Sermon Outline
Burton Memorial United Methodist Church
"The Cry of the Oppressed"
(Sermon I in "Psalm 22 & the Crucifixion of Jesus")
March 09, 2025

Scripture

Psalm 22:1
Mark 15:33-34

Core Idea and purpose

Core ideas from earlier sermons in the series:

- None. This is the first sermon in a series.

Core Idea: Like Jesus, we can choose to identify with the suffering servant in Psalm 22 by standing up for love, righteousness, and justice.

Purpose: To encourage a willingness to suffer for love, righteousness & justice.

The Sermon

On a Thursday night, the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, ordered their Temple Guards to arrest our Savior & Lord, Jesus the Christ. Before bringing Him in front of the Sanhedrin, the Temple Guards ridiculed and beat him. (I'm pretty sure they did not read him his Miranda rights.) The Sanhedrin conducted a late-night mockery of a trial and declared Jesus to be guilty of blasphemy. Jesus then spent the rest of the night in a dungeon with little to no food or water. Early the next morning, the Sanhedrin handed him over to the Roman government so they could execute him as a supposed rebel. The Roman soldiers beat Jesus and whipped him until his back was raw and disfigured. They then forced Jesus to carry his own instrument of death and when he became too weak to carry the cross, they forced an innocent bystander, Simon of Cyrene, to carry it. Upon their arrival at Golgotha, the place of the skull, they nailed Jesus to a cross and raised the cross for all to see as a warning to anyone who would dare resist Rome. While hanging and dying on the cross, Jesus summoned enough strength to say, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

This is strange. Jesus is fully human and fully God. So, why would he call out to God and say, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?" It's as if he was saying, "Myself, myself, why have I forsaken myself?" That, however, is quite silly. So, why did he say, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me"?

These words of Jesus make sense when we recognize that they are the first words in Psalm 22. By speaking these words, Jesus was referring to that psalm. If I should say "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day" to a bunch of Shakespearean scholars, they would know that I am talking about Shakespeare's Sonnet 18. Or, if I say, "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree" to a

bunch of English professors, they will know I am talking about Joyce Kilmore's poem, 'Trees'. In the same way, when Jesus spoke, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?", his Jewish audience knew he was talking about Psalm 22. They instinctively understood that Jesus was claiming that Psalm 22 is about Him. So, to understand Jesus and his suffering, we must contemplate Psalm 22.

When we look at the first verse, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?", we wonder, "What kind of cry is this?"

Is Psalm 22:1 the cry of suffering? Well, yes. Verses 6 – 8 and 14 - 15 make this clear: "But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. **7** All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. **8** "He trusts in the Lord," they say, "let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him…I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me. **15** My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death". This person is shamed by his 'friends' and on the brink of a slow, painful death!!

Is Psalm 22:1 also the cry of oppression? Yes, it is. The person making this cry is suffering because people are oppressing him. The psalm uses animal metaphors to describe the oppression. Look at verses 12-13 & 16: "Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. **13** Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me…Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet." The psalm portrays his oppressors as raging bulls, roaring lions, and wild, ravenous dogs – yikes!!!

It's very important to note, however, that Psalm 22:1 is also a cry of rescue. In verses 11 and 19-21, the Psalmist explicitly asks the Lord to deliver him. Then the last ten verses of the psalm praises God for the deliverance that is coming. It's thanking God in advance. Look at the last three verses: "All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—those who cannot keep themselves alive. **30** Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told about the Lord. **31** They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!"

Now we can ask, "Besides Jesus, who could this person be? Who is giving this cry of suffering, oppression, and rescue?" Remember, this psalm was written approximately 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus. The original author had no idea that this psalm would accurately describe the suffering of the Messiah. The original readers of this psalm did not envision Jesus as the one giving this cry. So, besides Jesus, who is this psalm talking about?

It could be King David. The subscript says that it is 'A Psalm of David'". This means that either King David wrote it, or it was written in his name. King David suffered plenty of persecution. So, this person giving a cry of suffering, oppression, and rescue, could very well be King David.

It could also be the nation of Israel. During the period of the Judges, just prior to King David, Israel suffered with persecution from the Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Canaanites, Philistines, and Midianites. So, this person giving a cry of suffering, oppression, and rescue could also be the nation of Israel.

What about us? Could this psalm be about us? We all suffer at some point during our lives - some more than others. Many people have also faced oppression. As followers of Jesus, we should all be willing to suffer because of our devotion to love, righteousness, and justice. So, yes, along with being about Jesus, King David, and the nation of Israel, this psalm can also be about us.

Soon after Christopher Columbus discovered a new world in 1492, the Pope gave the Spanish government the authority to appoint bishops and other church officers in the new world. As a result, a church hierarchy sprang up that supported the oppressive colonial governments.

Under the authority of the colonial governments, Spanish conquistadors would force the native populations into big plantations called encomiendas. Supposedly the encomienda owners would teach the natives the Christian religion in exchange for their labor. Hence, the encomiendas were nothing more than slave labor camps operating under the guise of Christian education.

There were, however, some low-level Franciscan and Dominican priests who lived with the native population, stood up for their rights, and resisted the encomienda system. They faced determined resistance and persecution.[1] Psalm 22 is about them.

One such Dominican priest was Bartolome de Las Casas.

In 1498 he arrived in the new world with Christopher Columbus. A few years later he established his own encomienda in Santo Domingo. Soon after, he became a priest but continued to enslave the indigenous population on his encomienda. So, for about a decade, he was a slave owning Catholic Priest. He was part of the system causing suffering and oppression.

[1] Justo L. Gonzales, "The Story of Christianity, Volume I: The Early Church to the Reformation" (HarperCollins e-books) pages 449-451 ; https://www.britannica.com/biography/Bartolome-de-Las-Casas

Then, in 1511 the Holy Spirit convicted Bartolome when he heard another Dominican priest named Antonio Montesinos deliver a sermon denouncing the evil encomienda system. He realized that, as a slave owner, he was not daily loving God, neighbor and self while proclaiming justice. So, he freed his slaves, renounced his privileges, and devoted his life to defending the rights and dignity of the natives. He wrote many books and reports that exposed the atrocities and injustices committed by the Spanish conquerors and settlers. His goal was the abolition of the encomienda slavery system. Yes, he was one of the first abolitionists in modern history. He also proposed peaceful and respectful methods of evangelization.

Not surprisingly, he faced fierce opposition and hostility from the colonial authorities and the church hierarchy. They accused him of exaggeration, deceit and even treason. They often ignored, censored, or persecuted him for his views and actions.[2] I suspect there were times when he read Psalm 22 and cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

Psalm 22 was about Jesus because He chose to suffer and die on the cross to defeat death on our behalf – something only a 'God-Man' could do.

Psalm 22 was also about Bartolome because he chose persecution when he stood up to the church hierarchy, governments & economic powerhouses to defend the rights of the enslaved natives of Central & South America.

What about us? Could Psalm 22:1 be, for us, a cry of suffering, oppression, and rescue because of our willingness to suffer for love, righteousness, and justice?

Let's pray.

[2] Justo L. Gonzales, "The Story of Christianity, Volume 1" Pages 451-453 ; Bartolomé de las Casas - Wikipedia ; Biography of Bartolomé de Las Casas, Spanish Colonist (thoughtco.com) ; Bartolome de las Casas Timeline - World History Encyclopedia ; Bartolome de Las Casas | Biography, Books, Quotes, Significance, & Facts | Britannica ; Bartolomé de Las Casas | The Core Curriculum (columbia.edu)

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Sermon Outline

I. Jesus says something strange

A. On a Thursday night, the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, ordered their Temple Guards to arrest our Savior & Lord, Jesus the Christ.

- Before bringing Him in front of the Sanhedrin, the Temple Guards ridiculed and beat him. (I'm pretty sure they did not read him his Miranda rights.)
- The Sanhedrin conducted a late-night mockery of a trial and declared Jesus to be guilty of blasphemy.
- Jesus then spent the rest of the night in a dungeon with little to no food or water.

B. Early the next morning, the Sanhedrin handed Jesus over to the Roman government so they could execute him as a supposed rebel.

- The Roman soldiers beat Jesus and whipped him until his back was raw and disfigured.
- They then forced Jesus to carry his own instrument of death and when Jesus became too weak to do that, they forced an innocent bystander to carry it.

C. Upon their arrival at Golgotha, the place of the skull, they nailed Jesus to a cross and raised the cross for all to see as a warning to anyone who would dare resist Rome.

- While hanging and dying on the cross, Jesus summoned enough strength to say, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"

D. This seems very strange.

- Jesus is fully human and fully God.
- So, why would he call out to God and say, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"
- It's as if Jesus was saying, "Myself, myself, why have I forsaken myself?"

- That, however, is quite silly.
- So, why did say, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me"?

II. These words of Jesus make sense when we recognize that they are the first words in Psalm 22. By speaking these words, Jesus was referring to that psalm.
   A. If I should say "Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day" to a bunch of Shakespearean scholars, they would know that I am talking about Shakespeare's Sonnet 18.
   B. Or, if I say, "I think that I shall never see a poem lovely as a tree" to a bunch of English professors, they would know I am talking about Joyce Kilmore's poem, 'Trees'.
   C. In the same way, when Jesus spoke, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?", his Jewish audience knew he was talking about Psalm 22.
      - They instinctively understood that Jesus was claiming that Psalm 22 is about Him.
      - So, to understand Jesus and his suffering, we must contemplate at Psalm 22.

III. Contemplating Psalm 22
   A. When we look at the first verse, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish?", we wonder, "What kind of cry is this?"
      - Is Psalm 22:1 the cry of suffering?
         - Well, yes.
         - Verses 6 – 8 and 14 - 15 make this clear: "But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by everyone, despised by the people. **7** All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads. **8** "He trusts in the Lord," they say, "let the Lord rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him…I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me.

15 My mouth is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; you lay me in the dust of death".

- This person is shamed by his 'friends' and on the brink of death!!

- Is Psalm 22:1 also the cry of oppression?
  - Yes, it is.
  - The person making this cry is suffering because people are oppressing him.
  - The psalm uses animal metaphors to describe the oppression.
  - Look at verses 12-13 & 16: "Many bulls surround me; strong bulls of Bashan encircle me. **13** Roaring lions that tear their prey open their mouths wide against me…Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me; they pierce my hands and my feet."
  - The psalm portrays his oppressors as raging bulls, roaring lions, and wild dogs – yikes!!!
- It's very important to note, however, that Psalm 22:1 is also a cry of rescue.
  - In verses 11 and 19-21, the Psalmist explicitly asks the Lord to deliver him.
  - Then the last ten verses of the psalm praises God for the deliverance that is coming.
    - It's thanking God in advance.
  - Look at the last three verses: "All the rich of the earth will feast and worship; all who go down to the dust will kneel before him—those who cannot keep themselves alive. **30** Posterity will serve him; future generations will be told

about the Lord. **31** They will proclaim his righteousness, declaring to a people yet unborn: He has done it!"

B. Now we can ask, "Besides Jesus, who could this person be? Who is giving this cry of suffering, oppression, and rescue?"
    - Remember, this psalm was written approximately 1,000 years before the birth of Jesus.
        - The original author had no idea that this psalm would accurately describe the suffering of Jesus.
        - The original readers of this psalm did not envision Jesus as the one giving this cry.
        - So, besides Jesus, who could this psalm talking about?
    - It could be King David.
        - The subscript says that it is 'A Psalm of David'.
            - This means that either King David wrote it, or it was written in his name. King
        - David suffered with plenty of persecution.
        - So, this person giving a cry of suffering, oppression, and rescue could very well be King David.
    - It could also be the nation of Israel.
        - During the period of the Judges, just prior to King David, Israel suffered with persecution from the Moabites, Ammonites, Amalekites, Canaanites, Philistines, and Midianites.
        - So, this person giving a cry of suffering, oppression, and rescue could also be the nation of Israel.
    - What about us? Could this psalm be about us?
        - We all suffer at some point during our lives - some more than others.
        - Many people have also faced oppression.

- ➢ As followers of Jesus, we should all be willing to suffer because of our devotion to love, righteousness, and justice.
- ➢ So, yes, along with being about our Lord & Savior Jesus, King David, and the nation of Israel, this psalm can also be about us.

IV. Psalm 22 is about Bartolome de Las Casas

A. Soon after Christopher Columbus discovered a new world in 1492, the Pope gave the Spanish government the authority to appoint bishops and other church officers in the new world.
   - As a result, a church hierarchy sprang up that supported the oppressive colonial governments.
   - Under the authority of the colonial governments, Spanish conquistadors would force the native populations into big plantations called encomiendas.
   - Supposedly the encomienda owners would teach the natives the Christian religion in exchange for their labor.
     - ➢ Hence, the encomiendas were nothing more than slave labor camps operating under the guise of Christian education.

B. There were, however, some low-level Franciscan and Dominican priests who lived with the native population, stood up for their rights, and resisted the encomienda system.
   - They faced determined resistance and persecution.[3]
   - Psalm 22 is about them.

C. One such Dominican priest was Bartolome de Las Casas.

D. In 1498 he [Bartolome] arrived in the new world with Christopher Columbus.

[3] Justo L. Gonzales, "The Story of Christianity, Volume I: The Early Church to the Reformation" (HarperCollins e-books) pages 449-451

- A few years later he established his own encomienda in Santo Domingo.
- Soon after, he became a priest but continued to enslave the indigenous population on his encomienda.
- So, for about a decade, he was a slave owning Catholic Priest.
  - He was part of the system causing suffering and oppression.

E. Then, in 1511 the Holy Spirit convicted Bartolome when he heard another Dominican priest named Antonio Montesinos deliver a sermon denouncing the evil encomienda system.
   - He realized that, as a slave owner, he was not daily loving God, neighbor and self while proclaiming justice.
   - So, he freed his slaves, renounced his privileges, and devoted his life to defending the rights and dignity of the natives.
   - He wrote many books and reports that exposed the atrocities and injustices committed by the Spanish conquerors and settlers.
   - His goal was the abolition of the encomienda slavery system.
   - He also proposed peaceful and respectful methods of evangelization.

F. Not surprisingly, he faced fierce opposition and hostility from the colonial authorities and the church hierarchy.
   - They accused him of exaggeration, deceit and even treason.
   - They often ignored, censored, or persecuted him for his views and actions.
   - I suspect there were times when he read Psalm 22 and cried out, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?"[4]

[4] Justo L. Gonzales, "The Story of Christianity, Volume 1" Pages 451-453 ; Bartolomé de las Casas - Wikipedia ; Biography of Bartolomé de Las Casas, Spanish Colonist (thoughtco.com) ; Bartolome de las Casas Timeline - World History Encyclopedia ; Bartolome de Las Casas | Biography, Books, Quotes, Significance, & Facts | Britannica ; Bartolomé de Las Casas | The Core Curriculum (columbia.edu)

V. Conclusion
   A. Psalm 22 was about Jesus because He chose to suffer and die on the cross to defeat death on our behalf.
   B. Psalm 22 was also about Bartolome because he chose persecution when he stood up to the church hierarchy, governments & economic powerhouses to defend the rights of the enslaved natives of Central & South America.
   C. What about us? Could Psalm 22:1 be, for us, a cry of suffering, oppression, and rescue because of our willingness to suffer for love, righteousness, and justice?

Let's pray.

<u>863 398 4431 Lanita battles</u>

1. Email coming
2. Ask for judicial warrant signed by a local judge (search or arrest warrnt) if arrest warrant it needs particular individuals name. This is different from an administrative warrant.

205 521 8389 – Law Office

205 218 5038 – Keith Covington

Athanas, Bill – 205 532 3006