

**Christ on the Cross Suffered  
Emotional Trauma for Us  
Sermon on Psalm 22:6-11  
Saint Mark's, Watertown  
Pastor Karl Walther  
February 27, 2008**

*He was pierced for our transgressions, Christ was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by Jesus' wounds we are healed. Amen.*

God's sacred Word for our special consideration today is, once again, Christ's own narration of his crucifixion in Psalm twenty-two—and this week specifically verses six through eleven.

You might recall that last week this psalm led us especially to consider the suffering in his soul that Jesus experienced on the cross. Next week we will focus particularly on Jesus' physical suffering. This week you could say that we are looking especially at the emotional trauma Jesus experienced during his crucifixion. Psalm twenty-two, verses six through eleven...:

Christ on the cross says: **But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by men and despised by the people. All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."**

And then to his Heavenly Father: **Yet you brought me out of the womb; you made me trust in you even at my mother's breast. From birth I was cast upon you; from my mother's womb you have been my God. Do not be far from me, for trouble is near and there is no one to help.**

This is God's Spirit-inspired record of Christ's emotional trauma upon the cross.

### **Introduction: Have You Ever Felt Friendless & Helpless?**

Dear fellow Christians—for whom Christ Jesus suffered friendlessness, helplessness, even hopelessness:

Have you ever felt like you didn't have a single friend in the entire world? ...Maybe some of us have; possibly most of us haven't—except maybe for a brief moment here or there. It must be terrible to feel like you don't have a single friend. I suppose that's what severe depression is like. I suppose that such friendlessness is what those who commit suicide must feel.

A related idea: Have you ever felt completely helpless? ...Again: Maybe some of us have; possibly most of us have not—at least since we were infants. It must be terrible to feel absolutely, completely helpless. I imagine that's what a convicted criminal must feel like, while awaiting sentencing—helpless. I imagine that's what somebody going in for some exceedingly serious life-making or life-taking surgery must feel—helpless.

God's Word to us today comes from somebody who really was without a friend in all the world and without any help in all the world. We'll also find out why he suffered that—and what effect it ought to have on our lives.

## Part One: Jesus Suffered Emotional Trauma at the Hands of Others

It's David who is writing God's Word to us today, under inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. It's about a thousand years before the time of Christ. David is writing hymn number twenty-two in the inspired Old Testament hymnal of the Israelites. And he isn't talking about himself at all here. David is recording the thoughts of his Savior, who is dying on the cross, also for you and for me.

Jesus describes his situation this way: *But I am a worm* – uh, that's actually, literally: *a maggot – I am a maggot and not a man*. Oooh, that's ugly, isn't it?!

And why does Christ on the cross describe himself that way? He comments further: *I am [the scorn of] men and [the contempt of] the people*.

And again, why does Jesus say that? Well, he describes the scene around him: *All who see me mock me; they hurl insults, shaking their heads: "He trusts in the LORD; let the LORD rescue him. Let him deliver him, since he delights in him—Hah!!!"*

And of course, that's an accurate prophecy of exactly what the Jewish leaders said at the foot of the cross. In fact, it's striking, isn't it?! Unbeknownst to them, they were fulfilling the Scriptures. Now, it takes an eternal God to foresee something a millennium ahead of time and then, after dozens of generations of humans have lived and died, to see it fulfilled. That marks this – and all the other prophecies of the Bible – as the true Word of the eternal God.

But returning to the story, think of what all this meant for Jesus! The very people for whom Jesus was at that moment dying ... were ridiculing him. The very men whom he had set in place as the leaders of his people ... were making fun of him. And they weren't making fun of his mannerisms, or his character, or even his manhood. They were making fun of his true claim to have a special Son-to-Father relationship with God. And they were calling into question whether he – the perfect Man, the sacred God the Son – really trusted in the Heavenly Father at all.

## Application One: Jesus Made Sure Never to Leave Us Friendless

I mean: it's painful even to hear! So, why did Christ Jesus go through all of that? It's because that's what you and I deserved. As our chief friend, he went through all of this, so that we wouldn't have to do so.

You and I do deserve ridicule and shame—maybe for our mannerisms, certainly for our character, definitely over our manhood or womanhood, and especially over our relationship to God. Here God created us, kindly, lovely, for his employ. But we sin so much, we defy him so much, we dishonor him so much, we would be hypocrites to call ourselves his people.

We deserved ridicule and shame for that. But Jesus went through it instead, as our Substitute—for us! And that means we always do have a Friend. No matter how depressed we are, Jesus is always our real Friend. No matter how bleak life looks, Jesus is always our genuine Friend. No matter how sinful we have been, Jesus is always our real Friend—and he willingly suffered the punishment we deserved: to cancel our sins.

And I guess that also gives us quite some motivation to get along with one another...! Is there an individual in your life who seems to be without a friend? Be a friend to him! Be a friend to her! And do it in honor of Jesus, who was a genuine Friend to us who were friendless.

## Part Two: Jesus Suffered Emotional Trauma at the Hands of His Father

Still, we've really got to say that Jesus suffered worse yet for you and for me.... Not only was he traumatized emotionally by his people, as we've read; he was also traumatized emotionally by his Heavenly Father.

And it had never been that way before. God the Son, upon the cross, says to God the Father: *Yet you brought me out of the womb.* In fact, it was God the Father who placed him uniquely in his virgin mother's womb. *You made me trust in you even at my mother's breast.* In fact, his was the perfect trust of a holy Son toward his loving Father. *From birth I was cast upon you.* That's not true of any of us. We were cast upon the Lord from rebirth in Holy Baptism. But Jesus belonged to God's family as a natural born Son immediately. And: *from my mother's womb you have been my God.* Again, absolutely not ... can any of us say that. As David wrote elsewhere: We were sinful from birth, sinful from the time our mothers conceived us. But it wasn't that way with Jesus.

Nevertheless, Christ on the cross had to say to his Heavenly Father: *Do not be far from me* – something which, however, was happening – *for trouble is near* – sin and shame, guilt and punishment: all things that were foreign to the nature of Christ Jesus – *and there is no one to help* – not even his Heavenly Father, not even the Holy Spirit. Jesus was abandoned upon the cross.

### **Application Two: Jesus Made Sure Never to Leave Us Helpless**

A person almost cannot bear to hear it! So, why did Christ Jesus go through all of that? It's because this is what you and I deserved. As our chief Helper, Jesus went through helplessness, so we would never have to do so.

You and I deserved to go without help. You and I should have to face our pain and sickness without the help of medicine and without the help of God—because mankind's sin is the source of pain and sickness. You and I should have to face our distress and sadness without the help of others and without the help of God—because mankind's sin is the source of all that evil. And you and I should have to face our judgment without the help of forgiveness and without the help of God.

We deserved to go without a helper in the world. But Jesus went helpless instead, as our Substitute—for us! And that means we always have a Helper. No matter what pain or sickness we face, Jesus helps us through it, often Jesus helps us get over it, and finally Jesus conquers our pain and sickness and delivers us into glory. No matter what distress or sadness we face, Jesus does the same. And no matter how rebellious we have been, Jesus is always our Helper—his death always avails to forgive you and me.

And I guess that give us some really good motivation to help one another...! Is there an individual in your life who needs your assistance? Help her! Help him! And do it in honor of Jesus, who is genuine help for us who are otherwise helpless.

### **Conclusion: Due to Jesus You Have Never Been Friendless & Helpless!**

So, have you ever been friendless? Have you ever been helpless? Have you ever been hopeless? Actually: never!—at least not since you've been a Christian. Jesus is your Friend, your Help, and your Hope. His cross proves it! And his empty tomb delivers it! Now, doesn't that give you something you need to share with others? Amen.

*We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on Jesus Christ the iniquity of us all.* Amen.