**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

**God Is in Control ~ of the “Resurrection”**

*Part Three – Ephesians 3:13-21 & Psalm 22*

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(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

Paul’s words to his personal friends in Ephesus parallel the message and power of Psalm 22. Remember, Paul writes to them while he is under house arrest awaiting to be tried by Caesar for his life. Paul, the Roman citizen, had appealed his case after being arrested in Jerusalem by the leading Jews on religious charges. Paul’s situation and the words in his letter parallel Psalm 22. How? Both men’s lives. . .

1. . . . rest in the power of God.

2. . . . will be delivered from their adversary.

3. . . . will continue to be a witness for God.

4. . . . are going through tribulation for the benefit of others.

5. . . . pray to God for deliverance.

 Paul asked them “not to lose heart at his tribulations” through which he is going for their benefit. The man in Psalm 22 in prophetically being crucified for the benefit of others. His witness, after God delivers Him, will be proclaimed in the assembly of the people for their benefit.

It is of note . . . that whatever tribulations through which Paul is going - he bows his knees to God in prayer to strengthen the saints in Ephesus by the power of God’s Holy Spirit. Jesus prays from the Cross for people. "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34)

 Like the man on his cross in Psalm 22, Paul knows that the only way the saints in Ephesus will have victorious lives - is for them to choose to have Christ dwell in their hearts, grounding them in God’s love. Paul points to the love of Christ that is more powerful than knowledge. And so is the fate and condition of the man being crucified in Psalm 22 who is also grounded in the love of God that is eternal. The eternal-life possession with which we leave this temporal world is the love of God embedded in our soul.

**Ephesians 1:13-21**

13 Therefore I ask you not to lose heart at my tribulations on your behalf,

for they are your glory.

 14 For this reason

 I bow my knees before the Father,

 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth

derives its name,

 16 that He would grant you,

 according to the riches of His glory,

**to be strengthened with power through His Spirit**

**in the inner man,**

 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;

 and that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

 18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints

what is the breadth and length and height and depth,

19 and to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge,

that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God.

 20 Now to Him

who is able to do far more abundantly

beyond all that we ask or think,

according to the power that works within us,

 21 to Him (God) be the glory

in the church

and in Christ Jesus

to all generations forever and ever.

Amen.

 A few weeks ago, I suggested that you go home and read Psalm 22. The Psalm gives the prophetic account of a man bring crucified. The fallen-mocking world around him thought they could control his death. But no…God is not far away.

 **Psalm 22:1** For the choir director; upon Aijeleth Hashshahar.

A Psalm of David. 1a My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?

Psalm 22 states that God was/is in control. The Cross was the redemptive plan of God from the foundation of the world. Fallen humanity could not stop the historical event of the Resurrection or its continuing witness two thousand years ago or now.

 The Resurrection witness could have been easily prevented by the Jews and the Romans. Who could not produce a body from a Roman guarded tomb? The Jews and Romans. Why? Because they were not in control, God was. Christianity could have easily been stopped by the Romans and the Jews by producing the body of Jesus, but they could not.

 From the Cross, Jesus points to Psalm 22 as a victory song. Reading the Psalm does not leave any doubt that God is not far in times of trouble. The Psalm prophetically describes a man being crucified – which is Jesus. This also highlights the world’s fallen condition and the persecution of Believers. We will have hard times and many Believers will be persecuted and suffer. However, not only Jesus but all those who have surrendered to the Lord will be delivered from this fallen world upon our passing.

**Romans 8:11** But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

**Romans 6:5** For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection,

**Daniel 12:2** "Many of those who sleep in the dust of the ground will awake, these to everlasting life, but the others to disgrace and everlasting contempt.

We will all be resurrected to a new eternal state and live victoriously with God in His heaven forever.

**John 14:2-3** - In my father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

**From the Cross – Jesus quotes Psalm 22**

Many people are unaware that Jesus is quoting the first sentence of Psalm 22 from the Cross. Jesus’ statement is often taken from context. It has been taught - that it was at this point, God could not look upon Jesus. Because at that point - is when Jesus took the sins of the world upon himself, and God cannot look upon sin. Many well-known and respected evangelists and preachers have taught this teaching. These evangelists and preachers are correct to point to Christ’s sacrifice on the Cross as payment for the sins of the world. However, the “whole Cross event” starting with Jesus’s arrest, trials and beatings are to be considered. If pressed why they teach this teaching, they will quote **Habakkuk 1:13** Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity (KJV).

Context is the light that reveals the truth. Reading the previous verses in Habakkuk 1 and the rest of verse 13, we see a broader context.

**12** Are You not from everlasting, O LORD, my God, my Holy One? We will not die. You, O LORD, have appointed them to judge; And You, O Rock, have established them to correct. **13** Your eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You cannot look on wickedness *with favor*. Why do You look with favor on those who deal treacherously? Why are You silent when the wicked swallow up Those more righteous than they?

The (NAS) adds “*with favor*” for clarification. Then, the second half of verse 13, we read that the prophet Habakkuk is asking the question: Why do you look with favor on those that deal treacherously?

So, the second part of verse 13 does say that God looks upon people who deal treacherously, and Habakkuk asks why. In the first half of the verse, the prophet is stating his understanding of God. However, Habakkuk’s understanding does not match what he is seeing God do. God allowed and watched the Chaldeans to be used as a judgement upon the Hebrew people.

**Habakkuk 1:6** "For behold, I am raising up the Chaldeans, That fierce and impetuous people Who march throughout the earth To seize dwelling places which are not theirs.

So, as a reference to support the application of Matthew 27:46 (God cannot look upon sin) - that God abandons Jesus on the Cross as He cried out, “"MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?", as the point Jesus took the world’s sin upon His being - is false.

**Where in the New Testament did Jesus look upon Sin?. . .**

**Right after He was born and for the rest of His life of 33 ½ years.**

 Remember that God became flesh and lived amongst us sinful people everyday for over thirty-three years being in the presence of and looking at sin. God, as Jesus upon the Cross, did absorb the world’s sin, but it was the whole Cross event that accomplished this miracle. Reading the entire 22nd Psalm reveals that Jesus was quoting the first sentence of the Psalm to draw attention to its victorious statement. The main point of Psalm 22 is that God did not abandon Jesus but delivered (Resurrected) Him to be that witness to the world.

If the Cross teaches us one thing, we are taught that this fallen world will inflict pain and suffering on God’s people, but we will be delivered to a newness of life. Jesus tells us in the Sermon on the Mount that we will be persecuted and suffer for his name’s sake (Matthew 5:10-12).

**Psalm 22** presents what the fallen world thinks - that God has/will abandon us as we go through our suffering and persecution. However, God has demonstrated His redemptive plan through the Cross of Jesus. Our earthly bodies will succumb to sin and death, but God will deliver us to a new life. Again, we will all be resurrected to an eternal life.

1b Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.

I groan now, but my guaranteed deliverance is to come.

 2 O my God,

I cry by day, but You do not answer;

And by night, but I have no rest.

This is what the fallen world sees. In our human weakness, this is what we feel. This is how Satan saw Jesus after forty days in the wilderness, but the Spirit of God/Jesus directed the wilderness journey (Matthew 4:1).

3 Yet You are holy,

O You who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

 In the midst of our pain and agony, Jesus chose (we choose) to praise God.

4 In You our fathers trusted; They trusted and You delivered them. 5 To You they cried out and were delivered;

In You they trusted and were not disappointed.

 Within our pain, we remember that our Lord delivered others. Verses 4 and 5 are stating that Jesus will be delivered from the Cross as the fathers were delivered. This deliverance does not mean you will not go through painful events in your temporal life. The deliverance, above all - is to live with God eternally. The deliverance miracle now is how we handle and witness the pain and suffering in this life. We are preserved in God’s strength at work inside our hearts.

6 But I am a worm and not a man, A reproach of men and despised by the people. 7 All who see me sneer at me; They separate with the lip, they wag the head, saying, (Prophecy fulfilled Matthew 27:39).

Describes fallen humanities view of Jesus’/our condition in suffering. Details how we can expect to be viewed by the ungodly.

 8 "Commit yourself to the LORD; let Him deliver him; Let Him rescue him, because He delights in him." (Prophecy fulfilled in Matthew 27:43).

With evil in their hearts, they mocked Jesus, and we can expect the same. The mockers assumed victory. But to Believers, who are justified to God - we see this as a badge of honor in the process of sanctification, that we did not have any other *commitments* to idols and pagan deities. We are committed to God alone.

 9 Yet You are He who brought me forth from the womb; You made me trust when upon my mother's breasts. 10 Upon You I was cast from birth; You have been my God from my mother's womb.

Remembering that God is our Creator and what He has done for us, God will not abandon His promise to us. We are sealed in His Holy Spirit of promise (Ephesians 1:13).

11 Be not far from me, for trouble is near; For there is none to help.12 Many bulls have surrounded me; Strong bulls of Bashan have encircled me. 13 They open wide their mouth at me, As a ravening and a roaring lion.

 The bulls of Bashan are a reference to a pagan system of religion. But, Believers, praying to God, have confidence that God is near in time of trouble, when there is not anyone else responding to help. The Lord does not abandon our soul. We pray, despite our bodies fallen condition, in the face of our persecutors. The next verses detail Jesus’ physical condition on the Cross. This is prophetically written by King David about 900 years before the incarnation.

14 I am poured out like water, And all my bones are out of joint;

My heart is like wax; It is melted within me.

15 My strength is dried up like a potsherd,

And my tongue cleaves to my jaws; And You lay me in the dust of death.

16 For dogs have surrounded me; A band of evildoers has encompassed me; They pierced my hands and my feet. (Prophecy fulfilled in John 20:25)

17 I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me;

(Prophecy fulfilled in Luke 23:35)

 18 They divide my garments among them, And for my clothing they cast lots.

(Prophecy fulfilled in Matthew 27:35; John 19:23, 24;

 Luke 23:34; Mark 15:24)

 **Confident Plea and Victory Statement**

 19 But You, O LORD, be not far off; O You my help, hasten to my assistance.

 20 Deliver my soul from the sword, My only life from the power of the dog.

 21 Save me from the lion's mouth;

From the horns of the wild oxen, **You answer me.**

 22 I will tell of Your name to my brethren;

 In the midst of the assembly, I will praise You.

What a victory statement! In verse 22, Jesus states that He will praise God to the assembly. To do this praise, He must live past the Cross, meaning He will be resurrected. Jesus calls upon God, and God answered Him. By Jesus pointing to Psalm 22, He is telling us that if we are in the midst of persecution - we are to call upon the Lord and praise Him. And tell others what has happened.

 23 You who fear the LORD, praise Him;

All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him,

And stand in awe of Him, all you descendants of Israel.

By Jesus referencing Psalm 22 from the Cross, He is talking directly to the Jews who are descendants of Jacob/Israel - to glorify God.

 24 For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted;

 Nor has He hidden His face from him;

But when he cried to Him for help, He heard.

Jesus is declaring that God has not turned His face from Him and He has heard His cry for help. So, this directly refutes the teaching that God abandoned Jesus on the Cross for any reason. God responded to the Cross in the power of the Resurrection.

 25 From You comes my praise in the great assembly;

I shall pay my vows before those who fear Him.

One of the main outcomes of Psalm 22 is that the crucified man overcomes the Cross and is available to praise God in the great assembly. Jesus continued His mission during the resurrection and then His followers (disciples) continued praising God as witnessed in Acts 2 at Pentecost.

 26 The afflicted will eat and be satisfied;

Those who seek Him will praise the LORD.

Let your heart live forever!

Verse 26 declares that the afflicted will be satisfied forever. This points to our next life and that the Lord makes our eternal lives possible by/through the resurrection. Paul witnesses this to us when he writes to the Believers in Corinth.

**1 Corinthians. 15:36,38,40,42,43,44**

36 You fool! That which you sow does not come to life unless it dies; . . . 38 But God gives it a body just as He wished, and to each of the seeds a body of its own. . . . 40 There are also heavenly bodies and earthly bodies, but the glory of the heavenly is one, and the glory of the earthly is another. . . .

 42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown a perishable body, it is raised an imperishable body; 43 it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; 44 it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body. If there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body.

 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the LORD,

 And all the families of the nations will worship before You.

 28 For the kingdom is the LORD'S And He rules over the nations.

 29 All the prosperous of the earth will eat and worship,

All those who go down to the dust will bow before Him,

 Even he who cannot keep his soul alive.

 30 Posterity will serve Him;

 It will be told of the Lord to the coming generation.

 31 They will come and will declare His righteousness

To a people who will be born, that He has performed it.

The Cross of Christ was proclaimed to all generations after the Resurrection. God was/is in control of proclaiming the Gospel Message. Proof of God’s witness is in the fact that we today have His Word in front of us that we proclaim to the world.

  Again, Psalm 22 is a victory song to which Jesus points from the Cross. Reading the Psalm does not leave any doubt that God is not far away in times of trouble. We will have hard times and many Believers will be persecuted and suffer. Not only Jesus, but all Believers will be delivered from this fallen world upon our passing. We will all be resurrected to a new eternal state and live victoriously with God in His heaven forever.

 Psalm 22 prophecies that the deliverance of the Lord will be remembered and be told to future generations. . . and so the apostle Paul does this in his letter to the Ephesians.

**Ephesians 3:21** to Him (God) be the glory

 in the church

 and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. **Amen.**