

Home Group study: week beginning 4<sup>th</sup> May 2020

## **Psalm 22: Where is God when it hurts?**

Can you relate an occasion when God has really given you a great blessing? Or has God's blessing to someone else really encouraged you in your life: whether it be someone you know, someone you've read about or someone in the Bible? Have you ever been able to draw on these experiences when things have been tough?

### **Read: Psalm 22: 1-11**

Dave mentioned on Sunday that this Psalm is, on one level, amazingly prophetic of Jesus' crucifixion. Are there any words that remind us directly of the crucifixion story in Matthew 27?

Compare verses 1 and 2 with verses 3-5; then compare verses 6-8 with verses 9-11. What do you notice? Verse 8 is quoted in the narrative about Jesus' crucifixion in Matthew 27 v43. It seems though that David has already provided himself with an answer for verse 8 in verse 4; do you agree? Do you think Jesus might have had verse 4 in his mind when the chief priests etc were using verse 8 to insult him on the cross?

### **Understanding**

We don't know exactly what the background is to Psalm 22, though it is clearly a Psalm of David so is referring to something in David's life. Dave suggested it might have been when Saul was trying to kill him, though David had done nothing to deserve that; or that it might have been his son Absalom conspired against him and deposed him after he had committed adultery with Bathsheba. In one situation he was unjustly facing danger, in the other he had, arguably, brought it upon himself. Do you think God would still have answered his prayer in either situation? If so, what does that say about the way God answers our prayers?

In verses 1 and 2 David sets out his complaint. What is his complaint? In the next 'complaining' section, verses 6-8, he looks at himself. How does he see himself? How does he deal with it in verses 9 and 10? What can we learn from this when we fall into the trap of despising ourselves?

Look now at verses 23-31. How does this strike you coming after what we have seen in verses 1-11? What has happened to change the mood of this Psalm? Can we turn our negatives into positives in the same way?

### **Application**

Do we sometimes feel like God is a very long way off and is not hearing our prayers? What very practical lessons can we learn from this Psalm at such times? It may be that we feel rather that way at the moment; a bit confused, struggling to understand where God is in all this, especially for those having to cope on their own. How can our trust in God be refreshed in difficult times like this?

In his sermon on Sunday Dave speculated that the COVID-19 pandemic could be part of the fall of man going right back to Adam & Eve, or it could be that the way we have treated our planet in our pursuit of greed may have made the increase of infection more likely. He suggested this was something to think about. So: what do people think? Let's not forget, though, that God is in control and God has always come through for his people: even when they really haven't deserved it.