

Psalm 22

God hears our cry

Outline. (Notes from WBC 19 Psalm 1-50. Craigie)

1. **Cry (lament) (vv 1-21):** The man expresses his deep sorrow and anguish.
 - a) Feeling abandoned by God and humankind (vv 1-11)
 - b) Prayer for help (v 12)
 - c) Surrounded by trouble (vv 12-18)
 - d) Prayer for deliverance (to be saved) (vv. 19-22a)
2. **Response (vv 22b):** assuming a response from God
3. **Thanksgiving (vv 23-27):** said by the sufferer
4. **Thanksgiving (vv 28-31):** said by the congregation.

Comments.

1. The Psalmist expresses a deep loneliness caused by his suffering and his expected death. He feels God's absence and the lack of compassion from his companions.
2. Like Job (3:1-26) and Jeremiah (20:14-18) who experienced similar distress, he too looks back to his birth and wonders why his life has turned out this way. But unlike Job and Jeremiah **there is relief for the Psalmist as he can express his sorrow to a caring community of fellow worshippers.**
4. In the New Testament this Psalm was seen as looking forward to the coming Messiah (Saviour), Jesus Christ.
5. On the cross Jesus clearly identified himself with the Psalmist (see Mt. 27:46 and Mk 15:34).
6. Each of the Gospel writers use the Psalm to help understand Jesus' death on the cross (Mt 27:39; Mk 15:29; Lk 23:35 - Ps 22:7)
7. The Psalm seems to anticipate the attitude of the high priests, scribes, and elders to Jesus' - in a similar way to that of the Psalmist's enemies.
8. Through Jesus' use of this Psalm on the cross we can see the Psalm as revealing part of the meaning of the crucifixion.
 - (a) The sufferer in the Psalm experiences the human fear of death (short finite existence), the absence of God and the presence of his enemies.
 - (b) In the suffering of Jesus we see God participating in the deepest way in our human fear of death. He identifies with those suffering and dying, so he can bring comfort to those who, like the Psalmist are now experiencing suffering or imminent death.
 - (c) But there is an important contrast between the experiences of the Psalmist and Jesus. The Psalmist is delivered from death (or suffering) while Jesus dies. The transition from sorrow to joy (see verse 21) is now understood for Jesus (and his future disciples) as deliverance through death. Jesus' resurrection affirms that he has faced and conquered death.

Reflection/Response.

How does Jesus' death and resurrection give us hope as we face suffering and death and look forward to the resurrection? How do we as a congregation support each other through difficult and dark times?