

Psalm 22

HOPE BEYOND DESPAIR

A prayer in the dark

 Hazlemere
church

IN

Introduction

Connecting in with each other

- How 'hopeful' have you felt recently?
- What things have brought you hope or comfort?
- How easy have you found it to turn to God over recent days?

Pause and pray for the Holy Spirit to guide your thoughts as you study this Psalm

UP

Explore

Exploring Gods word to draw closer to Him

Read through the whole of Psalm 22

- How would you express David's complaints in more contemporary language?
- How would you define what 'forsaken' means and feels like?
- Despite David's despair, what can you find in the Psalm that also describes his hope in God? Which of these do you find most helpful for you to hold on to hope in God?
- Why do you think Jesus, when on the cross, cried out that God had forsaken him? Why is this significant for us?
- What in this Psalm most helps you to rejoice and have hope in God?

OUT

Impact

The impact on our lives

- Choose one or two verses from the Psalm to share with the group, to form the basis of a prayer for yourself

End with a time of prayer for each other, and for the world.

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Some brief thoughts from the Psalm on the problem of suffering

The reality of suffering (vs. 1-2; 6-8; 12-18; 19-21)

Being a Christian does not make you immune to suffering. Suffering exists, there are different types of suffering. There are many Biblical examples of suffering, but a repeated theme in all of these is of God's people engaging with Him, and expressing all kinds of emotions to him, amidst their suffering.

Faith in God in the face of suffering (vs. 3-5; 9-11; 22-24)

We are not often given an answer about why we are not immediately rescued from suffering. And yet when we are going through suffering, an apologetic will not bring us relief. But it is God himself who can bring us hope despite suffering, giving us a larger perspective to our own situation. God is still the God who is worthy of praise (v3) and who can be our delight (v8); who is trustworthy; and who delivers. God is greater than our suffering. Even though His ways are sometimes beyond our understanding, He is reliable as the object of our faith, even in the face of suffering.

A God who suffers with and for his people - the cross (vs. 1a, 16b-18)

This is the key to having a Godly perspective of suffering. On the cross a good God suffers for and with his people. He demonstrates his love, opens the way to give direct access to him, and ushers in the new Kingdom.

Our future hope (vs. 22-31)

We currently live in the now and not yet. God's Kingdom is here, but not yet here in all its fullness. We are still broken people living in a fallen world and suffering still exists. Yet a day is coming when all the ends of the earth will turn to the Lord and bow down before him and God's Kingdom will arrive in all its fullness (vs. 27-28).