

An Inside View of the Cross

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[0:00] Well, here is a key. Here is a safe. You need to take the key and open the safe and I, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

That's the key to a safe that is full of treasure. And where is that safe? You'll find that safe in Psalm 22.

So if you'd please turn there in your Bibles to Psalm 22. And you notice how Psalm 22 begins. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Psalm 22 is the safe, is the safe of Jesus' heart. And as you read through Psalm 22, you can read the internal agonies, what is going on inside of his heart, inside of his mind.

[1:28] You get an inside view of the cross. It's from Jesus' perspective. So instead of looking at the cross as a spectator, Psalm 22 takes us right in and puts us on the cross looking out from Jesus' perspective.

We're on the inside looking out. God the Spirit opens up Jesus' heart and he allows us to go inside. So as we walk down those steps into Christ's soul and inside, we see pain and faith.

Pain and faith, pain and faith, pain and faith, three times. Notice that as we read these first 21 verses. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me? So far from the words of my groaning? Oh my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer.

By night and am not silent. Yet you are enthroned as the Holy One. You are the praise of Israel.

And you, our fathers, put their trust. They trusted and you delivered them.

[2:45] They cried to you and were saved. In you they trusted and were not disappointed. But I am a worm, not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people.

All who see me mock me. They hurl insults, shaking their heads. He trusts in the Lord. Let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him.

Yet you brought me out of the womb. You made me trust in you, even at my mother's breast. From birth I was cast upon you.

From my mother's womb you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help. Many bulls surround me.

Strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. Roaring lions, tearing their prey, open their mouths wide against me. I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint.

[3:46] My heart has turned to wax, has melted away within me. My strength is dried up like a pot shirt and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. You lay me in the dust of death.

Dogs have surrounded me. A band of evil men has encircled me. They have pierced my hands and my feet. I can count all my bones. People stare and gloat over me.

They divide my garments among them and cast lots for my clothing. But you, O Lord, be not far off. O my strength, come quickly to help me.

Deliver my life from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dogs. Rescue me from the mouth of the lions. Save me from the horns of the wild oxen.

So those first 21 verses tells us of Golgotha. And in the next nine verses, you'll read about what happens after Easter morning.

[4:55] We're not going to read that now. The first 21 verses breaks down into three stanzas of pain and faith. So what was the pain of the cross?

The first stanza says it was the agony of unanswered prayer. The agony of unanswered prayer. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Why are you so far from saving me? So far from the words of my groaning. Oh my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer. Jesus cried and God did not answer.

God did not save. What is hell? Hell is the eternally unanswered prayer. Hell is God not saving. Not saving. So please dip a finger in the water and cool my tongue for I am in agony here.

[6:03] No. Please send Lazarus to my brothers. No. God, please do something. No.

Please help me. No. Please let me go. No. Please have mercy. No.

What is hell? Hell is God saying no forever. Hell is being forsaken. Not heard.

Not cared for. Hell is God forsakenness. Sakenness. So suffering is one thing.

Many people suffer, but not all suffering is hell. Jesus was forsaken. He cried out and God did not hear his groaning.

[6:59] And God was far from his groaning. The pain of the cross was the pain of unanswered prayer. It was the agony of longing for God, reaching out for God, and God saying no.

It was the agony of Jesus reaching out in faith and God slapping his hands away. It was God hearing and not moving. It was God seeing, but not rescuing, not caring.

It was a child run over by a train and crying out, Daddy, Daddy, and the Father turning away. Who could know the pain of our Lord Jesus' heart when the Father turned away from his groaning and from his prayer, from his crying?

He reached out to God and God said no. And he looked and he only found rejection. He cried and he was not comforted.

And when I think about that it was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished. It was my sin that did that.

[8:12] I hate myself. I hate what I've done. And there's no words to describe that absolute self-loathing that I feel.

The absolute hatred for what I am, for what I've done. Sometimes I would even cry out, God, send me to hell instead. Let me forever cry and not be heard, but not him, not your son, not Jesus.

But the gospel makes us submit to this. Only when we humble ourselves and submit to the embarrassment of the cross can we be saved.

To the embarrassment of accepting a free gift. In our pride, we would rather pay than accept a gift. We would rather pay back than be forgiven.

Anything is better than that. So the prodigal son, he's thinking, I want to work. The man who had a debt that he could not pay and the king realized he could not pay, that man said, give me time, I'll pay you back.

[9:21] And the king and the father and the gospel again and again says, no, it's forgiven. It's forgiven. The gospel gives what natural man does not want.

It gives us a suffering servant, a suffering savior, a humiliated, perfect savior in our place. So instead of me, it's him.

Instead of me crying out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It's him. It's the lamb of God. It's the perfect lamb of God. God. And God doesn't hear him.

And yet, he goes on believing. He goes on trusting. That's what verses 3 and 5, 3 through 3 through 5 talk about.

He says, God, when your people call, you've answered. In the past, our fathers have called and you've heard them. They've trusted and you deliver them. They cried to you and they were saved.

[10:19] They trusted and you didn't disappoint them. God doesn't hear him and yet, he still says, but God, you are the God that answers prayer.

You are the God that can be trusted. I know you. When people call upon you, you save them. So Jesus met unanswered prayer with faith.

Faith in God's goodness. Faith in God's character. Faith in God's promises. Faith in God's promises. Faith in God's promises. But the pain is not over. We move into the second stanza.

Verses 6 through 8. And here it's the pain of men mocking his faith. Men mocking his faith. What was his greatest suffering?

It was this, that God was not answering him. That he was cut off from God. His faith, in some sense, was being disappointed. And it hurt.

[11:26] And it hurt. And then what did they do? Well, he trusts in the Lord. Let him deliver him. The Lord delights in him. Let him save him. They mock his faith.

They mock his reliance. They mock his depending on God. All who see me mock me. And so he has a bruise that goes all the way to the bone. And these men grab it and squeeze it and making it

hurt even worse.

So every mocking jeer goes down to the core. It reaches to his heart. They've got his heart. They've got it. They've got where he hurts the most. And they squeeze it. You believe.

And your God doesn't answer you. You say you can depend on him. That you're someone that he cares about. But look at you. You're rejected. You're nothing. God doesn't hear you.

God doesn't care about you. Have you ever been mocked for the thing that you're most ashamed about? I remember in high school a girl got a big zit right here on the end of her nose.

[12:35] And it was big. And it was red. And it was ugly. And you know she had to be embarrassed. You can imagine her standing in front of the bathroom mirror saying, do I have to go to school today?

And I can imagine she really wanted to stay home. But she went. And the girls, her friends, called her Rudolph.

They didn't ignore the place of her deepest shame. They didn't overlook it. They went right after her. After it. They mocked her for it. They pointed it out. They rubbed salt in that wound. And so here was Jesus at the height of his deepest pain. Of calling out to God.

And God not answering him. He's cut off from the God he loved. He's cut off from the God he's trusted. He's cut off from the God that heard his prayers in the early mornings. He's cut off from the God that heard his songs in the night.

[13:40] He's cut off from the God who said, oh this is my son with him. I'm well pleased. He's cut off. He's forsaken. And that's where the men struck.

That's what they went after. They mocked his faith. They mocked his agony. The place of his greatest pain they went after and they squeezed it all the more. But what did he do?

How did he meet that hatred? That violence? He kept right on calling. He kept right on believing. He kept right on hoping.

He did what we never do. He kept believing that God is loving. God is good. He kept right on believing the goodness of God. The sword was in his heart.

And yet he went on believing that God is good. That sword that was driven there, put there by God himself, and yet God is good. And like Job said, though he slay me, I will trust him.

[14:45] He might cut me down. The sword might chop me into pieces, but I will love him. His faith was mocked. And yet he endured. But the pain kept going.

Third stanza, verses 12 through 18. You see the violence of evil men. The violence of evil men. What was that pain that Jesus experienced on the cross for us? Well, it was the terror of evil, violent men surrounding him.

Encircling him. And then tearing at him and stripping him naked and piercing his hands and his feet. Many bulls surround me. Strong bulls abashed and encircle me. Roaring lions tearing their prey open, their mouths wide against me.

And he's powerless to do anything about it. I'm poured out like water. My heart is turned to wax.

[15:47] My strength is dried up. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. I can't do anything about it. I can't say anything.

I'm powerless to do anything to keep them away from me. I can't do anything. I can't say anything. They're everywhere. They're barking. They're growling.

They're snorting. And I can't get away. I can't defend myself. I turn one way and they grab me and I turn another way and they rip me apart. I turn another way and they strike me everywhere I go.

They're all around me. They strip me of my clothes. They pierce me. And then verse 17 they stare at me. They gloat over me.

I'm done. They've won. But you verse 19 but you oh Lord be not far off.

[16:47] Oh my strength come quickly to help me. Rescue me from the mouth of the lion. Save me from the horns of the wild oxen. It's amazing.

He kept on believing. Kept on believing. And that faith was his righteousness. He loved and he thought well of God even when the heavens were silent.

And even when men mocked his faith even when evil men destroyed him. Even when men chased him down like dogs on a deer. Threw him to the ground and tore him apart even that he loved God. Behold the beauty of our Lord. In Psalm 22 we see our Lord's pain. It was the agony of unanswered prayer.

It was the mocking of his faith. It was the violence of evil men. As we turn our attention to communion I want us to think about three things.

[17:51] First think about the depth of God the Father's love for you. He put his son to this for you.

for the forgiveness of your sins. God sent his son to pay for your sins and this was the payment.

And all that agony was for you and God saw his son suffer like this for you.

God put him to suffering for you. And if that doesn't move you what is wrong with you? If that doesn't break your heart and love then you're more of a beast than a man.

So think about the God the Father's love for you. Second, think about the depth of the Spirit's love for you. Now, of the Spirit's love for you.

Who inspired Psalm 22? Who took the mind and the heart of Jesus and he put it on permanent display for you to see, to read its lines, to hear of his love?

[19:07] That was the Holy Spirit. He's showing you the love of God because he loves you. The Holy Spirit is the greatest evangelist, the greatest encourager, and he's sharing this good news with you because he himself loves you.

Not an impersonal force. He's a personal, loving being and he wants you to experience the deep, deep love of God and so he gives you the key and he opens the safe and he opens up Jesus' heart for you because he himself loves you.

So God pours out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he's given us. Romans 5 says. So the Holy Spirit carries the love of God into our hearts and how does he carry that love of God into our hearts?

How does he pour that love into our hearts? By showing us the love of God in the death of Jesus Christ. God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit whom he's given us.

You see just at the right time when we were still powerless Christ died for the ungodly. So see the depth of the Spirit's love for you.

[20:29] He wants you to know how much God loves you. He wants you to feel that and experience that and enjoy that because he himself loves you.

love for you. Third, think about the depth of Christ's love for you. All this pain, all this reaching out to God, crying out to God, pouring his heart out to God, longing for God, reaching out for God just to be rejected.

He went through that in love for you. He experienced your hell for you. He was ridiculed. He was mocked. He had his wounds, the very places where he hurt the most.

He had those stabbed over and over again. He was surrounded by dogs for you. They drug him down. They tore out his throat. His blood ran out for you because he didn't ever want you to know that.

He never wanted you to experience anything like that. So he went in your place and when justice called your name he stood up and he left the cell and he took the slow walk to the chair and he took all your sins upon him and he offered himself to God and he was consumed by God and man for you.

[21:57] So behold his love. Don't forget his love. Don't forget his love. Finally you lost, lost unbeliever.

The gospel is free. The gospel is free. But at the same time it requires an awful price. You must submit to the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

You must submit to the awful reality that you can't do anything to pay God back. You can't do anything to right the wrongs you've done. There's no making it right.

There's no standing on your own two feet. You must submit to the awful reality that you can't pay him back, that you can't do anything to save yourself.

You must submit to sovereign, free grace. God will do it. He will do it all. He will do everything to save you.

[23:02] But he will do it all. And he will have the praise. The price is too much for many. It's too much.

They want to keep something for themselves. They want to keep their will. They want to keep their life. They want to keep this sin. They want to keep that sin. They want to keep something that they can claim for themselves.

It's too much for many. Will it be too much for you? Or will it cost you everything? The price is everything. But if you don't give it all up, then you will lose your own soul.

the gospel is free salvation for all those who are willing to take it. So are you desperate? Are you hopeless?

Are you hopeless? Are you at the last stand? Are you down on your knees? Then come and receive. This is a gospel for sinners who can't save themselves. So come and receive.

[24 : 07] God is ready to save right now. Right now all who come to Jesus Christ in faith. Let's pray. God, I pray that you would turn our hearts and our minds then in faith to our Lord Jesus.

Will you please help us to remember even now as we celebrate communion, our Lord's suffering, our Lord's love. Then help us to see the free offer of the gospel for sinners like us.

I pray that I beg and I plead that you would save sinners here tonight. Reach into their hearts, reach into their minds, drive them to their knees, convince them that this gospel is the only gospel that they have available to them because they can't do anything to save themselves.

Bring them to an end of themselves, convict them of the depth of their sin, and then sweetly call them to Jesus Christ even today.

In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. Amen. .