

## Transcription of 21TM101

Psalm 22

"Good Friday"

April 2, 2021

All right. Let's open our Bibles this evening to the book of Psalms, chapter 22. Psalm 22.

Probably everyone has their favorite psalm. This one is mine, and it is remarkable to me because it lays out for us the intense sacrifice that our Lord made so that you and I could be here today with smiles on our faces and a hope of what is coming next. And it's certainly a good psalm to look at, especially on Good Friday. I don't know how valuable your relationship with the Lord is this evening, but I'll tell you what: He had to give up His relationship with the Father to purchase yours.

In chapter 13 of Revelation, verse 8, the Lord is called "the Lamb slain before the foundation of the world." We've been going through Revelation on Wednesday nights, and this last week we were in heaven as the church was called there at the rapture, and John turned to see the Lord, and he saw "a Lamb as if it had been slain." From the foundation of the earth, which would suggest to you and me that God knew what He had to pay if He was going to have you at all. The Bible teaches that the LORD made us for fellowship with Him, and that certainly was His intention. He doesn't need us. We need Him. But He wanted to share with us all that He is and has, and He made us. But in making us, He gave us that free will, and He knew - being God - that inevitably He was going to have to do more than make us. He was going to have to redeem us as well. So before the earth was made, before man was created, before there was a world that we could talk about, in the heart and in the mind of our God, He was already willing and planning to send forth His only begotten Son into space and time, at a time when He would appoint, so that His creation, which had yet to be made, could be saved.

So He got into this knowing what it would cost. If I knew something like that ahead of time, I might balk. He did not. You are valuable enough to Him to have Him go down this road, realizing the cost He would have to pay to one day have you for Himself. And regardless of where you go in the Scriptures - if you read through the Bible - this sacrifice of His Son, the blood that He would shed, is highlighted constantly, mirrored throughout the Scriptures, as it leads up to the New Testament.

In Genesis 22, it was Abraham who had been sent by the LORD to sacrifice his only begotten son, Isaac. Traveled for three days. The LORD stopped him at Mt. Moriah. Mt. Moriah just happens to be the same hill upon which Jesus would die thousands of years later for the sins of the world. As Isaac, who was 25 years old at the time, was led up the hill by his father, he said to his father, Abraham, "Father, you have wood, and I see the fire. Where's the sacrifice?" Abraham looked at his son and said, "God will provide Himself a sacrifice." And indeed He did. When he had left the servants who had gone with him for three days traveling, Abraham left them standing on the side of the road as he went off with his boy, he said to them, "My son and I" (the "lad," actually, he called him) "are going over there to worship, and my son and I are coming back." Because this young man who had been doomed, really, by God's call would be the salvation yet of God - would find him and save him. But Genesis 22 is an interesting look into the Father's anguish as he had to suffer, looking at his Son as if he was dead. It really is a picture into the heart of our Father in heaven. This is what it was going to cost Him. Psalm 22 is a picture of Jesus - what He went through - from a first-person perspective.

In Exodus 12, you find the establishment of the Passover Feast. I'm sure you remember the story. The LORD commanded His people to take a lamb without spot or blemish, take it into your house for four days and then kill it. Take the blood of this lamb, put it on the doorpost of your house, and get inside. Because the judgment of the LORD was going to pass through the land, and if He didn't see the blood, judgment would fall. To those who believed Him, they were delivered. And, again, it was that blood put upon the house that was so important. It was the Lamb of God who would come to save man - everyone - from his sin. And so when the judgment of God fell, the blood of the lamb spared those who looked to Him. It was such an important event, such a turning point in the calendar and the history of God's dealing with Israel, that He told them from that point on their religious calendar would start with Passover. And everything was moved to accommodate what the LORD had come to do.

In Numbers 21, Moses is in the wilderness with two or three million complainers. Sounds a little like the church, doesn't it? The LORD had had enough, and He sends into the camp these snakes that begin to bite people, and they begin to die. And it's interesting. All of a sudden the whining quit, and praying began. In fact, the people said to Moses, "Please talk to the LORD about this." And he did. And the LORD told Moses, "Make a serpent out of brass, put it on a pole, hold it high in

the sky so that everyone who sees it and looks to it will be delivered from the bite of sin or," really, in this point, "from the serpent." And those who believed - and it would take an act of faith - they were spared. And those who, "That's ridiculous, how's that going to save me?" died. Years later, Jesus had a meeting with a Jewish leader named Nicodemus (John 3), and as Nicodemus was asking questions about how does he get to heaven, and he saw in Jesus something he just didn't understand, but he went to Him at night, Jesus said to Nicodemus, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:14-15). And then the very next word out of His mouth, "For God so loved the world that He gave us His only Son." If you believe in Him, you don't die. But, again, it is that sacrifice that is constantly being pointed out to us. And those who had been bitten by the serpent, by sin and the death that it brings, Jesus had come to take that punishment upon Himself. He would be that brass serpent. He would become sin, though He knew no sin, so that we could be made right with God (2 Corinthians 5:21).

In Isaiah 53, Isaiah the prophet, who began his ministry around 700 B.C., prophetically looked forward to this Messiah that was coming. And he described Him, in chapter 53, as being wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon Him, and by His stripes we are healed. But then he continued, and he said it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; that through the knowledge of Him, many could be made whole. It pleased the LORD to put Him to grief. He was oppressed and afflicted. And as a sheep before its shearers is dumb, He didn't open His mouth. But He poured out His soul unto death. It all fits the same scenario. God made us. We sinned. God had a plan. This was God's plan. It was laid out over thousands of years of history. It is referred to time and again - the blood that would be shed.

In our Psalm this evening, David prophetically and graphically speaks about the cross. He speaks about the manner in which this Son of God would die for the sins of the world. He spoke about crucifixion before it was ever used by anyone or ever entered into anyone's heart - that this would be a method of capital punishment. If you've read through the psalms, you know that Psalm 22, 23 and 24 are kind of a trilogy. Psalm 22 tells us about the good shepherd who would give His life for the sheep. Psalm 23 tells us about the great shepherd, risen from the dead, who would come to care for His own. Psalm 24 talks about the chief shepherd who will return to the earth to reward His people as they look to Him. He's the good shepherd,

the great shepherd, our shepherd, the chief one. But tonight, and on Good Friday, we look at His sacrifice, the one where He laid down His life for us.

The book of Psalms is quoted about 400 times in the New Testament. The second most-quoted book is the book of Isaiah; you'll find it 47 times in the New Testament. So Psalms is nearly ten times as often found in the annals of the New Testament than any other Old Testament book. And no wonder. We are given this astonishing and wonderful insight - at least in this psalm - the accuracy of seeing Jesus' suffering through His own eyes.

Verse 1 begins with the words, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" If you've ever read through the New Testament, I'm sure that that reminds you of something that the Lord cried out from the cross. And He did. The book of Psalms is part of a group of books in the Old Testament called the Books of Poetry or Wisdom. It starts with the book of Job. It goes forward in your Bible to the Song of Solomon. They are unique for a couple of different reasons. Number one - they are all written in the present tense. They are designed to have you immediately relate to what you are reading and get in line with what you learn. They are literal, and they are personal experiences written down for us. So when you read about prayers in those poetic books, they are the prayers of the writer who is writing them. If there are lessons to be learned, they are learned first-hand by the person who writes them and all. And even if there's a prophetic kind of long-term application of the experiences that were recorded, it is usually and almost always first lived out by the author who then experiences whatever he's writing, and then someplace else it says as this happened, now this will happen down the road in the lives of some people or experiences or situations or time. So, whenever you study the Psalms, or any book especially in the poetic books, it is important that you try to discover the settings in which they were written. What prompted David and the other psalm writers to pray? When did he find the need to pray? When did he cry out to God, "I feel like You've left me alone"? When does he find himself crying and in tears? When does hope disappear and despair come? When does he trust God? And when does he doubt God? You want to know the background because that's how these books are written.

And that's true of every psalm except this one because there is nothing in David's life that even comes remotely close to what is described here. This is pure prophetic utterances without a basis in human experience. That's not true of any other psalm. But it's true of this one. In fact, it is a detailed graphic description

of an execution by crucifixion. In fact, it is the most detailed and in-depth look at crucifixion in the Bible. Far more information here than what you are given in the gospel accounts, even by the gospel writers who were standing in front of the cross when it happened. David wrote this, like I said, 1000 B.C. Peter, in his first sermon, on Pentecost (in chapter 2 of Acts), said of David, "He's a prophet" and then quoted one of David's psalms, Psalm 16. David was a prophet, and he certainly was when he wrote this awesome prophetic psalm about the crucifixion. But what you come away with, and what you hopefully know by now of God, is that this was the will of God. This is God's plan. This was God's purpose. They might have plotted to take His life. God had a plan, all right, to save you. He came for our benefit. But the suffering was real. Remember, Jesus fully God, fully man, emptied Himself of the prerogative of His capabilities as God, and He became a man; laid those things aside. And here's Jesus, suffering at Calvary.

The psalm naturally divides into two parts. You can read through the first part of verse 21, and twenty and a half verses speak of the suffering that the Lord was experiencing on the cross. And then the corner is turned right in the middle of verse 21, and the rest of the psalm speaks specifically about His victory over sin, His fellowship with His Father being restored, and the effects of the gospel in the lives of people that would come down the road from the cross when they heard what He had done, when they learned of His willingness to pay the price to save us.

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me? Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent." We know that, at some point between 9:00 a.m. (when Jesus was crucified) and 3:00 in the afternoon, Jesus' Father in heaven turned His back on His Son, forsook Him. The fourth statement of the seven little phrases that you have recorded of Jesus' six hours on the cross is recorded here in verse 1. But it was really a different kind of a turn because the first three things out of Jesus' mouth in this horrible time had to do with taking care of others.

Early on, as they dropped that cross in the hole that was to hold it up, Jesus, from the cross, said, "Father, forgive them; they don't know what they're doing" (Luke 23:34). I'm not sure if I was in that situation that would be my first concern. "Father, kill them" would be good. "Let a meteor hit them, Lord. Amen." But He doesn't say that. He's thinking about the crucifiers and their sin.

His second statement was made to a common criminal. There were two of them crucified with Him that day. And from what we read in the gospels, they were both pretty antagonistic, really kind of smart-mouthed, and they deserved what they were getting. And they didn't go to their deaths quietly. But somewhere in the middle of that, one of them realized he was wrong, and the Lord was not. In a last-ditch effort to make things right, he said, "Please, Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). He expressed his confidence in what the Lord had declared of Himself. Jesus said, "Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43). And He offers assurance - the Lord does - on the cross to a very late-blooming faith, one that has been moved in his heart at the last moment because God's interest is always the same: He wants you to get there, He wants you to make it. He made you to have fellowship with Him. Sin got in the way. He sent His Son to remove it.

His third statement - also before noon - was to John and to His mother (John 19:26-27). He said to John, "Behold your mother!" He said to Mary, "Behold your son!" And even in the midst of all of this suffering, He made plans and all to be sure that Mary was taken care of and that John would take her in and watch over her in the days and weeks and months to come.

But then something strange happened. Noon came. And darkness began to fill the land. It was mysterious. It was overwhelming. It was so dark at high noon, and it would last for the next three hours. And Jesus, during that time, said nothing. Nothing until He would confidently proclaim His victory, dismiss His spirit and leave His body; the flesh would die. But as darkness gripped the whole earth, there were three private hours that the Lord stood before (and is seen before) His Father. It was a time when He became sin for us - every sin of every man laid upon His shoulders. He would make the sacrifice. He would pay the price. And the Father couldn't look at sin. And what we would have suffered had we come before the Lord in our own sin - being pushed away and set aside and alienated from God forevermore - Jesus took there upon the cross, paying the ultimate price. We know from the Scriptures that as horrible as the physical pain was that Jesus suffered, His greatest concern and His greatest anxiety in a fleshly sense was being separated from His Father who the Bible says they had had fellowship since eternity past. This would have to be severed. He would have to have the Father turn His back, look away from His own Son as He became sin. And for three hours, Jesus hung there, paying the price but separated from the Father. Maybe He was meditating upon these verses that David had written about His suffering 1000

years before. Because the psalm will end in victory and in fruit. The silence was broken only in the last couple of minutes before 3:00. In fact, Matthew, in chapter 27:46, will record that about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out (the fourth thing He said), verse 1 (of Psalm 22), "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" It's an awful word, isn't it? Forsaken. Have you ever been forsaken? I guess you probably have. I think if you know other human beings, you probably have experienced it. People forsake relationships. They forsake commitments. Kids forsake their parents. Wives and husbands forsake each other. On a human level, I think all of us have had some first-hand experience about what it feels like to be abandoned, and that's really what the word means - to be set aside or abandoned. Yet no one, none of us, has ever had to experience the level of abandonment that Jesus feels on the cross. When you were forsaken, you always could do this, "Lord, help me. Lord, fill my heart. Answer my prayers. Bring some justice." There was always the Lord to talk to. He was always available to you. But what if you were in Jesus' shoes, and you cry out, "My God, where are You?" and heaven is silent. And it had never been silent for Him. But He's entirely alone. What's He doing? Bearing our sin. Forsaken by the Father. Why? So that you and I would never be forsaken by God.

The gospels, as you read through them as you go towards the cross, clearly lay out the course of this kind of gradual abandonment by man - leading up to this ultimate abandonment. A week earlier, Judas had been at a dinner up on the Mount of Olives in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, when he didn't like what was going on there, and he determined that evening to go to the chief priest and make a deal to sell Jesus out. "I can get Him to you. I can deliver Him. I know where He is at all times." And for thirty pieces of silver they agreed that he would look for a time when the crowds were thin, and they could pull this off without a riot. In Gethsemane, as the Lord went to pray for several hours, His three closest friends - His inner circle of disciples that He had poured Himself into for years - couldn't stay awake with Him for an hour, at the worst time in His life. When He was facing this separation. Not the pain. That was horrible enough, but that wasn't what broke His heart. It was the price He was going to have to pay. He said, as the disciples slept (Matthew 26:42), "Father, if there is any other way that this can be done, let's do that. Because what I'm about to be asked to do, I don't know if I can survive." And the disciples slept. When the Roman guards finally arrived en masse to arrest Him late that evening, we read all of the disciples forsook Him and fled (Matthew 26:56). And then He was left alone.

Level after level of abandonment as He neared the cross. But this is the only time He experienced having to be forsaken by the Father.

Throughout His earthly ministry - if you read through the gospels - Jesus continually called upon His Father. He'd get up early to pray. He sought the heart of His Father in picking the disciples. He depended upon the work of the Holy Spirit as we need to. But here on the cross, what does He cry? "My God, why have You forsaken Me?" Not why has Peter or Judas or the thief on the cross or the Jews or the Romans. No. "Why have You? Where are You?" What happens to make the Father forsake His only Son? The prophet Isaiah wrote (Isaiah 53:6), "The LORD laid upon Him the iniquities of us all. All we like sheep have gone astray; we've all turned to our own way." But upon Jesus was laid our sin. Good Friday. God's plans from the beginning since before the foundation of the earth. "There's a way back for man. It'll be through the blood of My Son." But in order to get us there, Jesus was going to have to take the sins of the world upon His shoulders. Paul would write in the 2 Corinthian letter, chapter 5:21, "For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."

In that moment, at the cross, after noon, the sins of the world were placed upon His Son - His perfect, sinless, righteous life - and God substituted His own Son for man's sinful ways so He could judiciously offer forgiveness to us who would look to Him. That really is the essence of the gospel. It's not very complicated. But it sure is amazing. The crux of the good news that everyone has to be confronted with in this life. The invitation is clear: we're sinners, He's a Savior; we deserve it, He took it. If you go to Him, you don't get anything but life. He makes you right. In your faith in Him, in your receiving Him, the Bible says you are saved, born again, cleansed by the blood of the Lamb. That's God's intention. That's what He came to do. I read it all the time, and I shake my head because it doesn't seem fair that He would get us and we get Him. He should get change, shouldn't He? And a lot of it. But that's why He was forsaken, that's why He was abandoned, that's why He went through this. But it was this abandonment, "God, where are You?" that was the worst. It certainly explains the agony that you read about Jesus going through in the Garden where the capillaries around His sweat glands had broken due to stress and had leaked into the sweat. He began to sweat great drops of blood. His body almost couldn't handle what His mind was understanding. The flesh almost wasn't suited to get through it. The greatest stress was the loss of intimacy with His Father, a fellowship that, unfortunately, we as Christians have and oftentimes



just set aside so we can go pursue life in the world. But for Jesus, it would take all of this to get you into a place where you could have life with God. "Father, if it's possible, pass this cup." And His cry in the darkness that afternoon was what is recorded here in 1000 B.C. "My God, where are You? I cry to You, You don't hear. I'm not silent, and yet You don't respond."

But He encourages Himself. He records and rehearses the times past, what He knows about His Father. He says, in verse 3, "But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them. They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed." He recalls the true nature of the God that He is now forsaken by. He's a good God, He's holy, He's righteous, He's faithful to His people. He deals in goodness. When they repent, He hears. When they cry out, He listens. They weren't ashamed. God won't forsake His own. And yet Jesus had to hang on to what He knew about His Father in the darkness that isolated Him completely.

He says, in verse 6, of Himself, "But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised by the people. All those who see Me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, 'He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!' " The mockery of men at the cross continued while victory and deliverance seemed so far away; nowhere in sight. If you go read the gospel accounts of the cross, what David had written in 1000 B.C. took place at Golgotha on this dark day as the opposition came with words of hatred and taunting and unbelief. We read, in Matthew 27:39-43, that the people began to pass by the cross, blaspheming the Lord, wagging their heads and saying, "Well, if You said you could destroy the Temple and in three days you could build it up, well, hey, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." The chief priests and the elders, the scribes, began to shout, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He's the King of Israel, then come down, and we'll believe in You. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now, if He'll have Him. After all, He said He was the Son of God." Exactly what David had written. Why? So you would know that He wasn't going into this blindly or got caught unaware. This was a purposeful act of God. Nothing surprised Him. Isaiah would write of our Lord, "He was despised and rejected of men, a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him" (Isaiah 53:3). "God, You've helped others when they cried to You. You're always faithful. But I'm a worm and a reproach, and people mock Me,

and they ridicule Me, and they shake their heads, and they stick out their tongue. They mock My trust in You." And the Lord now hangs by Himself.

Verse 9, "But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made Me trust while on My mother's breasts. I was cast upon You from birth. From My mother's womb You have been My God. Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help." Our Lord suffering alone.

Verse 12, "Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, like a raging and roaring lion. I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within Me. My strength is dried up like a potsherd, and My tongue clings to My jaws; You have brought Me to the dust of death. For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet; I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me. They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots." The cruelty of man as Jesus cries out to His Father in the midst of this physical suffering. And there's no answer. Paying the price so that you could be here tonight, saved. The reference to the "bulls of Bashan" - up in the Golan Heights area is a city called Jabbok and a mountain called Mount Hermon. It is to the far north of the land of Israel. Actually it crosses into the land above them, across the border into Lebanon. But it was a place that in the 1<sup>st</sup> century the bulls would run wild in the fields, and so any slight provocation would have them charging you. They were just itchy to tear someone up. Notice the Lord compares them here to wicked men who had surrounded Him like wild dogs; not family dogs but wild dogs that roam the streets. The wickedness of men - the wild men - who wanted Him dead. If you go into the Golan Heights today, there aren't any bulls. Well, there are, but because of the fighting over the years over the Golan Heights, the surrounding mountains are filled with unexploded bombs. So there're fences up and signs that say, "Don't walk around out here." And once in a while, a cow'll go up and step on a land mine, and that'll be it. But at least in those days it was dangerous to walk through the fields for an entirely different reason.

Notice the graphic words of crucifixion that, here, affirmed God's finger writing the Bible, certainly, as the Lord describes the physical nature of what He was going through. He was being poured out like water, His bones were out of joint, His heart was melting within, His strength was gone, He thirsted and was dehydrated, He was near death, they had pierced His hands and His feet. Even the One who

made the water now cries out that He's thirsty. Why is He thirsty? So that I can live. "I can count all of My bones. They part My garments, they cast lots for them." Matthew 27:35 records them doing just that - at the foot of the cross, as He hung and died. Death by crucifixion is awful. In fact, when it started to be used as a capital punishment tool, a new word was invented that they began to use to describe what it would feel like to die on the cross. The word is "excruciating." You'll find its origin developed when the cross became a part of the culture. In fact, by definition it means "the pain of the cross." It is sometimes translated unbearable, insufferable and even agonizing. But the cross was the culmination of why the Lord had come. In fact, go through your gospels again, and you'll find that Jesus was arrested at the Garden early evening, and for the next many hours He was passed around like a ball - went to Annas first, then He's taken to Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin. He was brought back to Annas who sent Him off to Pilate who went, "Pfft! Let's get Him to Herod." And Herod gave Him back to Pilate. He was scourged and beaten. A crown of thorns was shoved into His head. And then, in that weakened state of blood-letting, He was forced to carry this 60-100 pound crossbeam of His own cross. Called the "*patibulum*" in Latin, but it's just crossbeam. He was able to get through town until He got to the gates of the city, and Simon of Cyrene, who was compelled to help carry it the rest of the way, probably came to know the Lord because of it (if you read all that we know from the Scriptures). And then the stakes into His wrists and into His feet and the pulling up of His arms just to force air into your lungs. To be crucified, you die of asphyxiation. You can't breathe. You can't get breath in. You have to pull up on your arms just to fill your lungs, and then it becomes hard to even expel the air. Jesus would dismiss His own spirit before then. But look at how graphic and how clear and what our Lord went through so that we could have life.

We end, in verse 19, with the words, "But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion's mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen!" And then you read these wonderful words, "You have answered Me. You have answered Me." At some point before 3:00, communion with the Father is restored. Separation from the Father is finished. The price is paid. He is about to give His life. And you can hear the shout coming. "It is finished!" (John 19:30). The tone changes as well.

When Jesus rose again on Easter Sunday morning, you will find from the Scriptures that He spent the entire afternoon with two people - probably a couple who lived

about seven miles outside of Jerusalem, and they lived in a town called Emmaus. They were sure that the Lord was the One to follow. When He died, they were devastated. When Sunday finally rolled around, and the Sabbath restrictions for travel were laid aside, they were headin' home. They weren't stickin' around at all. But the Lord met them on the way home. And it says in one of those places there that He opened up their understanding to understand the Scriptures, "and beginning at Moses and all the Prophets," (going through the Bible, the Old Testament), "He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:27). I suspect He spent a good amount of time in this chapter. I know that it had its effect. It gave them holy heartburn, Batman. I mean, when the Lord disappeared from their sight, they said, "Didn't our heart burn within us while He talked to us on the road?" (Luke 24:32).

Because of the cross, the whole world now could be saved. Every sinner forgiven. Every debt paid. What follows after "You have answered Me" in the rest of this psalm, is the proclamation from the Lord that the consequence of His death for us will have far-reaching effects to every generation. In verse 22, it is "My brethren." In verse 23, it's the "descendants of Jacob." In verse 24, it is the poor and "the afflicted." In verse 25, it is "the great assembly." Again to "the poor," in verse 26. To "the ends of the world and all the families of the nations" in verse 27. To "His kingdom," verse 28, and finally, in verse 30, these words, "A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation, they will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this." This is what the LORD's anticipation was for His Son's sacrifice; that there would be a growing and ever-widening worldwide congregation to the ends of the earth; that every generation would pick up the battle cry, deliver the gospel message and find people getting saved.

I heard a story many years ago of three Army men in a battle in Western Europe during World War II and, in the midst of this battle, one of the three men was killed. They picked up his body. They found a cemetery nearby, asked if they could bury his friend and were asked, "Are you a Catholic or a Protestant?" They said, "No. He's a Protestant." And they said, "Well, I'm sorry. This is a Catholic cemetery. But," he said, "if you'd like, you can go over there on the other side of the fence and bury your friend there." And so they did. The next morning, as they got up to leave, they thought they'd drop by their friend's grave one last time, and as they went to look for him, they couldn't find him. They went back to the house, knocked, and talked to the priest and said, "What happened to our friend?" He

said, "I went to bed last night, and I couldn't sleep thinking about what I had to say to you. And so I spent the night digging, and I moved the fence." That's what Jesus did for us. He picked the people, the Jews. Through them, He wanted the whole world to hear. He moved the fence. You go to Jesus, you're in. You're a sinner, you're in. It's what Jesus came to do at Calvary. He wanted you in, He moved the fence. How? By standing in your place.

In fact, in verse 30 He tells us He looks ahead to future generations hearing of His love displayed at the cross and then coming to believe in Him as we have. Every Good Friday, that message should be told.

The fifth thing that Jesus said from the cross was that He was thirsty (John 19:28) - right towards the end. I think He wanted to get a clear throat so He could yell what He had yet to say. Because the next thing out of His mouth was, "It is finished!" (John 19:30) "*Tetelestai*." It's done. It's complete. "There's nothing left for Me to do."

Finally He said, "Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit" (Luke 23:46). It all happened in seconds. "It is finished!" (John 19:30) In Hebrew, the word for "this is finished" is the word "*asa*." It's the word that you find the word "done" here at the end of verse 31. It's the same cry of Jesus at the cross. "It is completed."

When they came to Jesus, in John 6:28-29, and they said, "What can we do to do God's work?" Jesus said to the disciples, "This is God's work. You can believe on Him whom He has sent." Until Jesus comes, we're going to have to tell our generation of what He's done and finished and now offers to everyone because of this very dark day that we call Good Friday. But also because Easter is coming and God was able to accomplish what He said by rising from the grave.

You can come to Jesus today. It's His will. It's His accomplishments. It's His invitation. He didn't die so that you could have an option. "I could do my own works or I could believe in Jesus." This isn't "Let's Make a Deal." There aren't three doors. There's only one name, one hope, one way to life. What an amazing God that we serve. I wouldn't do this for you. You wouldn't do that for me. But He did this for us. We're blessed, are we not? But all He wants is that others would know what He's done. May verse 30 become your marching orders. Tell someone. Because the good news of His work is empowered by God's Spirit and not just words; they're impactful words because God stands behind them. They worked in

your life, and they'll work in others'. What the church needs to do is quit politicking and start preaching. It'll make a bigger difference than you'll ever imagine.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
April 11, 2021