



Psalms of Forgiveness

Cal Heights UMC

CalHeightsUMC.org

(562)595-1996

The Source of God's Forgiveness

“All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord.” Psalm 22:27



The words of Jesus as he hung dieing upon the cross, “Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”--“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” have long been the focus of theology and our most basic understanding and confusion over who God is. Did God really forsake Jesus as he hung on the cross, having taken the sins of the world upon his shoulders? Did Jesus merely feel forsaken as he died? Psalm 22, from which the words in Christ’s mouth come, opens our eyes to what may have been the true message of the Messiah. The true hope and everlasting presence of God, our Creator.

Opening Prayer: (Unison)

Loving and most gracious God, there are times in our lives when we feel an absence of your presence, when we can't seem to connect with your Spirit within us. Remind us today that you have promised us that you would never leave us or forsake us, regardless of our sin or even our own leave-taking. You are closer than the very air we breathe and your Spirit gives us life that moves and guides us throughout our days. May we always glorify you and follow you even as we are encircled by pain and suffering. In the name of Jesus, who died for us and who lives again, we pray. Amen.

Read Psalm 22 below:

Psalm 22

Plea for Deliverance from Suffering and Hostility

To the leader: according to The Deer of the Dawn. A Psalm of David.

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?
2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.
3 Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.
4 In you our ancestors trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them.
5 To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.
6 But I am a worm, and not human; scorned by others, and despised by the people.
7 All who see me mock at me; they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;
8 "Commit your cause to the Lord; let him deliver— let him rescue the one in whom he delights!"
9 Yet it was you who took me from the womb; you kept me safe on my mother's breast.
10 On you I was cast from my birth, and since my mother bore me you have been my God.
11 Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.
12 Many bulls encircle me, strong bulls of Bashan surround me;
13 they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.
14 I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;
15 my mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.
16 For dogs are all around me; a company of evildoers encircles me. My hands and feet have shriveled;
17 I can count all my bones. They stare and gloat over me;
18 they divide my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots.
19 But you, O Lord, do not be far away! O my help, come quickly to my aid!
20 Deliver my soul from the sword, my life from the power of the dog!
21 Save me from the mouth of the lion! From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.
22 I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

23 You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him; stand in awe of him,
all you offspring of Israel!

24 For he did not despise or abhor the affliction of the afflicted; he did not hide his face from me,
but heard when I cried to him.

25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will pay before those who fear
him.

26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts
live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord; and all the families of the nations
shall worship before him.

28 For dominion belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.

29 To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down; before him shall bow all who go
down to the dust, and I shall live for him.

30 Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord,
31 and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn, saying that he has done it.

[*The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*](#). (1989). (Ps 22). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

Opening Questions:

- 1) When have you felt an absence of the presence of God in your life? What events brought you to that spiritual place?

- 2) On what or whom do you lean when you are in what many call, “the dark night of the soul?”

- 3) When Jesus spoke the words of verse one of Psalm 22, what do you believe he meant?

- 4) When you feel forsaken by God, or an absence of God’s presence, where do you feel God is? What causes us to feel God’s absence?

- 5) When you have made it through “the dark night of the soul,” what is your response?

- 6) What does the Psalmist conclude regarding the forsaking by God—God’s hiding of his face?

- 7) What will happen as we praise God and serve God, especially as we emerge from isolation and affliction?

- 8) The concluding line of Psalm 22 speaks of the future generations who will proclaim God’s deliverance, “for he has done it.” What has God done?

Closing Prayer: (Unison)

Gracious God, whose only Son gave himself for our forgiveness, healing, and eternal life, grant that as we go from this place, renewed by our memories of your deliverance and grace, we would proclaim your praise in the congregation of our lives. Help us to always remember your promise that you would never leave us or forsake us and that you are faithful to your promises even when we are not. In the times of trial that we face, may we always look to your unending love and presence for hope, for healing, and for our deliverance. In the name of your life-giving Son we pray. Amen.