



**Empowering People to Change the World**

**Praise Amid Suffering  
Psalm 22  
Steve Holt**

## Road Declaration

### Praise Amid Suffering

#### Psalm 22

- Most definitely, one of the hardest disciplines to learn is thanking God, praising God, in the midst of suffering.
- Thanking God for good things, blessings, is easy—the locker room after the victory.
- But thanking and even praising God after a huge defeat takes resolute faith and belief in the sovereignty and power of God!

#### Psalm 22

##### Verses 1-2

- Jesus' words on the cross as He gives His life: While on the cross, the tortured Jesus cried out these words. Hell is total separation from God as a punishment for unrepentant sin, a state of being forsaken. Jesus went to hell so that we would not have to go to hell.
  - Hell is a real place! Jesus is taking on our sins, and He is feeling the desperation of separation from God.

#### **Hell is the desperation of separation from God on Earth and into eternity!**

- God the Father is turning His head from His Son, Who is taking on all of our sins. This is the great love of the Father and Son, taking on our sin so that we would not have to.
- David would not have known that his Psalm would be the poem the Messiah would quote 1,000 years later. David is truly expressing his feelings at the time.
- David is in the midst of great suffering: Might this have been while being chased by Saul? Hated by the people? Despised by his own

son? After his adulterous affair with Bathsheba? After the death of his infant son? The death of Absalom?

### **Suffering and loneliness haunts all of us! It's the culture of this world.**

- There are times when God seems so very distant.
- There are seasons when we cry out to God, and He seems to have taken the “last train to Clarksville.” Where is He? Doesn't He care?
- We are groaning inside, feeling so very distant from the Lord.

### **Verse 3**

#### **“But God” is the foundation of miracles.**

- But...and that is a big word...BUT YOU...two powerful words!
- The two most powerful words in the English language: BUT GOD.
- Whenever we choose to say, “But You,” or “But God,” we are back on track.
- “But You are holy.” What David is saying is that “You are sovereign.”  
“You are perfectly in control.”
  - Yet we feel He is not “in control” over our affairs.
  - God is working things out IF we will say and mean “But God.”
- That is why we must get to the next part, “Enthroned in the praises of Israel.” God is enthroned, crowned, lifted up, whenever we praise Him!

#### **Praise enthrones God in our heart! God gets back on the throne of our lives when we worship Him, when we praise Him!**

- This is one of the “secret places” of God.
- One of the great lessons of the Christian life is learning to praise God in the midst of suffering!

- David is reminding himself; David is shaking himself; David is waking his spirit.
- David is saying, “I will not be depressed and destroyed by my circumstances; rather, I will praise and worship God!”

### **Verses 4-5**

- One of the exercises of faith and praise is to remember back.

### **Look back and remember what God has done; not just in our lives, but in the lives of the saints of old.**

- Look back and meditate on the lives of great leaders who have been used mightily by God: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Elijah, the Apostle Paul, the Apostle Peter.
- Ex. Men like J. Hudson Taylor, George Mueller, C.T. Studd, D.L. Moody, Charles Spurgeon, Bill Bright, and Billy Graham.
- Read biographies.
- These were men just like us. These were men who made mistakes, fell into sin, yet stayed faithful; and God mightily used them.
- God wants to remind us that He still works supernaturally and powerfully.
- They cried out during times of distress, and God showed up and delivered them!

### **Verses 6-8**

- But Satan comes, too; demons come. They come to ridicule you and accuse you.
- These are people being used by Satan to ridicule, harass, and accuse you.

### **Revelation 12:10**

**“Then I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, ‘Now salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ have come, for the accuser of our brethren, who accused them before our God day and night, has been cast down.’”**

- Satan comes to accuse and berate us! All day long, he looks for opportunity to attack us.
- But “the accuser of our brethren...has been cast down.” The cross is the anecdote to his charges.

### **When Satan accuses you, send him to the cross!**

- Send Satan to the cross...tell him not to mess with you. You are only His servant. God, take up his accusations with Jesus...make him go to the cross, and let God fight for you!
- “You can quit harassing me right now! Take up your accusations to the cross of Jesus. Tell Him about my mistakes!”

### **The Vulnerable Prayer of David**

- This is one of the most vulnerable, honest prayers in the Bible!

### **Verses 9-21**

- David is crying out; he is exhausted; he is so down.
- Do you ever feel like you are just “poured out like water” with nothing more to give?
- I have been there so many times...
- It feels like we are in the arena, surrounded by bulls, dogs, and lions! Those are strong pictures. David and Christ feel utterly abandoned in the arena - out of strength, out of ideas, out of control.

### **Prayer Shift: from Problems to Praise**

### **Verse 21b**

- But David hears from God! “You have answered me...”

### **Verses 22-23**

- David chooses by faith to praise the Lord in the midst of his struggles.
- David chooses to praise the Lord to the congregation.
- David lets everyone see him in a posture of praise and worship.
- David declares the name of Yahweh to the people.
- Praise is lifting up the name of Christ even when we don't feel like it, even when we feel defeated and beaten down.

### **Verse 24**

- When we cry out, God always hears.
- We have no place in the Bible where God doesn't respond to the cries of His people!
- God loves to answer those who cry out to Him!

### **Verses 25-28**

#### **Our testimony of praise touches so many lives.**

- All the ends of the earth are touched when we become a people of praise.
- At the heart of God is the Great Commission...praise changes us; praise gives us the heart of God.
- Families are touched by our praise.

#### **The goal of the cross is in verses 27-28.**

### **Verses 29-31**

- So, church, praise the Lord in times of depression, struggle, and difficulty.
- Praise him, cry out to Him, and He will show up and touch the nations through you!

**Revelation 7:9-10**

**“After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!’”**