

TOPICS: Faith; Folk Tunes; Jesus' Suffering & Death; Lament; Lent-Easter

LEAD-IN: *My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?* (Psalm 22:1, NASB)

LEAD-IN DEVOTIONAL READING, non-seasonal:

Trusting God in the Darkness

A Prayer Based on Psalm 22

My God, my Father, I feel abandoned.
I continually cry out to You,
 but You do not answer.
I have no rest, and
 deliverance seems a million miles away.

But Lord, I know
 You are pure and perfect.
 You are the sovereign king of all.
 You are forever with Your people.
When they have trusted You and cried out to You,
 You have always delivered them.
Always!

Look at me, Lord.
Look at me!
To the people around me, I am not even human.
I am revolting to them,
 something to be
 despised and
 ridiculed.
They even mock my devotion to You.

But Father, my life has always been interwoven with Yours.
My life is continually
 trusting You and
 depending on You.

God, I am utterly dependent on You now.
I am encircled by
 powerful and vicious beasts,
 roaring to consume me.
I have no strength left.
My body, heart, and soul,
 are completely spent,
 drained away like water.
The wicked
 shout at me,
 glare at me,
 growl at me,
and I cannot answer.
 I cannot resist.
They give full vent to their hatred.
They pierce my hands and my feet.
They even take the last scraps of my clothing,
 knowing I will never need them again.

But Father,
 You are, and
 You are God.
You were, and are, and are to come,
 forever.
With my last breath
 I will trust You.
With every ounce of strength You lend me
 I will glorify You,
 I will worship You,
 I will praise You!
Your praise will sound through
 all people of
 every nation and
 every age.

Father God, You are Lord of heaven and earth,
 now and forever.
I trust You.
Praise to You!

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LEAD-IN DEVOTIONAL READING, Jesus on the cross:

Why Have You Forsaken Me?

As Jesus was dying on the cross,
in the darkness and pain He cried out,

“My God, my God, why have you forsaken Me?” (Matthew 27:46, NASB)

With all that He was enduring,
 physically and
 emotionally,
His deepest sorrow was feeling separated from His Father.

But He expressed His sorrow using the opening words of Psalm 22.
That Psalm, filled with
 raw honesty and
 desperate cries,
is an eloquent prayer of determined faith.
Jesus was making that prayer His own.

In the grip of the very worst life can bring,
 Jesus showed the way for us.
He expressed ultimate faith in
 the unchanging faithfulness of
 the Sovereign of the universe.

Even as Jesus felt
helpless,
utterly alone,
separated from His Father,
He turned to Him and
trusted Him.

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