**Special Presentation**

Psalm 22

The Rev. Ted Wood

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**Ted:** You know, in Psalm 51 there was a lot of pain. Roger, thank you; you did Psalm 51 thoroughly. I think you did three parts, didn’t you?

**Roger Myers:** Yes.

**Ted:** The thing I get concerned about when you do something like Psalm 51 is that it’s so closely connected to Jesus and His life and His death that we perhaps begin to miss the personal application of it. And the same thing can happen in Psalm 22. And what I’m going to do is, I’m going to read Psalm 22.

But I find that when I studied it, you have two basic elements. We have verses and sections that are doom and despair and other ones of great hope. And so as I read this Psalm—let me just be sure that I have it all here!—I’m going to label each section as I go through it, and then take them apart. That’s what I find helpful to do in Scripture. If you’ve got a lot to do in your reading of Scripture, and you have things that are to one side or the other, sometimes I pull them apart and it helps me to make more sense. We’re in Psalm 22; you can follow along. This is a section of doom:

*“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?*

*Why are You so far from saving Me,*

*From the words of My groaning?*

*O My God, I cry by day,*

*But You do not answer,*

*And by night, but I find no rest.”*

Then hope:

*“Yet You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.*

*In You our fathers trusted;*

*They trusted, and You delivered them. To You they cried, and were rescued;*

*In You they trusted and were not put to shame.*

*But I am a worm and not a man;*

*Scorned by mankind and despised by the people.”*

More doom:

*“All who see Me mock Me;*

*They make mouths at Me;*

*They wag their heads:*

*“He trusts in the LORD; let Him deliver Him.*

*Let Him rescue Him, for He delights in Him.”*

Now on to hope:

*“Yet You are He who took Me from the womb,*

*Who made Me trust You at My mother’s breasts.*

*On You was I cast from My birth,*

*And from My mother’s womb You have been My God.*

*Be not far from Me,*

*For trouble is near, and there is none to help.”*

Then on to doom:

*“Many bulls encompass Me,*

*Strong bulls of Bashan surround Me.*

*They open wide their mouths at Me,*

*Like a ravening and roaring lion.*

*I am poured out like water,*

*And all My bones are out of joint.*

*My heart is like wax;*

*It is melted within My breast.*

*My strength is dried up like a potsherd,*

*And My tongue sticks to My jaws.*

*You lay Me in the dust of death.*

*For the dogs encompass Me;*

*A company of evildoers encircle Me;*

*They have pierced My hands and My feet.*

*I can count all My bones;*

*They stare and gloat over Me.*

*They divide My garments among them,*

*And for My clothing they cast lots.”*

Now hope:

*“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 Him,*

*But He has heard when He cried to Him.*

*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!*

*All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD,*

*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*

*Shall be in worship before Him.*

*All shall bow who go down to the dust,*

*Even the one who could not keep himself alive.*

*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.”*

This is the word of the Lord.

**Brave Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Ted:** So in dealing with this Psalm I’d begin to take it apart. I took it apart on the hope side and on the doom/dismay/despair side. And what I want to do this morning is that I want to talk about it from two levels. One is our own personal experience of this, how we experience it. The Psalm speaks to our own experience and how we’re living with it. And it also speaks to Jesus’ experience in a way that we seldom have insight into what was going on in His heart and His mind when He was suffering, from the Passion all the way to the Crucifixion and His death.

So I’m going to deal with the first part. And then at the end I’m going to give an interesting twist to all this that I kind of stumbled on in a Bible study I was at.

First of all, the sections dealing with despair and terror; despair and terror on every side is what the Psalmist is writing about. So what are some of those verses that are of despair and terror? What do you see there? I’m going to ask you to join in on this discussion as you look at Psalm 22. So we’ll just go down through the verses. What are the ones that talk of despair and terror?

**Don Maurer:** Obviously the first verse.

**Ted:** Yes. *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” The Hebrew word for “forsake” there is* azab.We’re going to run into it again, so just keep that in mind. And it means to leave or lose, to let go of or relinquish, to kind of let go of something when you forsake it. *“Why are You so far from saving Me, from the words of My groaning?”* Okay, what’s another verse of despair? Come on guys, all you have to do is read.

**Don Bishop:** Verse 6.

**Ted:** Okay, verse 6. *“Scorned by mankind; I am a worm and not a man.”* The next verse is: *“Scorned by mankind and despised by the people.”*

*“All who seek Me mock Me;*

*They make mouths at Me; they wag their heads:*

*‘He trusts in the LORD; let Him deliver Him.*

*Let Him rescue Him, for He delights in Him.”*

Okay, those are all ones of despair and doom. What else?

**Don Bishop:** 12 and 13.

**Ted:** Yes.

*“Many bulls encompass Me;*

*Strong bulls of Bashan surround Me.*

*They open wide their mouths at Me,*

*Like a ravening and roaring lion.”*

It’s a really interesting image there; it’s sort of hard to figure out. First of all, what are the bulls of Bashan? It’s hard to know, I’ve read some commentaries on this, and we’re not really too sure.

Bashan was an area in southwest Syria. I suspect that if you go to Israel you go up to the Golan Heights and you’re just going kind of northeast of that. And it was always an area of great fertility; a lot of rich pastures and rich land. The Romans used it as a kind of bread basket when they controlled the area.

And there is only one other reference to the bulls of Bashan, found in Amos 4:1. It says: *“Cows of Bashan who are on the mountain of Samaria.”* So really they cross from Syria into Samaria. *“Who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their husbands, ‘Bring, that we may drink.’”* Of course the only difference is that a bull is a male, and Amos 4:1 refers to cows of which the Hebrew word is feminine, female cows. Can you have male cows? When I look at a cow I can tell.

**John Gratner:** You can’t these days; they transition. *(Laughter)*

**Gary Craig:** Cows are female and cattle is either way.

**Ted:** Good. See, I haven’t looked that up.

**Gary:** Steers.

**Ted:** Steers. Okay, right.

**Don Maurer:** That’s a bunch of bull. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** What does that mean, the whole thing about “strong bulls encompass me, strong bulls of Bashan?” It’s hard to know what that means. But in Amos 4 it’s female cows who seem to be overlording their husbands: *“Who oppress the poor, who crush the needy, who say to their husbands, ‘Bring, that we may drink.’”* It’s hard to know what it means. But it’s some kind of oppressive force.

Okay, so what do we have here? We have 22:1, we have 22:6-8, we have 22:12 and 13. What else?

**John:** 14-18.

**Ted:** Yes, absolutely.

*“I am poured out like water,*

*And all my bones are out of joint.*

*My heart is like wax;*

*It is melted within my breast.*

*My strength is dried up like a potsherd.”*

Then on to 16:

*“For dogs encompass Me;*

*A company of evildoers encircle Me;*

*They have pierced My hands and My feet.*

*I can count all my bones;*

*They stare and gloat over Me.*

*They divide My garments among them.”*

Okay. What else? I guess that’s pretty much all of them. I would also have included verse 2:

*“O My God, I cry by day,*

*But You do not answer;*

*By night and I find no rest.”*

Okay, there seems to be two kinds of suffering here that the Psalmist is talking about. He’s talking about physical suffering and he’s talking about emotional, psychological and spiritual suffering. I guess the question is: Does any of that seem real to us in our everyday lives from the things we have experienced? We hope not. But if it doesn’t relate it’s fairly meaningless, except as we apply it to Christ. Then we can say that the only purpose of this Psalm is to give us an Old Testament picture of Christ. But do you relate to any of that? Have you had any of those experiences? Have you had times when you felt that God has forsaken you and was far from you? Have you ever felt like a worm and not a man? Have you been scorned and despised by others? Have you had bulls and ravening dogs surround you and seek to do you in?

**Don Rimbey:** I can’t say I have.

**Ted:** Yes. You know, I had a client call up the other day. He told me because of something he had said in the office; it was a major corporation. In that corporation he was walked out of the office onto the street and put on leave; he may get fired. And this guy is in despair. He feels like he’s surrounded by dogs. He feels like a worm at this time. And he had a very nice position; with all the bonuses and everything he was probably making close to $1 million a year.

**Brave Man:** Wow!

**Ted:** A million dollars is nothing these days. So I can relate to that; I’ve been in that position.

I’ve told my story. I got walked out of Pitt when they brought in a new administration. HR sat down at my desk and had a box, and I put all my paper clips into one box and all their paper clips in the other box and walked out. I never felt so low and empty. Well, I have on other occasions. But what about you all? Is this just kind of theoretical talk? Have you been through something like that: death, divorce, loss, reject4ion by kids, financial disaster? Does this relate to any of you? Yes, Gary?

**Gary Craig:** I just wanted to say that I remember that I was once in a company. And they sent me home; I don’t even remember why now.

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Gary:** Anyway my program was not supervised. But the thing I know was that I did not sleep well.

**Ted:** You were under stress.

**Gary:** That’s right; yes.

**Ted:** I don’t think the Psalmist was sleeping well with all these things he’s talking about. Go ahead, Jordan.

**Jordan Obaker:** I have not struggled with or thought a lot about the fact that it seems that life has been pretty easy for our family. We have people around us whose kids have had cancer and died. Their loved ones have gone through something very hard. It doesn’t seem like the Lord is answering his prayers. I think that for me I kind of expect suffering in this life with the expectation of glorification in the next life. And I’ve thought over it sometimes. Why does it seem that we’re not suffering more?

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** It has given me pause. Am I too in love with the world? Am I maybe not suffering more because I’ve become too worldly in the things we crave—a great house, a great car, good health, whatever it may be?

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** But I will say that I’ve often felt like a worm and not a man when I think of my sins, sins of repetition.

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Jordan:** But I don’t know that I’ve ever felt forsaken. And if we’re in Christ I don’t know that any of us will feel forsaken.

**Ted:** Right.

**Jordan:** I certainly feel like the Lord is quiet in answering prayers.

**Ted:** Right.

**Jordan:** But hopefully we should never feel forsaken because Christ is the One who went through that for us; He had to.

**Ted:** You know, I’ve had trouble of my own making, though I wish I could blame somebody else. But I’ve had a pretty good life, and many of you have. But you look at Pastor Jeff, and everything he’s been through in his life. I mean, he’s had a rough life in spades, and he’s a very righteous guy. Now he’s suffering. And think about—

**Don Rimbey:** Job.

**Ted:** Well of course. But what I’m trying to do is that I’m trying to bring it from out there to right here. I understand that Job suffered. But I think about Bruce Bickel. Was there ever a more righteous man? I remember how he stood up at PNC. The PNC execs went on a gay recognition event, and he wouldn’t go. He put his job on the line. He faithfully ministered and many people have benefited from his ministries and his teaching and his pastoral care, and now this.

You know, sometimes I wonder. I don’t think the Lord has forsaken me. But sometimes I wonder if the lack of suffering in my life is an example of the fact that I’m not one of the elect. Have you ever felt that? Thank you, Roger; Roger agrees with me. The rest of you don’t have to. *(Laughter)* Do you understand what I’m saying? I haven’t suffered much; I’m not going through this stuff, and what does that mean? I’m just laying that out there.

**Jordan:** Just to continue the conversation on that, I think we also see plenty of examples in the Bible where the Lord does bless people.

**Ted:** Oh, absolutely; right.

**Jordan:** Look at Abraham as an example. He was blessed with plenty of sheep and servants and all that kind of stuff. And sometimes the Lord uses this to bless His people so that He can bless the Kingdom.

**Ted:** Oh, absolutely. I know all those lines.

**Jordan:** And what I was contemplating more recently is the work of Satan. You know, I think it’s stuff like that where doubts may be allowed to creep in, and I think that’s his work, right?

**Ted:** Sure.

**Jordan:** He’s trying to make you doubt and hopefully to land in despair.

**Ted:** The conclusion I come to is that my doubts are based on appearance rather than reality. So it appears that I may be getting off because I’m part of the Lord’s army.

“Who is on the Lord’s side?

Who will serve the King?”

How long will that be? So I’m getting blessed in this life. But that’s an appearance of things. Then I’ve got promises up against that.

Being prosperous is not necessarily a sign that you’re one of God’s people. I mean, the most economically successful group in this country is the Mormons, and they are heretics in spades. But I think that what we just find more and more in the world is that you don’t have to really be good to be good. You do the right thing and lead a more ethical life, and you’ll prosper. People are obviously desperate for people like that out in the world.

But you don’t have to be a believer. To me it’s a sing of God’s blessing, but maybe not. Others are blessed and they are not believers at all, but they lead very good lives. Jordan, I’m not too sure you like that answer. Yes?

**Gary:** I just want to say that I think that sometimes the devil lets people be blessed in his army, just like you read in *The Screwtape Letters.”*

**Ted:** Sure.

**Gary:** People don’t rely on God anymore. They break away; they think He’s unnecessary.

**Ted:** Sure. Yeah, right.

**Gary:** Another thing I want to say about this Psalm is that another thing that stands out to me is where he says: *“I am a worm and not a man.”* I hear Christ saying this from the cross; He makes reference to this.

**Ted:** Yes.

**Gary:** I don’t think of Him as a worm or that He imagined Himself as a worm.

**Ted:** Mm-hmm.

**Gary:** But it’s one thing that sticks out to me.

**Ted:** Is it a contradiction or something odd?

**Gary:** Yes. I think He always realizes who He was.

**Ted:** I’m gonna get to that. It raises an interesting point about what was going on in His mind on the cross. I guess I’m famous for teaching things with everybody feeling down and depressed. *(Laughter)* But let’s move on to the next section. I know the things that are gloom and despair. But we can move on to the next section and the reasons for hope. And in a number of these verses—and I didn’t fill them in; you’re going to tell me what they are because I put them under four categories—the first category is: What is my reason for hope amongst all this despair and this doom? Often the verse will begin with “but” or “yet.” The Hebrew word means “doubtlessly, certainly, assuredly.” So assuredly, even though facing all this darkness, there is assuredly and certainly hope and light.

So I put them under the categories. The verse is: Who is the Lord? What kind of God is He? Or look back for future hope. What has God done? Continue to seek, knock and ask, and then to respond to what God has done for me and what the Lord has done for us. What can I do to encourage my hope. So what verses do you find in there as you go under those categories? Yes, Don?

**Don Maurer:** I see that in 3-5.

**Ted:** Yes.

**Don:** I hope I have this right. It’s similar to Psalm 78, where David or whoever wrote that Psalm despairs. But then he looks back to what the Lord has done in previous generations. And he does that in these verses too. “You are holy; our fathers trusted in You.”

**Ted:** Yeah. Verses 4 and 5.

**Don:** “Our fathers trusted in You. They trusted in You and You delivered them. They trusted in You and were not ashamed.” There’s hope there. Of course I assume that not only is David speaking prophetically, but in some ways he must be talking about his own experiences.

**Ted:** Sure.

**Don:** And how those who trusted in the Lord in the past were delivered.

**Ted:** Yes. Not only in the past for His people, but also in the past for him personally. You get that in verses 9 and 10.

**Don:** Yes.

**Ted:** *“Yet You are He who took Me from the womb.”* So it’s not only my fathers, but it’s me.

**Don:** Yes.

**Ted:**

*“You made Me trust You at My mother’s breasts;*

*In You was I cast from birth,*

*And from My mother’s womb You have been My God.”*

**Don:** So there is not ultimate despair, even though a lot more is to come.

**Ted:** No.

**Don:** But it’s not ultimate despair.

**Ted:** Right. We have despair, but these are the antidotes to all this despair. And that’s one of them: to look forward to hope in the future; to look in the past for hope in the future. What has God done? Okay, what else do you find? Who is the Lord? What kind of God is He? That’s a reason for hope. What verses do you find there?

Who is the Lord? I’m in terrible shape. Who is God anyway, that He should do something?

**Jordan:** Well, verse 9 tells us He’s the giver of life.

**Ted:** Yes.

**Jordan:** Even from the womb.

**Ted:** Yes. Keep going.

**Jordan:** Verse 19 says that He is our help and our aid.

**Ted:** I put that under “continue to seek, knock and ask.”

*“But You, O LORD, do not be far off;*

*O You My help, come quickly to My aid.”*

**Don Maurer:** Verse 24: *“For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted.”*

**Ted:** Yes, right; that’s who He is. I’m a mess, but He doesn’t abhor me. That’s who He is.

**Jordan:** He rules over nations.

**Ted:** Okay; that’s who He is. He’s in charge; He has the final say, right?

**Don Maurer:** The whole rest of the Psalm has promise and redemption. I’m probably getting ahead of you.

**Ted:** No, that’s okay.

**Don:** But we know the end: the worship of God, the triumph of Christ, that it’s not just for the Jews, but all the families of the nations shall worship.

**Ted:** Yes.

**Don:** A happy ending as it were.

**Ted:** Mm-hmm. And I put that under “the response.” You know, when we’re in despair and doom how do we respond to it? Verse 22: *“I will tell Your name to My brothers.”* Start talking about the Lord. Verse 23: *“You who fear the LORD, praise Him.”* Verse 25: *“From You comes My praise in the great congregation.”* I’m down, but I’m going to praise the Lord. And Don, as you were pointing out:

*“Posterity shall serve Him;*

*It shall be told of the LORD to the coming generation.”*

So you are faced with the despair and doom and awful situations that we may find ourselves in. I mean, modern medicine has relieved us from a lot of suffering that we once had to suffer. I think I’ve told the story about when my wife and I were dating. We lived down in Washington County. We used to go through the old graveyards of those old Presbyterian churches. Those who settled in the early 1700s and 1800s were Presbyterians. And you would go through the graveyards. We went to one graveyard and there were four kids that were dead within two weeks of each other, and then the wife. I mean, how do you deal with that? I mean, it’s almost inconceivable. If it would just happen to one child it would be catastrophic; the person would have to go into therapy for years. How did those folks deal with that? They dealt with it all the time.

Back when I was in my early 40s they found out that I had Graves’ disease. So they had my thyroid operated on, which means that if I didn’t, what would happen? Within twenty years my heart would have raced so much that I would have been dead if I didn’t have that little purple pill. Some of you folks take it too as well. But I’m just saying that modern medicine has relieved me of having to suffer what I should actually suffer.

**Don Maurer:** Tell me about it.

**Ted:** That’s right; you as well, Don. You should be dead, right?

**Don:** Yes, absolutely.

**Ted:** Right.

**Don:** But you know, I think of those in countries like the Middle Eastern countries and Communist countries who are suffering daily for their faith.

**Ted:** Yup.

**Don:** And where do they get the strength to go on? It’s from verses like the ones we’re studying.

**Ted:** Yes, right. Exactly. They look to who God is, to look back to the past and hope for the future. What has He done for you in the past? Did God drop the ball in the past? When we doubt and have worries we have to ask ourselves the question. Why am I worrying? Do I think God is going to drop the ball this time? Well He hasn’t in the past, but maybe He will this time. Maybe there’s the possibility that God just won’t show up. I mean, it’s kind of a silly question. But you have to ask this of yourself in order to knock some sense into you, because otherwise that’s a silly question. Why then are you worried, Ted? Why are you concerned?

**Don Maurer:** And see, that’s what the Communists and the Islamic persecutors are banking on. They don’t want any hope. They want the sufferer to completely despair.

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Don:** And that’s where they’ve got to rely on the promises of God and the word of God.

**Ted:** Right.

**Don:** So do we.

**Ted:** Well when it gets too bad you have to really ask yourself the question: What is real in the end? What is rock bottom real in all this? And even though you’re suffering, what other option do you have? Are you going to give up? Are you going to say that God doesn’t exist? I mean, tell me. Relay, what are your options? Either He is or He isn’t. That’s the question we all have to ask.

Our church has gone a number of times to the Holy Land with our pastor; I think it’s been about seven or eight times; he has led tours from our church. And on this last tour he got to know one of the tour guides. Now this is the West Bank; this is not Gaza; those are two different things. Well, they’re very much related. But Bethlehem is in the Palestinian authority. And when you meet in Jerusalem and you’re staying in Jerusalem you take the bus out and it’s a 20-minute ride and there you are at the border. And the Jewish guide gets off the bus and the Palestinian Christian guide gets on the bus. And they take you into Bethlehem because the Jewish guide doesn’t go there.

And the guide that we had on the last tour into Bethlehem had written us because the Christians, which at one time had made up 80% of the population of Bethlehem are down to about 5% now because they’ve had to get out. And what has happened is that almost all the Christians in Bethlehem make their living on tourism selling olive oil. There’s no business. The man has no income, and he has a family of four.

And so he just writes us about this. We took a collection at our church and allowed him the money to leave Bethlehem and to go to a refugee camp in Jordan, and he wrote from there. And when he got to Jordan the Jordanians said, “We don’t want you here. You’re a Christian. We want you to get out; you’re not one of us.”

And he got persecuted, he got attacked. His children were attacked in school. And he went back to Bethlehem where at least he wasn’t being attacked.

Now I don’t know anything about that; I don’t know if that’s right. But he continues to write with great faith and trust. What is the option? Yes?

**Don Rimbey:** We talk about having affluence, if you will. Sometimes that can keep us from seeking God. We are so corrupted as a nation, and as a people we say that we don’t need God, right?

**Ted:** Right, exactly. That’s what we do. And we guard ourselves against the future by having these assets to cover us. I mean, any of us know that we’re slowly falling apart; we can just tell. If it isn’t our eyes it’s the prostate or something else. We’ll arrive at that place someday; our teeth, whatever it is. And so what we do is that we set aside assets to cover us when we get old.

But in a sense that’s good. The negative aspect is that we can be independent of having to rely on God. It’s a double-edged sword.

Well let me go on from there to talk about the prophecies. Psalm 22 is full of prophecies about the suffering Messiah. Now let me see, what did I do with the worksheet here? What I would like you to do is that you have A’s and B’s: 1A and 1B and 2A and 2B. What is the prophecy and what is the fulfillment in the gospel? Just look through it. What are the prophecies and where does it get fulfilled in the gospel?

**Don Maurer:** In verses 6-8 the rulers of the Sanhedrin and everyone on the cross unwittingly say the exact same words of this Psalm.

**Ted:** Right.

**Don:** It’s in all of the Synoptic Gospels.

**Ted:** Right.

**Don:**

***“He trusted in the LORD; let Him rescue Him;***

***Let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him.”***

**Ted:** Right. That’s verses 6-8 of Psalm 22. I put as a reference there Matthew 27:39 and following. That would be: *“Those who passed by derided Him, wagging their heads and saying, ‘You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.’ So also the chief priest with the scribes and the elders mocked Him, saying, ‘He saved others; He cannot save Himself. He trusts in God; let God deliver Him.”*

Okay, that’s one of the fulfillments. In Psalm 22 those are verses 6-8. What are the other verses that are fulfilled in the New Testament?

**Don Bishop:** Verse 1 is quoted in Matthew 27:46.

**Ted:** Excellent. *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”* Matthew 27:46: *“About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’; that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’”* Okay. Yes?

**Brave Man:** *“They divided My clothing, and for My garments they cast lots.”* It’s somewhere in Matthew.

**Ted:** Don pointed out that it is in the Synoptics. Mark 15:24: *“They crucified Him and divided His garments among them, casting lots for them.”* Okay. What else?

**Jordan:** Just before that, *“They have pierced My hands and My feet.”*

**Ted:** Yes.

**Gary:** Just a historical aside. Someone once said about how the Old Testament talks about piercing His hands and His feet, and that they looked on Him whom they pierced. If the Old Testament was prophesying that Christ would be crucified, why didn’t it just come out and say that?

**Ted:** Right.

**Gary:** They don’t mention the fact that crucifixion wasn’t invented yet. *(Laughter)*

**Ted:** I know, I know. That’s good.

**Don Maurer:** And then speaking of the Crucifixion, in verses 14 and 15 that is how a person who was crucified would have felt.

**Ted:** Yeah, right.

**Don:**

*“I am poured out like water,*

*And all my bones are out of joint.*

*My heart is like wax;*

*It is melted within me.*

*My strength is dried up like a potsherd;*

*My tongue clings to my jaws.”*

Christ said, *“I thirst.”*

Ted: **Yes, that’s right; John 19:28. So that’s a fulfillment there.**

**Don:** Yes.

**Ted:** What about verse 16?

*“Dogs encompass Me;*

*A company of evildoers encircle Me.”*

Who are the dogs? Who do the dogs represent in Jewish thinking? What were the dogs?

**Don Rimbey:** The Romans.

**Ted:** Yes. The Gentiles, the Romans. And you get that in Mark 15:16. *“They called together the whole battalion. And they clothed Him in a purple cloak. Twisting together a crown of thorns they put it on Him. And they began to salute Him: ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’ And they were striking His head with a reed and spitting on Him and kneeling down in homage to Him. And they mocked Him.”* So the dogs of the Old Testament are the Gentiles who are not the Jews.

**Gary:** The dogs eat what falls from the table.

**Ted:** Yes, that’s correct. Where was she from?

**Gary:** Syrophonecia*.*

**Ted:** The Syrophonecian woman. It’s not good to give food to the dogs. But even the dogs eat the scraps. He was referring to her as a dog. That’s very upsetting to a lot of modern people.

You know, in the garden, a part of the Passion begins in the garden. In verse 2:

*“o My God, I cry by day, but You do not answer,*

*And by night and I find no rest.”*

Matthew 26:38: *“My soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch with Me. And going a little further He fell on His face and prayed, saying, ‘My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.”* “My God, I cry day and night.”

So there are all these cross-references where we can see the prophecies being fulfilled in the death of Jesus. But any more thoughts on that?

Okay. So we’ve dealt with our own personal experience and how we experience Psalm 22, how that reflects on our despair and our hope. And we talked about the connection between Psalm 22 and the prophecies of what happened in the Passion of our Lord. Now I want to talk about a third thing that I stumbled on in a Bible study that our pastor was leading, and I think it’s #3 on the outline. Jesus amazed in the Garden of Gethsemane: *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”*

What do the Gospels say about Jesus’ experience in the Garden of Gethsemane? Well here they are. The Garden of Gethsemane is only featured in three Gospels. (I shouldn’t say only; three out of four Gospels.)

Luke 22:44: *“Being in agony He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down on the ground.”*

Okay, He was in agony. The word there is *agonia,* and it means the feeling of an athlete before a contest. We get our word *agony* from that. I know I used to compete in sports; that was about thirty or forty pounds ago. And it was agony before the competition; I was miserable.

But Jesus was in agony. So Luke tells usHe was in agony. That has to do with what was going on in Jesus’ soul; He was in agony.

Okay, what does Matthew say? This is Matthew 26:37: *“Taking with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, He began to be sorrowful and troubled.”*

Okay, let’s look at those two words. Sorrowful is the Greek word that means to experience deep emotional pain, sadness, severe sorrow and grief. Okay, we can understand that. And also troubled. It is to feel fear or a lack of courage, to be distressed. So Jesus was both deeply in a lot of emotional pain in the garden, and He was also fearful and He was distressed, lacking courage.

But I thought what was most interesting was in Mark 14:33. And I googled this to try to find the real understanding of this, and I only found one article about it. And the article itself said that they hadn’t found any other articles on this interesting word; it stopped me in my tracks. Mark 14:33 says: *“He took with Him Peter and James and John and began to be greatly distressed and troubled.”* This is the ESV. *“And He said to them, ‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.”*

So the word “troubled” there in Mark 14:33 is the same word that’s used in Matthew 26:37, which is feeling fear or lack of courage. But what they translate as “greatly distressed” is not found in any of the other Gospel accounts. And it has an interesting meaning because it’s translated in the ESV as “greatly distressed.” But it means in almost every instance amazed and greatly astonished, which is a different kind of meaning than “greatly distressed.”

And interestingly enough the King James Version translates it as *“Jesus began to be sore amazed and to be very heavy.”* And in the American Standard Version it’s translated as *“He began to be greatly amazed and sore troubled.”*

It’s interesting that this word is only found four times in the New Testament, and it’s always found in Mark. Mark is the only one that uses this word. And it’s used with the healing of the boy with the unclean spirit in Mark 9:15. *“And immediately all the crowd when they saw Him were greatly amazed, and ran up to Him and greeted Him.”* It’s found here in Mark 14:33: Jesus praying in the garden. And it’s found in Mark 16, verses 5 and 6. *“Entering the tomb the women saw a young man sitting on the right hand, dressed in a white robe. And they were alarmed.”* It could have just as easily been translated as “amazed” or “astonished” or “awestruck.” *And he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed.”* Do not be surprised, amazed, awestruck. *“You seek Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified. He is risen’ He is not here.”*

So I began to drill down on this word because it’s such a unique word, and it’s found in no other Gospels, and it’s only found in Mark. And it’s only found four times in Mark in the entire New Testament. And what I came to read, if I’m going to translate this correctly, is that while He was praying in the garden, Jesus was amazed and astonished.

Now I understand His stress. I understand being fearful; I get it. I don’t understand amazed and astonished. What was Jesus amazed and astonished by?

In the article that I read—a very good article—the author says: *“Why did the translators not translate it that way?”* Did they have some problem with Jesus saying, “Wow! I can’t believe that!”

I get the physical suffering and humiliation of Jesus; I think He understood that. It was awful; it was portrayed in a number of movies and books have been written about His physical humiliation and all that He was suffering. He had already experienced this in part in His earthly life; this would not have surprised Him. I kept asking myself the question. What would have surprised Jesus at the end of His life? What was something He had never experienced?

And we’re talking in time and in space here; it’s hard to do that. He existed forever. What was the one thing He had never experienced?

**John:** Separation from God.

**Ted:** That’s right; being forsaken by God! Being forsaken; remember the word *azab*—cut loose—forsaken, cut loose, left by His Father, being cut off from His perfect *koinonia,* the perfect fellowship that the Trinity had for eternity—beyond eternity, beyond time and space. This is something He had never experienced. And I know; we’re talking about eternity and time and space, and outside of time and space; I understand. But it leads to that.

So I began to think about that. *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”* As I said, in Psalm 22 verse 1 the Hebrew word means to let loose, to refuse, to let go. And in the Gospels that’s translated with another word that means to leave behind, desert or abandon. “Why have You deserted or abandoned Me? Why have You forsaken Me?”

**Don Nemit:** Ted?

**Ted:** Yes?

**Don:** When I read that particular verse—*“Why have You forsaken Me?)*—with what we just discussed, He experienced what we should. But I look and say, “You forsook Him because of me.”

**Ted:** Yeah.

**Don:** He is my perfect propitiation. Because of what He suffered, I’ll never suffer that.

**Ted:** Right.

**Don:** With thanksgiving.

**Ted:** You’ve gotten ahead; you hit my best line at the end. *(Laughter)* I’m getting there; I want to give us a bit more time.

**Don Bishop:** Aren’t we made to sing that the Second Person of the Trinity was forsaken by the first Person?

**Ted:** Yes, I know.

**Don:** How does that happen?

**Ted:** How does that happen?

**Don Maurer:** I was going to ask that too. The universe would disintegrate.

**Ted:** That’s right; of course. I understand the theological problems with it. But nonetheless I’m trying to wrestle with the fact that Jesus was amazed, astonished. What astonished Him? All the other verses talk about distress, fear and discouragement—all of these things—but what was the thing that really surprised Him? That’s the thing I had to wrestle with. John, I can see you warming up here; I was waiting for you.

**John:** Do you want it now or do you want to finish your thought?

**Ted:** Well let me just do it quickly and then we can end. It’s the experience of Psalm 51:11: *“Cast me not from Your presence.”* The exact same word is to hurl back or to throw away.

On the other hand, in many places in Scripture, we have the assurance that once born again by the Spirit, the Spirit can never be taken away from us; we know that. I mean, we’re settled with that experience. But God could do it; He could forsake me. He has the power to forsake me. He has the justification to forsake me. He should forsake me. I deserve to be forsaken. But He won’t because of His covenant which was sealed in His Son’s death and resurrection.

It’s interesting. I found that interesting passage in Genesis 28:10 and 15: Jacob and the angels going up and down on the ladder into heaven. But what does the Lord say to Jacob as he’s seeing this dream? *“I am the LORD, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac. Behold, I am with you and will keep you, and will bring you back to this land, for I will not leave you.”* *Azab*—forsake; the same word in Psalm 22:1—*“I will not leave you or forsake you until I have done what I have promised you.”* God is not going to forsake us because He has made a promise and a covenant.

We see the same thing in Philippians 1:6: *“I am sure of this: that He that began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”* And 1 Thessalonians 5:23: *“Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely. And may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus. He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it.”*

This is a promise. Even though we deserve that same forsaking, that, as you said, was done on our behalf. But that terrifying amazing, astonishing fear of being forsaken—a greater fear than the wrath of God I believe—the fear of being forsaken by God is greater than the fear of the wrath of God, because the forsaking of God makes me as nothing. It doesn’t just punish me; it nullifies me. This should motivate us to embrace the Father and kiss Him and plead, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and earth and before You, and am no longer worthy to be called Your son.”

I had an experience in a very dark period of my life back in the ‘early 80s where a priest took me in because I had no place to live, and he made a house for me. But I continued to sin during that period and to rebel. And then finally the priest, Father Bob, sat me down and he said, “Ted, I think God is about to run out of patience with you.”

And you know, I had other theological answers for that, because of course “I will never forsake you; I will do all this good work for you; I’ll never leave you alone.” But when Father Bob said that to me, it struck me as profoundly true: that God was about to run out of patience with me. I was about to be forsaken by God. Theologically I knew that was not possible. Existentially I felt it. That God-awful fear of being deserted by God—cut loose by the God that I claimed to love and follow—was so terrifying for me to imagine that that became my repentance.

So although we know that God will never forsake us, that’s still in His card deck; He can still deal that out, except for what happened in Jesus Christ. So I just thought that last part was very interesting. So John, give it your best shot.

**John:** I saw that Don’s hand was up first.

**Ted:** Don has asked all the questions he’s allowed to ask. *(Laughter)* He’s gone over his quota. *(Laughter)* Fire away, brother.

**John:** It’s a hard thing to understand; thanks for bringing it out. Why did Jesus do it? Why did He go through with it? I think what you said backs up that answer. “For God so loved the world,” and “it was for the joy set before Him that He endured the shame” and went to the cross. And also we have “No one takes My life from Me. But I have the power to lay it down and I have the power to take it up again.” And maybe in that moment in the garden He marveled at what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 2:6: *“But truly we do speak wisdom among those who are mature: however not of this age, nor of the rulers of this age who are passing away. But we speak God’s wisdom in a mystery, repeating wisdom which God predestined for the ages to our glory: the wisdom which none of the rulers of this age has understood.”* Those are the rules of the shop. *“For if they had understood it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.”* And for the joy in the wisdom of the plan hidden in the ages He was astonished, even at His own and His Father’s wisdom. “They think they’re going to win. But I’m going to lay My life down and I’m going to show who is God. Then all the nations will t4urn and delight in Me.” He is lifted up and He will draw all men to Himself. And in the weight of the heaviness there was already the light of the joy of why He came in the first place. All the weight then was put upon Him at the moment there before the plan was completely fulfilled when He said, *“It is finished.”*

**Ted:** Anything else? Any comments? Let’s say goodbye. John’s comments and everybody’s comments are excellent. Why was Jesus amazed in Gethsemane? I’m sorry. Yes?

**David Miller:** In 1971 I was passing out some gospel tracts. And God told me, “This is your last chance.” And I was terrified of losing my connection to God. And I realized then that He was the only source of any and all good for all of us.

**Ted:** Thank you. Go in peace; we’ll see you next week. *(Applause)*