

**PRAISE**  
**By Senior Pastor Tom Harrison**  
**Psalm 22:22-31**  
**Prayer Sermon Series**  
**February 21, 2022**

INTRODUCTION: Prayer never begins with us—but with the focus of our prayer: the Lord. Failure to pray is a failure to recognize God as God. However, our Lord greatly desires our companionship. What the Lord said to Solomon applies to us: *“If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land”* (2 Chronicles 7:14).

Following Jesus does not mean life is one wonderful moment after another. We love Psalm 23:1, *“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.”* However, it follows Psalm 22. Jesus quoted these words of heartbreak from the cross, *“My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”* (Psalm 22:1). Indeed, we experience God-forsaken moments, too, when we are abandoned, in pain, and despair. When we go through times of being lost, neglected, angry, fearful, worried, and perplexed it helps to remember that others, including Jesus, did too. Also, circumstances change. While Jesus died on the cross, His story was not over. His death served a larger purpose. Resurrection could only come after His death. Read ALL of Psalm 22. The initial lament turns to praise and proclamation. Psalm 22, 44, 60, 74, 79, 80, 85, and 90 are also prayers of lament. They confront the brutal facts of life’s burdens and woes. They are part of everyone’s journey, but praise, not lament, is the final word.

APPLICATION: Have you started a Lenten prayer group yet? Guides for prayer are available in the prayer room to help you. Prayer has many components. Praise, adoration, worship, awe can describe our amazement at God’s glory and grace. Describe how you praise the Lord. When have your prayers been lamentations? Is your heart more inclined to lament or praise today?

Pray: Lord, you continually leave us in awe. All our days, we will praise you and tell others of your goodness!

Fast: Begin 24-hour fast. For example, eat dinner on Thursday night, then fast through breakfast and lunch on Friday. Break your fast with dinner on Friday night.

Everyone loves Psalm 23 and rightfully so, but the Psalm before it, Psalm 22:1-21, describes **David’s anguish**. He feels “God-forsaken.” He is like a worm, not a man.

People scorn, despise, and mock him. Trouble is near and no one can help. He uses images of animals: many bulls surround him. They are like roaring lions. There are dogs (not the cute house pet, but more like savage wolves). He is poured out like water and is in the dust of death. They pierced his hands and feet. They stare and gloat over him. They divide his garments and cast lots for his clothes." Vs. 20-21 says: Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog! Save me from the mouth of the lion!" This is **David's** story, yet **Jesus** experienced many of these same things on the cross (Matthew 27). Jesus quoted Psalm 22:1 on the cross: "*My God, my God, why have you forsaken me.*" The cross was a God-forsaken experience for Jesus.

Can **you** relate? I think part of the human experience is that all of us will also suffer anguish in life. Everyone. No exceptions. Everyone gets wounded.

In "The Masculine Journey," Robert Hicks lists six Hebrew words that describe a man.

#1 "**Adam**" (created beings whether M/F. We did not create ourselves.)

#2 "**Male**" (Male/Female. A man is a sexual being)

#3) "**Warrior**" "Gibbor" means a warrior. God gave men ambition, a competitive nature who wants to achieve.

#4.) "**Wound**" A man's sexuality and warrior personality result in a fourth word that surprises the male. King David, the great hero/warrior, was also wounded. I'm sure his relationship with Saul was terrifying and wounding, as was the death of his very close friend, Jonathan. But probably his greatest wound came when he fled for his life. 2 Samuel 15:30-31 *David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives, weeping as he went, barefoot and with his head covered. And all the people who were with him covered their heads, and they went up, weeping as they went. And it was told David, "Ahithophel is among the conspirators with Absalom."* Ahithophel was his chief counsel and best friend (and Bathseba's grandfather). Absalom was David's son who tried to overthrow his father as king. The betrayal wound was a great shock to Israel's greatest king.

We all get wounded in life, whether M/F. Here's life's question – what happens after the wound? Will we die on the battlefield or will we get well? Some of us get stuck. We experience "A Failure of Nerve" and choose to give up. The fifth Hebrew word ("ish") for a man is this process of getting well. We CAN get well, but we must try. We must admit our mistake and ask for help. That leads to the goal of life for a man – the sixth word - to be a "Zaken" – a man with wisdom & relationships. A zaken has known the wound, but has learned from it and tries to help others.

How do we get well? There are many answers, but **Psalm 22:22-31** gives an important part.

*I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation, I will praise you: You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel! For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him. From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him. The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever! All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations. All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, even the one who could not keep himself alive. <sup>3</sup> Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation; they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it.*

Note in verse 22 David has a “band of brothers,” has a congregation, but is focused upon praising God. Having trusted friends, a congregation, and the ability to praise God are 3 important ways to respond to the lament.

**Application:** There may be nothing more important in our lives than to give God praise, honor, and glory. It helps us see a bigger picture. As Paul wrote: *Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I have been fully known.* (1 Corinthians 13:12) God is in control, even when we can't see it. We've gone through COVID-19, and now this mess with the weather. It's been disruptive and there has been loss. But God is still in control. Because we trust Him, we can also praise Him. Jesus taught us how to pray. He began with praise: *“Our Father, who art in heaven – hallowed be thy name – thy kingdom come – thy will be done on earth as it in heaven.”* Then it goes into supplication (asking). But prayer is communicating with God.

There are many ways to pray. We pray for ourselves and we pray for others, but we must not neglect praise. When we experience something great, we complete it by describing it and talking about it. If we repress it, it tends to go away. The more we express it, the more we revel in it. Praising God is like that. It moves the focus from ourselves and our circumstances to the character of God. Praise is huge in the Psalms. It has other places where lament and complaint appear, but nowhere like praise. Praise is powerful. It can change us. It can be depressing, particularly when it feels like things aren't progressing.

The purpose is that Psalm 22:27-28 All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you. For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations. Helping others follow the Lord is seen in verse 31 too – praise leaves a legacy for future generations.

During this Lenten season, I invite you to do two things in your prayer life:

- 1.) Give God praise.
- 2.) Pray for others to give their lives to Christ, too.

Consider incorporating the Wesley fast, too. Eat Thursday night dinner and don't take solid food again until Friday dinner. Use the time normally spent in food preparation and eating to prayer.