

PSALM 22

A study of the psalms warms our heart as the midday sun warms and brightens a cold, dull stone lying alone in a field. The psalms often tell of universal feelings through the events of one person's life and we can relate. We, too, have been in need of protection, of rescue, of a lifted spirit and a forgiven heart. The psalms are stylistically beautiful, full of wonder, graphic metaphors and splendid imagery. Our mood goes up. *But* a word of caution! Grocery store music or winning a fat sweepstake's purse might have the same effect - for a time. And to live on the basis of such feelings is to be a sensual Christian, dominated by highs and lows of mood.

The lifting-up that we should look for from the psalms comes from a fresh or renewed *understanding of truth*. Truth about a mighty God who is Holy and who is also Love. Truth about who I am and the way out of my fetters and weaknesses. Truth about my world and how to live and like it. A life warmed and brightened by *understanding the truth* of the psalms will still have a defense when the feelings dissipate. And like a stone sun-warmed, a life warmed and brightened by the truth of God will have something to radiate to those around it. That's God's desire. He'll help us to understand.

The Bible is true and reliable and one way we know this is by seeing hard times and dark moods and defeats and sins set forth, as well as health, wealth and happiness. God is always our answer but our path to Him may be smooth or it may be very rough. In Psalm 22 David begins in the rough. Many presently identify; all will eventually. Let's anticipate help in our stormy days by gaining understanding of David's way through his.

Review your memory verses from Psalms.

1. Write out the one that's helped you most.

2. If you can, *relate an instance* this past week when you remembered His promise in Psalm 18:17-19 and counted on Him while under stress to deliver you from an enemy of your soul.

Memorize Psalm 22:22. Have someone help you check your memory by saying your verse to them. (A friend, child, co-worker - everyone likes to be needed.)

3. Who did you say your verse to? _____

Read Psalm 22 through at one sitting.

4. Would you say that the tone of the psalm is up or down? Why?

5. Verses 1 and 2 are a personal expression of David's feelings.

a. What is he feeling?

b. Who is he talking to?

6. At this point, do you think he is trusting God or not? Please explain.

Read verses 3-5.

7. In the midst of his confusion and feelings of isolation (verses 1-2) what does David do?

8. What does "holy" mean (verse 3)?

9. How does God's being Holy tie in with the way David feels in verses 1-2?

10. How does looking to the past help him to face the present? (Re-read the verses if necessary.)

Read verses 6-8. This is another "me" section.

11. What is going on in this section and how is David feeling? Who is he talking to?

Read verses 9-11. Now another "You" or "Thou" section.

12. David is using the same device in these verses that he did in verses 3-5 to free himself from being sucked down by his feelings. What is it? What truth does he see that helps him?

Read verses 12-18. Notice again all the "me" words.

13. How does he describe his adversaries?

14. How does he describe himself?

Read verses 19-21.

15. What does David mean in these verses?

16. What progression do you see in David's thoughts about God in verses 3-5, 9-11, and 19-21?

Read verses 22-31.

17. Do you see verse 22 as a turning point in this psalm? Why?

18. Do you think David's trouble had ended when his praise began? Read carefully these verses again.

19. Who else besides David will praise God?
20. What kinds of people will worship God ultimately?
21. How does David's suffering integrate with the worship all men will give to God?
(Think about what they "remembered" in verse 27.)
22. At what point does this psalm depict your experience? How?

Read Mark 15:1-39.

23. In what ways does this psalm also refer to Jesus?
24. How does what Jesus went through relate to you and the principles of Psalm 22?
Make it personal, please.
25. As you consider Psalm 22, what principles of prayer – talking to God – do you see?