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Why Have You Forsaken Me? - Praying Psalm 22

Main Verses: Certainly! Please provide the content, and I will extract the Bible verses and generate the HTML list with hyperlinks for you.

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Message Given: Apr 18th 2020

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Teaching Length: 32 Minutes 39 Seconds

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Do you ever find yourself searching for something bigger than you? For a community to be a part of? A place founded on truth and love? A place to worship the King of Kings, the Lord of Lords, and the Son of God? Welcome to Founded in Truth, where we're more than just a fellowship. We're a family. So welcome home. Shabbat Shalom everyone. We are excited to jump back into the Psalms this week and which I hope has been and will be edifying. To get you caught up, we have discussed the different genres of poetry found in the book of Psalms. The hymns, the Psalms of Thanksgiving, the heaviest of the types that we find are the Psalms of lament, the crying out to God, sometimes in anger even. And as we review these Psalms, the goal is to realize that these are not simply for day reading. These can and were meant to be used as templates for prayer in our own lives. And that's important. It's important because sometimes, if we can be real for just a moment, sometimes when we bow our heads for prayer and we get in our knees for prayer, sometimes the words don't come. Sometimes the words just aren't there. Sometimes you just don't know what to say to God in the circumstances that you find yourself in. And depending on those circumstances, you're either unmotivated to even engage in prayer, or you just don't even know how to begin to approach God with your feelings and emotions and your opinions about everything that's going on. And why Psalms is kind of exciting for me is we have 150 chapters for times like that. Songs and poems and prayers that can all be utilized for specifically these types of moments. Many,

many of which were actually used during the temple service by the community of Israel. It's pretty neat. Can you imagine, can you imagine quietly kneeling before God in prayer and reading or singing a psalm? And in that moment, you were joined by thousands of years of voices of men and women and children who have been singing that same song to God. Imagine the voices of the priests joining you at the services of the temple a thousand years ago. Imagine the flood of tears that have been shed on the ground while speaking or singing these same words that you now open your scriptures and dare to implement as a praise or prayer to God. It's powerful. And it's not simply just a chapter in a book. It's a chapter that has been just long held as inspired throughout history of the people of God. What an honor. What an honor that we are even allowed to open these pages up and to partake in this long-held tradition. So join me today. We are going to explore Psalm 22. And the psalmist, David, is going through a troubling time of anguish, and he's suffering. And as a result, he's crying out to God. He makes the accusation that God has abandoned him, and he lays out his troubles before God. Everything has crumbled around him. I'm in suffering. And you know what? God, you're nowhere to be found. You promised you would be. You're nowhere to be found. The pattern is interesting in Psalm 22 because it starts out so bold. It's almost uncomfortable to think of even using it as a template for prayer. But the pattern, when you read the entire chapter, it follows a steep downhill trajectory and then an increasing, rapidly increasing uphill conclusion of the reality of God's presence. From trial to triumph is kind of the pattern of the chapter. And let's be rather frank for a moment, because especially if you're familiar with Psalms of Lament, it's Psalms like this that are meant for times like this, a time when Christians are called to pray, lament before God, and look forward for the hope of God's provision and mercy and blessing and victory of the circumstances around them. And I don't know where you're at with your walk with God today, but I do know that many of us are experiencing an abrupt shift in the normality of our life. It's very easy to feel almost an onset of darkness, as Jason would call it. That darkness that kind of subtle, it zaps your motivation, your will to get up, your will to pour into your children as much as you normally do. Your motivation to be a stable rock within your marriage. Some would call this a type of depression. And I'm not a scientist, but it wouldn't surprise me one bit if chemical changes take place in our brains as a result of a sudden lifestyle change that we're not used to. And if that's you today, I want to encourage you to push, push forward. Put in the extra energy. Take the extra step. Look at your marriage. Put in a little bit more of extra energy. Just push through. Put the extra energy into your children. Push through. Put that extra energy into your walk with God. Push through. Don't let this overtake you. Like I said, only you know where you're at, or maybe you don't. Either way, we're going to read this psalm. We're going to read the whole psalm. So go ahead and turn with me to Psalm 22. And I want you to imagine yourself speaking these words to God. And I want you to imagine everything that would come with that. And maybe think of a time in your life where you felt that God had absolutely abandoned you in your circumstances, in your situation. And so please join me in reading Psalm 22. And as we read, like I said, try to embrace the text. This is an ancient poem that we are blessed to be able to read. So Psalm 22, verse 1. To the choir master, according to the tune of the dawn, a psalm of David. And so, let's just break up right here. Just the first line. This is neat. Because right here you see this whole chapter was used as a song with a choir and musical instruments. That's what the assumption is, that phrase, Tune of the Dawn is. It's the type of way it's supposed to be sung, either with musical instruments or how it's supposed to flow. And this is the cue up, letting the worship leader know how to play this thing. Again, this was likely sung in the temple. This psalm. Much of us can't even imagine praying a prayer

like this. Now imagine singing it collectively. Verse 1. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me? From the words of my groaning. Oh my God, I cry by day, but you don't even answer. And by night, and I find no rest. Yet, you are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted. They trusted you, and you delivered them. Verse 1. Verse 1. Verse 1. They divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. But you, O Lord, do not be far off. O you, my help, come quickly to my aid. Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog. Save me from the mouth of the lion. You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen. 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 you, but has heard when you cried to him. Verse 1. Verse 1. That's heavy, right? That's heavy. And look how it's not even like a low point where he begins to realize the reality of God's presence among him. It's just bloop, just right in the middle. No, you know what? He comes to this conclusion. Verse 9 and 10 are awesome. Verse 9 and 10, He places God in this midwifery role here. You notice that? Like, God, you are my midwife. You are the one who took me and made sure I was okay and I trusted you as my God. I don't know. I just think the poetic language there is really neat. So this song is attributed to King David. And We've read the stories of David, and many times we can totally see David at a point like this. Constant pressure, constant threat, forced to depend on God. But notice something that's cool here. In this psalm, it is absent any historical markers. Like, it was intentionally written not to be a historical record. There's no David while he ran from his son Absalom, or David after his whole incident with Bathsheba. None of that. It was intentionally written to be used by a later audience of worshipers. that had similar but not identical situations. It was written for people like us, for people like you. I love that. So, as believers, what part of the Psalm sticks out to you the most? And when I say that, I mean as Christians, with those lenses on, what verses stuck out to you the most when we read this Psalm? Maybe it's verse 18. Sounds familiar. Maybe it's verse 16. It's actually a lot of debate over that verse. But we know from the oldest manuscripts of the Bible, the Greek Septuagint, which is much older than the Hebrew Masoretic text. That's what it had then, the piercing of his hands and feet. I think this is one verse that we're all familiar with. Verse 1. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me from the words of my groaning? See, both Matthew and Mark of the New Testament quote Yeshua speaking this verse in the cross. It's in Matthew 27, verse 46. And about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, that is, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And so the big question is, and this is a big question, did God forsake Jesus? Did God forsake Yeshua? And there's many opinions about this. And I want to express mine just up front. I don't think God forsook Yeshua on the cross. When I was younger, I would ask others why Jesus said these words. And I had lots of people, even some Sunday school teachers and such, they'd tell me things like, God couldn't stand the sight of sin that was poured out on Yeshua, so he had to turn his back on him. Or God abandoned Yeshua at the cross. Or God withdrew himself from the presence of his own son being tormented. God is the one who sent him to the cross. Remember, the cup that Yeshua asked not to drink, but God's will be done. And I feel, if I can be blunt, and this is a debated verse. There's lots of opinions, obviously. I feel this is almost a damaging accusation towards God, that he couldn't take the heat when things got tough, so he just washed his hands to wait for things to calm down. It's kind of pulled back at the most intense moment, the most horrifying moments. Only to come back when all that was done. That's what Pontius Pilate

did. When things were too, no, I'm just going to wash my hands of it. No. God sent Yeshua to do this work. I don't think he stood at a distance. And I wouldn't be so passionate about this topic if it weren't for what Psalm 22 continues to say when we get past the first verse. See, Psalm 22 is a psalm that paints this bleak picture of suffering with no hope. Death is right here. A man has nothing left. He's so hungry you can see his bones. Instead of helping him, his enemies take advantage of him. They take his clothes and cast lots to see who will take his clothing home. He cries out to God, but instead of giving aid, those around him mock him.

Let's see. Let's see if God comes and saves him. It's a circumstance that doesn't appear to have any resolution. There's no way this can be fixed. This is bad. This picture right here is bad.

But then David swings it around and he has this realization that although he may not understand why everything is happening, why God didn't act the way he thought he should, he comes to the reality that God can be depended on, that God is faithful. Look at verse 24. So it's Psalm 22, verse 24. For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted. He has not hidden his face from him, but he's heard when he cried to him. He's not hiding his face. He has not abandoned him. No, he heard the cry. How did he hear the cry if he was gone? He heard the cry because he was present. He was right there. Remember, the trajectory is from, it's in a circumstance that seems to be so far removed from God to the end, praising God. Praising God for being present the whole time. For coming through, despite the suffering, despite the experience, God answered David's prayer. So David shouts from the rooftops that our God can be trusted. Verse 21, Psalm 22, verse 21. Save me from the mouth of the lion. You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen. I will tell of your name to my brothers in the midst of the congregation. I will praise you. Now what's interesting about that verse is As the author of Hebrews quotes it in Hebrews chapter 2. Sorry, it's Hebrews chapter 2, verse 12, not 11-12. He says, speaking of Yeshua saying this, I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters in the assembly. I will sing your praises. So the author of Hebrews is presenting Yeshua as saying the concluding verses of Psalm 22. So Matthew and Mark have Yeshua quoting the beginning of Psalm 22. John alludes to Psalm 22 with the soldiers casting

lots for his clothing. And here the author of Hebrews has Yeshua quoting the reassuring conclusion of Psalm 22. Why? Because God was faithful. It's powerful. The deepest, darkest moments where you feel there is no hope. Remember, says David... God is faithful. God saves. God rescues. God is here. In the book of Lamentations, there's an accusation that God has turned his back on Jerusalem. The horrors of the destruction of Jerusalem. The horrors of war. The death of so many being seen. Jerusalem is torn down. The temple is destroyed. The entire book of Lamentations is actually made up of five sections that has a cadence of this funerary eulogy. It's heavy. It's heavy. And Limitations 5.20 says this. Here's the accusation towards God. Why have you forgotten us completely? Why have you forsaken us these many days? What an assault on Yahweh's character. See... In Isaiah, Isaiah comes back with a counter, a rebuttal against that. He quotes Lamentations 5.20 in order to refute it in Isaiah 49, 14 through 15. Here's what it says. But Zion, another word for Jerusalem, but Zion said, the Lord has forsaken me and my Lord has forgotten me. No, can a woman forget her nursing child or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even those may forget, yet I will not forget you. Refuted it. Isaiah goes on in verse 16. It says, behold, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands. Your walls are continually before me. Your walls are continually before me. I am there. You are engraved. You're carved. You're tattooed into the palm of God's hand. He can't even wash it off. He can't. The Lord has forgotten me. No, he hasn't. It's outside his nature. You are unforgettable to me, says God, because I've dug you into my hands, is how Isaiah puts it. There's no doubt that Yeshua was suffering the moment that he cried out these words. That's

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not even... But when those around him heard these words, they were confused. They were confused. They misunderstood. They said, Eli? Is that Eli? Is this Elijah? Elijah? Is he crying out for Elijah? Yeah, let's see if Elijah comes and saves him. And what's interesting about that point, when Matthew records that, that's exactly part of Psalm 22. Let's see if the one he cries out for comes and saves him. Like I said, there's tons of opinions about this verse, but when Yeshua spoke these words and the authors recorded them, they would have known he was referencing the entire psalm. He was referencing the whole thing. People understood that. This was a psalm they were familiar with. This is a psalm that they sung in the temple. My God, my God, why have they forsaken? What would they have thought of in the psalm? At this moment, when his closest followers are looking on, this moment, when everything from their point of view is crumbling down, at this moment, when you're thinking that I don't know where God is, but he's certainly not here, you remember what David wrote. For he has not turned his face away from me. If this is bad, if this is bad, if this is the beginning of Psalm 22, man, just wait. Just wait for the end of Psalm 22. Y'all know how Psalm 22 ends. We just read it. It's big. It has these prophetic undertones that are huge. Psalm 22, verse 27, starting in verses 27 through 31. 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. So let me get this straight. David declares that it is through God's response to this ultimate suffering that's happening that all of the families of the world will come to know God and worship him.

Everyone will sit and eat at the table and worship and bow before him. Not just Israel or Judah in the future. Even those who have died. Even the ones who couldn't keep themselves alive. They are not even out of the reach of God's faithfulness and presence. No, I don't think God. God didn't abandon Jesus on the cross. God didn't hide his face. God didn't forsake Yeshua. No. Yeshua invites us into Psalm 22 during his own crucifixion to grab hold of the hope that we would find in God's presence always being with us. In Luke's account, he doesn't record Yeshua quoting Psalm 22. No, in Luke's account, he has Yeshua quoting another psalm. In Luke 23, 4, 6, Then Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. So Yeshua here not only acknowledges God's presence at the moment of his death, he's quoting Psalms 31. How can he speak to God if God's not there? No, he's intentionally quoting Psalm 21. This is Luke's record. In Psalms 31, verse 5, this is what he quotes. The overwhelming weight of the love of our God recorded in these Psalms. Psalm 22 is absolutely a messianic Psalm where we see blatant fulfillment in the New Testament. It's the second most quoted Psalm in the New Testament. It points directly to Yeshua being the one that suffers and through his suffering God's mercy and grace and abundant blessing is poured out to all nations, all of the earth, all of creation. But it's also an invitation For you to understand that God hasn't forgot about you either. God is still present with you also. When in a time of suffering, uncertainty, isolation, maybe you feel all alone, desperate. What an amazing blessing we have that we can join Yeshua in praying Psalm 22 as a template to work through the times of sorrow we all experience at times. And through working and wrestling through these God, why have you forsaken me moments, we find his peace, we find his redemption, we find his presence. John sums it up in John 16, 20. He says, Very truly I say to you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. Guys, I want to conclude with a quote from a New Testament scholar, Richard Bauckham. And it's a hefty quote because I don't think I could have articulated this any way different. He says this, His suffering does not deflect him from his purpose, but accomplishes his purpose. His transcendence does not keep him aloof from the world, but as transcendent

love appears in the depth of his self-sacrificing involvement in the world. Finally, if Christians know anything about God from the cross, it is that, quote, the weakness of God is stronger than men, 1 Corinthians 1.25. The cross does not make God a helpless victim of evil, but it is the secret of his power and his triumph over evil. This is why only a suffering God can help. The anthropological corollary is, as always, important. The man or woman who lives within the pathos of the crucified God becomes capable of real love, which is concerned for others, sensitive to their suffering, ready for the pain of loving the unlovable, vulnerable to the sorrow and hurt, as well as open to the joy and pleasure. I don't know where you're at today, but God does. And this God does not abandon you just because the circumstances are hard. He joins you in his all-consuming love. That's his nature. He is love. I dare you, pray. And when you pray, shout. And when you pray, scream. And when you pray, dare to ask the hard questions of God. Work through it with the realization that his plan is in motion right now. And you... You have been engraved in the palms of his hands, just as the prophet Isaiah says. No, the Lord has not hidden his face from me. He is faithful, as the scriptures say. Take your deepest, darkest thoughts. Take your deepest, darkest feelings before him. David did. Yeshua did. So can you. See, it's these types of psalms are, they're in the Bible to encourage you to do just that. Our God is also a father, and sometimes we forget that. He's a father, and his arms are wide open because he's here amidst the trials, amidst the circumstances, and his greatest work comes out of the scenes where we say, is God even here right now? And he's working. So don't lose hope. Don't lose hope. As the followers of Yeshua looked on the cross, where is God? This is not what we're used to. Where is God now? and Yeshua cries out in pain and suffering. Something you cannot imagine, much less being a follower of his for years. This is not how you envision things happening. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Yeah, that's what I was thinking. Oh, that chapter. That chapter doesn't end in sorrow. It ends with an explosion of God's manifesting actualized presence from such circumstances. Alvina Malkinu, our father, our king, father, we thank you. We thank you for this opportunity to meet, Father, and gather together through another means that we're not used to. This is your provision. This is your blessing you've given to us. Father, we thank you. We thank you for your presence. We thank you for your spirit. We thank you for the reminders in your word that you've given to us that you have not abandoned us. We are not alone, no matter how isolated we may feel, no matter how different life seems. Father, we thank you for being present here. And we have a hope, a hope that is inspired by the spirit of your son Yeshua given to us that reminds us that just because the situation looks bad doesn't mean you have left us. In fact, you are working right now and we cannot wait to see the fulfillment so that we can praise throughout the nations. We thank you, Father, in the name of Yeshua, for Yeshua and for his spirit that resides with us, that you would equip us to push past the sorrow and embrace the joy of your presence in all things and all circumstances. In the name of Yeshua, we pray, amen. I'm Matthew Vander Aales, pastor of Founded in Truth Fellowship, and we hope you enjoyed this message and that it was a blessing to you and your family. Founded in Truth exists to cultivate a fellowship of image bearers that live the redeemed life only Yeshua can give. If this ministry has been a blessing to you, we would love to hear from you. Send us an email through the contact form on our site and tell us how God has used this ministry to edify your faith and your relationship with Him. If you would like to donate to Founded in Truth Ministries and be a part of this ministry's continued impact, you can do so through our website. Thank you for joining us, and we pray that you experience the peace and the joy of God's holy Sabbath. Shabbat Shalom.

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