father, Jesus continues to call out to His Father as ***"My God,"*** not once, but twice. This is a mystery that only eternity can penetrate: God is forsaken by God.

The forsakenness of Jesus, the Christ, is unique because He places Himself under the judgment of God as He bears the sins of all people for all time.

Jesus cannot be spared from experiencing God's full wrath against sinful humanity. He faces it completely as if He Himself were guilty.

Jesus, who is completely innocent and holy, came to take our place and represent us before God as the Second Adam. Christ faced the experience and terrors of hell in order to free us from the power of sin, death and the devil.

[Jesus' Enemies]

As Jesus says in His dying woes, ***"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*** He is crying to His God and His Father, which penetrates God's wrath, reaching all the way to the eternal and steadfast love of God for us.

But, as Jesus says these words, Jesus' enemies mock Him by drawing the conclusion that God does not want to rescue Him.

This cruelty of mockery is portrayed in the psalm by comparing them to vicious animals: bulls, lions, and wild dogs (Psalm 22:12-13, 16).

- When they beat Him, they were like bulls trampling a person underfoot.
- When they tore His flesh, they were like lions tearing their prey.
- When He was on the cross, they surrounded Him like a pack of wild dogs.

Meanwhile, at the foot of the cross are the Roman soldiers who carry out the sentence. And, according to Roman custom, the garments of the victims were a part of the soldiers' booty. Even before our Lord's death, they are already dividing the spoils.

Now, since Jesus' robe is without a seam, they ***“divide [His] garments among them and for [His] clothing they cast lots”*** (Psalm 22:18).

Christ's enemies, however, would not have the power to do all of this if God had not given it to them. Therefore, it is God Himself who lays the crucified Savior low to death. All of this is in accordance with the Father's Divine Will, even as it was prophesied in Psalm 22.

It is also amazing how God enabled David to write all of this more than a thousand years before Good Friday.

[God's Love]

From Christ's Incarnation – God coming in our flesh that we celebrate every Christmas – the Father declared His love for His only-begotten Son. Angels also announced His future glory to Mary and Joseph even before He was born. At His nativity, angels announced the peace He would bring. The Father even personally declared His pleasure at Jesus' Baptism and Transfiguration.

In the same way, Jesus had shown His love and obedience to the Father throughout His life. And, He would not renounce the love of His Father as He is hanging from the cross.

In Psalm 22, our suffering and dying Lord proclaims God's holiness and His trust that the Father will work deliverance through the terror He is undergoing now, even in and through His terrible agony.

The intensity of Jesus' suffering is described in the following ways: He is poured out like water. He is dried up like a piece of a broken pot.

From the Cross, Jesus says: ***"I can count all my bones."*** He is likely referring to the way He was stripped of His clothes and is now nailed to the cross — nails piercing through His wrists and His ankles. These words portray the suffering that led our crucified Lord to cry out, ***"I thirst."***

In Psalm 22, our suffering Lord tells us why He has been forsaken by God. He tells us why He has faced the mocking of his tormenters. He tells us why He has undergone the intensity of this suffering and death.

He did this all for us! The Father let His Son die for the sins of His people so that He could restore them and grant them eternal blessings.

Christ suffered as one who was separated from God as a result of the curse of our sins.

You see, the pains He suffered, we all deserve. But, Christ suffered and died to save us from God's wrath because of our sins. For we would all be doomed to eternal damnation because none of us follow God's Law perfectly – we all sin in thought, word and deed.

Now, as we will see on Sunday morning, the Father did not abandon His Son to the grave, but He was raised to life and glory.

In the closing verses of Psalm 22, the Messiah promises to declare the good news — the Gospel — of what He has accomplished for God's people.

Now, through faith in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior, we are truly God's children who share in His suffering and death, in His flesh and blood. Through Jesus Christ alone, we have deliverance from sin, death and the devil.

Now, ***"all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you"*** (Psalm 22:27).

Christ is the Savior of all people and all who turn to Him in faith will receive the blessings of His kingdom. All who trust in Him will be fed at the heavenly banquet of eternal life. Until that time, Christ continues to feed us now through His Word and in His Supper, where He gives us to eat and drink His very body and blood, which gives us forgiveness of sins and strengthens our weak faith.

[It is Finished]

Psalm 22 ends with these simple words, ***“He has done it”*** (Psalm 22:31b). This can also be translated as ***“It is finished”*** — which are the last words from the lips of our crucified Savior — ***“It is finished.”***

At that very moment, God was reconciling the world unto Himself. That is what Jesus proclaimed when He had completed all that was necessary for mankind’s redemption. It is accomplished. Our reconciliation and atonement was finished on that cross.

Today, Good Friday, our salvation and reconciliation was finished, completed, accomplished on the cross of Calvary by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Now, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we are called to repent of our sins and believe that Christ Jesus has paid the ultimate price for us. Through Christ alone, we have received forgiveness and life. Amen.

The peace of God which surpasses all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.