

Why Jesus Endured the Cross, Part 2

Psalm 22:22-31

There's a second joy that Jesus kept in the forefront of his mind as he endured the cross. He looked forward to the day when he would rejoice in the salvation of God, but second, and simply, he longed to rejoice in relationship with God. Salvation for us brings us into relationship, doesn't it? We're saved for God. We're saved to know him. Salvation is not just a get-out-of-hell-free card. Salvation is a know-God-for-eternity card. This is in close connection with the previous point, obviously, but it merits consideration on its own because there's emphasis, here, in the Hebrew.

Take a look at verse 25 and 26, there's emphasis right here, it says, "From you," and there's emphasis there. "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!" As I said, everything flows out of that opening phrase, that prepositional phrase, from you.

David recognizes, here, in this situation, as Jesus also does in his situation, that God is the source of his praise. God is the reason for his praise, and there is a close relationship between the one giving praise and then the one receiving praise. They're joined together. God is the source of all joy and praise, and so Jesus praises his father. His father is both the reason and the source of his praise. He's the reason and the source of his joy. This is a testimony, again, once again, to the gracious wisdom of God, because he unites himself to his people in the joy of praise. We're brought together in unity and harmony with God. There's a unity and a harmony through praise between God and those who worship him in the outworking of a personal relationship.

Not only that, but notice how as Jesus joins in intimate fellowship with God, he turns and he joins other believers with him in that fellowship, calling them into the joy of personal relationship and mutual fellowship with God. There's a reference, there, to performing vows. Do you see that? You might wonder what vow David was performing, what he had on his mind or even what vow Jesus needed to fulfill, what he was thinking of as he thought about this on the cross. There's a clue, there, in the verb, to eat. The verb, to eat, it's the verb *akal*, which can refer to eating any meal, but in this reference, here, in

this context, and often it's used in reference to eating a sacrificial meal, part of the Old Testament law and sacrifices. And that's what we're talking, here.

It's a sacrificial meal that's connected to fulfilling vows. The worshiper, he brought his fellowship offerings to the temple, and he called others to join him in thanksgiving, in sharing the meal. So after laying the fat pieces on the altar that had been consumed by the fire, the priest, the offerer, those invited to the feast, they would together cook the remaining meat and eat that meal together. These are the vows of thanksgiving. These are the free will offerings of gratitude to God, simply because of the joy of God's person and character. All of it is offered in recognition of God's tremendous kindness, his deeds of kindness.

It's fascinating, isn't it, that Christ intends to bring us together to eat with him, to join in thanksgiving, in his celebration. He wants us there. But notice who Jesus invites. The great congregation isn't for everyone who would pretend devotion. This isn't for all church attenders. You say, I've been attending church for 30 years of my life. Well, that may be. It's not just for the outwardly religious. Those who join in

Christ's fellowship meal are those who belong to God in personal relationship.

They are those who fear God. As the passage says, they are, the afflicted, who, in spite of their affliction, their affliction doesn't drive them from God, but their affliction for the sake of God and his Word, it draws them to God. They seek God through affliction, and they praise him still. They are the ones who belong at this feast, just like Christ, just like their Savior. Notice verse 26, it's in the context of personal relationship. Those who recognize that it's "from you, God, from you that my praise comes." They find sustenance. They find satisfaction. They find joy forever. It says there that "they eat and are satisfied. They seek him and they praise." Jesus prays, "May your hearts live forever." Specific. Their hearts.

John Calvin said, "One meal could not have sufficed to make their hearts live forever." Obviously, you need to eat again, right? "One," har, "one meal could not have sufficed to make their hearts live forever. It was rather the hope which they entertained of having ready succor from God which did this, for all the faithful justly reckoned the deliverance of this one man as a deliverance wrought for themselves in particular." In other words, for those who've hoped in God, for those who are

characterized by finding all their sustenance and all their satisfaction in God, they and they alone are those who will know the joys of personal relationship with God for all eternity. "May your hearts live forever." And all this because of the faithfulness of Christ. All of this through the power of his resurrection.

Well, in the passage, here, there's a change as the psalmist shifts the attention from those who occupy this current congregation of those who believe and share in joy and praise. He turns our attention more broadly to those who do not yet belong to the company of worshipers, but there's an expansion here from Israel to the nations, to all the nations; more people are to be added to the number of those who rejoice in God's salvation. More people are to be added to those who participate in this fellowship of believers.

The psalmist, David, Jesus himself, looks to rejoice in the sovereignty of God. To rejoice in the sovereignty of God. God is not just God of Israel, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though he is not less than that. He is the God Most High. He's the God of the nations as well. Look at verses 27-29, "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."

That is an awesome passage, there, particularly for us in Greeley, Colorado, 2,000 years later, on the other side of the world, and 2,000 years forward in history because we're not Jews, most of us. We're not Jews; we're Gentiles. This pertains to us. The scope of praise expands from the national to the international, from the local to the universal. And the focus is that central line, there, in verse 28, Kingship or sovereignty, the right of absolute rule. "Kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations." Although the scope expands, there is a sameness to God's ways with the nations. He treats all of us like he treats his beloved people Israel, and he treats Israel like he treats us.

Now there is so much contained in these verses. We can only just mention some things, leave it to your future study, very rewarding study to trace these themes throughout the Bible. But first of all, notice the role of divine sovereignty in the way of salvation. The way of salvation. There in verse 27, salvation

comes to all, how? By remembering, by turning, and then by worshiping, right?

That person, an unbeliever, cannot think objectively until God gives him grace, and in his gracious sovereignty, God regenerates the sinner, whether it's a Jewish sinner or a Gentile sinner. And he causes that person by the working of his Holy Spirit to remember the God that he has suppressed, to remember the God that he has rejected. And once that unbeliever remembers, you know what he does? He repents. He puts his faith in God.

The word translated, turn, there in verse 27, "The ends of the earth shall remember and turn," that is the Hebrew verb *shuv*. *Shuv*, which forms the basis for the concept of repentance. You know what repentance is? Very simple. Repentance means you're thinking and living in one direction, and then you turn 180 degrees and think and live in the opposite direction. That's repentance. And all who come to God, if anyone comes to God, it is always and only through the grace of repentance.

The evidence of repentance is a changed life, or I should say maybe a changing life, a growing, a transforming life, and that's summarized by that third term, this process of sanctification, that third term in verse 27, "All the ends of

the earth shall remember, they shall turn," or repent, "to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall," what? "worship before you," becoming true worshipers of God, becoming zealous for obedience, zealous for good works, zealous to obey the Lord. That is the mark of genuine repentance and true salvation.

Jesus rejoices in the sovereignty of God not just in the way of salvation, remembering, repenting, worshiping, but also in the universality of salvation. And we see universality in two ways. There is an ethnic sense in the universality of salvation. That is Jew and Gentile, all the families of the earth. And there's also an economic sense of this universality. We might call this a social equity in God's sovereign salvation. And say it another way, God is impartial. He shows no favoritism to the kinds of sinners that he saves. I'm so grateful for that, aren't you? There's no ethnic or social or economic preference. God saves whoever comes to him in repentance and faith. Notice verse 29 again, "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."

There are those who are the prosperous of the earth. They're the wealthy. But even they put no trust in riches. They turn from their wealth, and they don't trust in their wealth.

They trust in God. God has granted them means; he's increased their wealth. And it's his prerogative, his sovereign right, to do so, right? They turned away from money, though, to eat at God's table, to worship in the great congregation. There is no communism in the Bible. There is no radical egalitarianism that tries to level the playing field with every single person. No. God gives more to some and less to others, and that's his sovereign right to do that.

It says the rich are joined at the table by those who have no means, "those who go down to the dust." This is talking about those who can't keep themselves alive. They're truly destitute. They're poor. They are poverty stricken. But God brings them to the table. He levels the playing field at his table. Money doesn't earn someone a place at the table, but neither does it need to hinder them even if it is "hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven." Jesus said, "It's harder for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven." But Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus, didn't he? He was a rich man, and Jesus was buried with the rich.

We talked about the way of salvation, here, the universality of salvation, all determined by the goodness and

the grace of a sovereign God, right? I'd just like to move on, but I can't leave this point without showing you something very significant, a vital connection between the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the joy of Jesus Christ in the glorification of the absolute, without question the absolute sovereignty of God. Just quickly, turn over to 1 Corinthians 15. 1 Corinthians 15 and I want to look at starting in verse 22. Jesus rejoices in the absolute sovereignty of God because it puts the greatness of God, his kingship over all the earth, over all the nations, that puts God's greatness on display.

To proclaim the sovereignty of God is to put God in his rightful place, and this is something Jesus rejoiced in even before going to the cross, but all through the cross, after the cross, to see God in his rightful place as sovereign over all. It's a joy that Jesus anticipated and one that carried him through the suffering of the cross. It's one of the reasons that he endured the cross. So notice what Paul reveals, there, about the consummation of the age, starting in verse 22. "As in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive, but each in his own order, Christ the first-fruits and then at his coming those who belong to Christ."

Now that's, they're just talking about the order of those who are raised from the dead. All those in Adam, if you remain in Adam, you die. Those who are in Christ, though, all of them shall be made alive. And then notice what happens in verse 24. "Then comes the end, when he," that is, Jesus, "delivers the kingdom to God the Father after destroying every rule and every authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. 'For God has put all things in subjection under his feet.' But when it says, 'all things are put in subjection,' it is plain that he," that is, Jesus, "is excepted who put all things in subjection under him. When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all."

I realize that's a mouthful, but this is what Christ is looking forward to; when all things are in subjection to God as the absolute sovereign of all. He longs to see the practical, the functional, the actual sovereignty of God acknowledged by all. No more rebellion, no more sin, no more unbelief, and no more death, either. All will be rightly related to God whether they are suffering eternal destruction. Even in hell they will acknowledge God as God along with all rule, authority, and

power. Those rulers and authorities and powers that deny the sovereignty of God, they will one day bow.

Also, those of us who enjoy eternal life, we'll be rightly related to God, finally, right? These are the ones Jesus calls brethren, the members of the great congregation. So one day even death, this instrument of God to punish the ungodly, even death will be banished, having served its purpose. Heaven and earth will be finally put to rights, and God's sovereign place will be acknowledged by all. Listen, Jesus rejoices in that as do all of us who will be raised in his resurrection life. We long to see God in his rightful place, don't you?

So Jesus rejoices in the salvation of God. He rejoices in a right relationship with God. He rejoices in the sovereignty of God. And he rejoices to bring the rest of us into that joy. Let's consider a final point just quickly. While Jesus hung on the cross, even prior to his resurrection, he looked forward to a time of unbroken rejoicing, and that's your fourth point: to rejoice in the glory of God. To rejoice in the glory of God. It says in verses 30-31, "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."

The word translated, posterity, there, it's the word seed, which, as you know, you guys come from Greeley, there's farming around in this area, right? Seeds produce a certain kind of plant or fruit or crop, right? This seed you plant to get wheat. This seed you plant to get an apple tree. So the posterity, the seed, it's referring to descendants of like kind. All the same kinds of people. Jesus rejoiced in the generations of his people, who would join him in magnifying the glory of God his Father. These are those who are the seed of faith. These are the descendants of those who believe, those who trust God, those who follow Christ. Not natural, physical descendants. We know that people aren't born Christians. Descendants of faith, those who trust with the like faith of Abraham, the like faith of Christ.

Now think for a moment about this point from Jesus' perspective. Who is the one throughout all of human history who has known God best? I give you one guess. Jesus, right? Who is the one who loved God the most? Jesus. Who has the greatest appreciation for God's knowledge and wisdom, his justice and mercy, his power and his tenderness? Jesus, Jesus, and Jesus, right? And what Jesus rejoices in most is to share that love and appreciation that he has, that knowledge of the greatness of the glory of his father, with whom?

He wants to share that with all of us, right? He wants us to join in with him in his rejoicing, in his celebration. He wants us from the depth of our souls to know and appreciate and love the glory of God in all his awesome splendor. Jesus loves his father deeply, intimately. He loves his father infinitely, and he wants us to share in that love. He wants us to share in that appreciation. Have you ever come to a sight, just traveling, come to a sight on this earth, and you look at it and go, Wow! That's God for all of eternity, to look at him and look in awe and wonder.

Notice verse, 30, 31, there are three generations, there, listed. There's an initial generation of his posterity, followed by a coming generation, and they in turn proclaim and turn and tell about God's glory to a people yet unborn. That's a third generation. There's a cascading, here, of proclamation as generation after generation proclaims the righteousness of God. And remember, because of the resurrection, these generations continue to live. They are never silenced. Remember verse 26, "Those who seek him shall praise the Lord. May your hearts live," what? "forever." Right? No end. These generations never die. They continue living, and their chorus of their praise, it grows ever stronger, ever louder as more and more souls are added to increase the size of this congregation.

Listen, as one who loves the father deeply, with unequalled intensity, with unparalleled zeal, Jesus is absolutely thrilled about this. He's rejoicing in the glory of God, which is revealed through the plan, and is magnified in the telling and the re-telling of the story. Jesus rejoices in hearing the glory of God amplified through the praises of his people. What do we praise him for? His righteousness, the fact that he has done it. Done what? God has accomplished salvation for his people. 2 Corinthians 5:19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them and," get this, folks, "he has committed to us the ministry," the word, "of reconciliation."

That's how we become a part of this, right? We're the fulfillment of Jesus' rejoicing. When we spread this Word, the joy that took him through the cross, we're a part of it. When he died on that cross, we were not members of that immediate posterity, right? We're members of the remote posterity, the 2,000 years remote. His immediate posterity, that's the holy Apostles. They served Christ by setting the foundation of the church, and that church is here called the coming generation. That coming generation, they continue proclaiming the righteousness of God in Christ, a proclamation that has worked its way throughout all of history to us, those who at the time

were a people yet unborn. That's us. They told us; we tell others as well, that he has done it, that it is finished.

John Calvin again. This is a man who was one of the most significant church planters of his day. Sometimes people say, oh, John Calvin, he was against evangelism. Not true. Not true. Through his work in Geneva, he planted churches all through France, all through Switzerland. He was responsible at the time for clarifying and defending and proclaiming Gospel truth. He said, "It is by the preaching of the grace of God alone that the church is kept from perishing."

Continuing with Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 5:20-21, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. As though God were entreating through us, we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in him." Look, those are the joys that Jesus anticipated on the dark side of the cross, and they're the cause of his rejoicing even now, in his post resurrection ministry. Charles Spurgeon said, he put it this way, he said, "Sovereign grace shall bring out from among men the blood-bought ones. Nothing shall thwart the divine purpose. The chosen shall come to life, to faith, to pardon, to heaven. In this the dying Savior finds a sacred satisfaction."



Like us, but to an infinitely greater degree, Jesus rejoices in the salvation of God. He rejoices in his relationship with God. He rejoices in the absolute sovereignty of God, and he rejoices in the glory of God. By his grace he enlists and empowers us to share in his joy along with him, to proclaim the righteousness of the God in the Gospel to our generation and to the next. That's our joy, beloved. That's the joy of resurrection life.