

Thoughts From Other Minds:

1. It is right that the followers of an afflicted Saviour should know the fellowship of his sufferings and be made conformable unto his death. They all need instruction and discipline; and they are sure to get both. "God had on earth one Son without sin; but never a son without affliction." "All Christians have been taught in one school; all have known the power of affliction in some of its forms." Ponder Heb. 12:3.
2. Of all the forms of affliction to the pious soul none is more dreadful than the hiding of God's countenance, v. 1. In the case of Christ "this desertion was a judicial act on the part of God towards sin." In the case of his people it is for their purification, or to make them bright patterns of suffering affliction. In all cases, "spiritual desertions are the saint's sorest afflictions." He can stand anything better than the loss of comfortable communion with God. A minister near death and in darkness said to a brother, "What is to be thought of one who has long preached Christ to others, and in death has not the comforting presence of God?" The other replied, "What think you of the dreadful darkness and desertion of a Saviour dying?" This remark brought peace.
3. Great perturbation may consist with eminent piety. Christ's soul was agitated until that dreadful distress indicated by roaring, was upon him, v. 1.
4. If sin, 'when imputed to a voluntary and innocent sufferer, may produce such unparalleled sorrow as is described in this Psalm, what will be the portion of the man who dies in sin, and has neither conscious innocence, nor the assurance of speedy deliverance, nor the soul-cheering presence of God to support him? Luke 23:31. "No man knows the exceeding sinfulness of sin, but he who learns it at the cross of Christ."
5. Sense and faith are very diverse. Sense may cry, *Why hast thou forsaken me?* while faith cries, *My God, my God.* "It is possible, that when deserted by the great God, man can still address him in the language of affiance."
6. There is but one method of satisfactorily explaining the awful scenes of the crucifixion. Stevenson: "That was the judgment-day of the Saviour of the world. At the tribunals of men he was condemned-under their sentence he was executed: and while his body hung in torture on the cross, he was arraigned in spirit before the bar of God, under the imputation of human guilt. The court of heaven, as it were, descended to Mount Calvary. These awful words, 'Let the law take its course,' are uttered by the eternal Judge." This explanation alone is sufficient. With his stripes we are healed. By his chastisement we have peace. By his death we live. Otherwise we never can defend the character of God concerning the humiliation of Christ. He never permitted a holy angel to suffer even the slightest indignity.

W S Plumer, Doctrinal and Practical Remarks on Psalm 22, *Psalms*, pp. 302-303.

Camperdown Noorat Terang Presbyterian Charge

7 February 2016 — Lord's Supper

Sermon: 'Worship Him who is the Righteous Saviour (text: Psalm 22:1-31)

Scripture: Psalm 22:1-31; Matthew 27:24-54

Sermon Notes

Introduction: We reach our ultimate study in psalms that call us to worship God with psalm 22 because of 'remember': 'And all the ends of the earth will *remember* and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the earth will worship before him' (v. 27). (NIV 'bow down'; other versions, 'worship'; the same word as 'worship' (v. 29)).

'Remember' caught my eye firstly because I knew that today we would be remembering our Lord in Holy Communion, and secondly because I thought it strange that David does not say who or what will be remembered; we would expect 'remembered *something*' - but it is not there.

We saw last Lord's Day from psalm 86 that although most people do not worship God, because God is alone God, all the nations will come and worship him. This psalm affirms the same truth—but it gives us reason to hope that they may do so because they want to worship him. So we ask, 'remember *what?*'

1. Saved

This is a psalm of David, and yet it is not about him. Many people reject predictive prophecy, but the scriptures teach that this psalm is such a prophecy and that it was fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth; his hands and feet were pierced, for he was crucified; his garments were divided and lots were cast for his clothing; he could count his bones; he was stared at and gloated over and mocked with words from this psalm (Matt 27, esp. vs. 41-43).

He is the 'I' of this psalm (Matt 27:46; Hebrews 2:11-12). This psalm is true only of Jesus; it is not the description of a sickness (could have been true of David) but of an execution; it predicts Jesus' sufferings and helps us understand and feel them. From it we can see how he was victorious through faith and prayer; God forsook him, but he did not forsake God; he kept praying until he was answered.

The answer to 'remember what' is that they will remember what has happened as narrated in the first part of the psalm; they will remember his sufferings. It is natural and right that we should read this psalm in the light of the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus, for to any fair-minded reader it is a prophecy of the cross; for us the prophecy helps us understand the fulfilment, and the fulfilment casts light upon the prophecy. But how might those who lived before the cross understood it?

Firstly, it depicts a man deserted by God in the face of overwhelming attack by evil enemies who yet maintains his faith in God; a godly man, for even his enemies testify to the fact that he trusted the Lord. Indeed he had, even from birth (unlike

us, who go astray from birth!). Secondly, his enemies were intent on his death, and yet it was from God (v. 15). And thirdly, although he died, God answered his prayer—in the Hebrew a one-word shout at the end of verse 21: “Rescue me from the mouth of the lions and from the horns of the wild oxen. *You have saved me!*”

He was saved not from death, but through death—a mystery only resolved when his tomb was found empty except for the grave clothes, for he was no longer dead, but alive! So the psalm (vs. 22-24) predicts his post resurrection ministry, implying that in a way not yet made clear his suffering and death was acceptable, even pleasing, to the Lord: ‘from you comes my praise in the great assembly’ (v. 25).

2. Saving

Why remembering what had happened to the innocent sufferer would cause the nations, when they remember it, to turn to the Lord and worship him is only made clear in the second part of the psalm where the first part of the psalm is interpreted in terms of sacrifice; the law provided (Lev 7:16; Deut 12:17-18) that portions of sacrifices should be eaten, representing participation in the sacrifice and worship of God and fellowship with him established by the sacrifice (1 Cor 10:18).

The sufferer is represented as one who has offered a sacrifice and who now invites the whole world to the feast, with its benefits for all who will join in the sacrificial feast: : (v. 26) ‘The poor [better, ‘meek’] ... (v. 29) ‘All the rich will feast and worship; (vs. 27-28) ‘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, for dominion belongs to the Lord and he rules over the nation.’

‘Remember’ implies ‘knowing’ for what is not known can’t be remembered; the psalm closes with a vision of the consequences or outcome of the sufferer’s sufferings, the salvation of the Lord extending from generation as each successive generation teaches the next generation what the Lord has done, so that they might in turn remember and turn to the Lord and worship him (vs. 30-31).

The gospel is the good news of the righteous justification of ungodly people; the good news that when God justifies sinners who trust Jesus Christ he does what is right because he made him, the sufferer of this psalm, sin for sinners (cf. ‘How deep the Father’s love for us’). The gospel makes God’s righteousness known; he is righteous in justifying the ungodly because he put Jesus forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith (Romans 3:21-26).

So we remember with deep thankfulness and great joy the suffering and death of our Lord; he was forsaken of God so that he would never forsake anyone who believes in him. We also remember that there are many who can’t remember him because of ignorance and unbelief. We have been ‘told about the Lord’ (v. 30); we are among the ‘they’ who are to proclaim his righteousness to others; may God forgive our disobedience, and fill us with his Spirit, to make our duty our delight.

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My Notes:

Questions for Reflection:

1. In what way does psalm 22 (vs. 27-28) present the same encouraging truth as psalm 86 (vs. 9-10) but in a more hopeful or optimistic fashion?
2. How might we give a scriptural and helpful answer to someone struggling with the idea of predictive prophecy? What parts of this psalm support the teaching of scripture that God can and does reveal the future to his servants the prophets? (Look for the fulfilment passages in the New Testament).
3. How does psalm 22 encourage and help us to persist in prayer, even when it seems that God is not listening or will not answer us? Persistence seems to be part of the very nature of prayer; why is this so? (cf Luke 18:1-7).
4. In what way does the second part of psalm 22 (vs. 25-31) interpret and cast light upon the first part of the psalm so as to enable how what is remembered will cause the ‘ends of the earth’ that remember to turn to the Lord?
5. What parallels are there between the sacrifices of the Old Covenant and the Lord’s Supper, and how do these help us understand the Lord’s Supper? (cf. 1 Cor 10:14-22; also John 6:25-59).