

Psalm 22: 21-26; “Christ Declaring God’s Name”, A Communion Sermon, part of the series entitled – “Christ’s Passion, Death, and Resurrection noted in The Psalms and Remembered”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on December 6th, 2015, in the Afternoon Worship Service.

We are going through the Psalms to uncover Christ’s passion, death, and Resurrection so that we might remember Him this afternoon, even as we have received the command from Him to do so. I hope that you have seen from our previous studies that Christ is just as vividly portrayed here in the Old Testament as He is in the New Testament gospels. Perhaps He is even more vividly portrayed here, as His thoughts are revealed in depth; the prayers of His heart are written down for us to examine in detail. In verses 22-26 we find Christ’s prayers have been answered in His being raised from the dead. You will notice that in verse 21, the last phrase reads, “You have answered me.” All through this psalm we have seen that the Lord Jesus was suffering at the hands of wicked men and He was crying out to His Father God to deliver Him. In verse 1 He asks, “Why have You forsaken Me?” He is praying, but God is far from His groanings. As we examined this more closely, we saw that the Lord Jesus did not leave off praying even though He was not being heard. Even though His Father had deliberately left Him in this suffering state, we find that He was justifying God in His leaving him in those sufferings. This was because before the foundation of the world, He had covenanted with His Father to willingly undergo these sufferings. As a Man, now, He had to come to terms with them. During this critical time of His earthly ministry, when He was dying on the cross, He knew that for our sakes He had to come to the place where He saw Himself as a worm and not a man. He continued to entrust Himself to God even though trouble was near and there was none to help. He was brought to this death of being crucified for our sakes, still praying that His father would help Him; that He would deliver His precious life from the power of these men who were acting like dogs. He was still praying that He would be saved from the lion’s mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen.

Then came those words that we will begin with this afternoon, “You have answered Me.” The Father did not answer the Lord Jesus to deliver Him from death at that time when He was on the cross. Christ must die for the sins of His people. His precious life could not be spared from this, even though He was not only innocent, but He was perfectly righteous. But after He died there on the cross, His precious life could be righteously restored in His resurrection from death. God would vindicate His Righteous Son. We see here in verses 22-26 Christ’s triumphant praise to His Father for fulfilling His Eternal Purposes in regard to Redemption through Himself. Christ glories in this, and we should glory in it as well, because this is the reason that we have come to know God, and this is the reason that our hearts will live forever. Christ responds to what the Father has done for Him in raising Him from the dead by declaring His Father’s name to His brethren, and He tells us what we should do, we who believe in Christ, in light of His resurrection. So let us look at these things in that order.

1st of all – Christ’s response to the Father’s raising Him from the dead is to declare His Father’s name.

He says: “I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You.” Now that He had been freed from the grave and was alive forevermore, He would declare His Father’s name to His brethren, those who had stood by Him in His trials. He would declare what the Father had done for Him in raising Him from the dead. It says, “In the midst of the great assembly.” The specific fulfillment of this can legitimately be understood as referring to a number of places and times where Christ appeared to His brethren after the resurrection took place. Christ appeared to His disciples, manifesting Himself to them, telling them to touch Him and see that it was Him. It was a great occasion of praise, Christ’s bodily physical resurrection

from the dead. It says in Luke 24 that when Jesus appeared to them that they were frightened and supposed that they were seeing a spirit. But Jesus said, "Why are you troubled?" "And why do doubts arise in your hearts?" "Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself." "Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have." "When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet." It says further, "While they still did not believe it for joy, and marveled, He then said to them, 'Have you any food here?' "So they gave Him a piece of broiled fish and some honeycomb." "And He took it and ate in their presence."

You and I should see, that because our Lord Jesus was raised from the dead, and showed Himself to be alive in this way, we who believe in Him should be looking forward to the time of our Lord's 2nd Coming, when He will raise us from the dead on that final Day, with a transformed body. It will be the same body that we have now, only glorified; and we will be recognizable to others, as it being ourselves. Let us remember this afternoon that because Christ is alive forevermore, that we shall one day be alive forevermore in a glorified body. This ought to bring us great joy this afternoon as we partake of the Lord's Supper. It is because Christ died that we live. And it is because Christ was raised from the dead, that we too, shall one day be raised from the dead. As a believer in Christ, your spirit has been made alive by the working of the Holy Spirit. And this work was done on the basis of the merit of the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ. But our bodies will still decay, and someday our bodies will die because of sin. We can certainly glory in the fact that our spirits shall never die, and we can rejoice greatly that we will never perish eternally because of the work of Christ. But still, we must sadly accept the fact that our body must eventually die. But must we really be sad, that one day we shall die?

I suppose that this might be a cause for real discouragement, even to a true Christian, except for the reality of the resurrection which we celebrate here today. "Flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God," Paul says in 1st Corinthians 15: 50. "There is a natural body and a spiritual body," he says in 1st Corinthians 15: 44. But now, it is good for us to rejoice greatly in what Christ died to purchase for us; a glorified body in the Day of the resurrection. The hope that we have, even with regard to our mortal body is that someday we shall attain to this glorious resurrection of the dead. Our hope in this regard, should be fixed just as much upon our Lord Jesus for that great event, as it is fixed upon Him for the salvation of our souls, in our being brought to heaven instantly upon our death. Let us hold to both. Let us glory in this fact together, this afternoon, that man is not destined to be a disembodied spirit forever! It is true that we will die in weakness, at some point in time, in the future. We will die physically, but we shall be raised in power, if we have believed in Jesus.

Turn with me over to the book of Philippians, chapter 3, and verse 20. "For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself." How we should rejoice in this, today, and look forward to the future with a sure and certain hope! Our lowly body will be transformed, and made over into conformity to His glorious body; a body without sin or its effects, joined to a spirit without sin and its effects, so that we shall be like Christ Himself; beautiful, powerful, glorious, and righteous forevermore. What is the basis of such a hope? Verse 24 of our text tells us what happened behind the scenes spiritually, in the Father's mind. It says that God the Father did not "despise nor abhor the affliction of the afflicted; nor did He hide His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard." The sufferings of the Lord Jesus were not despised by His Father. Instead they were rewarded. Oh, it is true, that He could not hear and give an assuring answer to the crying, the prayers, and the tears of the Lord Jesus to be delivered from suffering on our behalf; when He was praying in the garden, and when He was suffering on the cross. But He could hear and answer in all the fullness and the richness of His blessing when those sufferings had been accomplished, and our Lord had made propitiation for

our sins; when He fulfilled everything necessary to bring salvation to us. The response of our Savior Himself at that time is recorded for us in verse 25 – “My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay my vows before those who fear Him.”

It is recorded in 1st Corinthians 15, verse 6, that He praised His Father in the midst of the great assembly of 500 brethren who saw Him, all at one time there. He was praising His Father God after His resurrection from the dead, because He knew that He had answered Him and had crowned Him with glory and honor, and had given Him a name above every name. He knew that all of His prayers for the Elect would be answered; that a vast number of sinners, a number which cannot be numbered, would all receive this great salvation which He had purchased. This verse 25 of our text is quoted again in Hebrews 2: 10-12 – “For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: ‘I will declare Your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to you.’” Christ praises His Father, realizing that He has been given a people to sanctify, and because of His death and resurrection, they shall indeed have all the blessings of grace which they need to bring them to that place where they shall be made holy and happy forevermore. Will you not rejoice in this today, dear Christian, as you approach the Lord’s table to partake. You are partaking of these rich blessings, costly blessings, blessings which make rich and add no sorrow.

2nd – What should your personal response, and our collective response, be here today in light of Christ’s resurrection?

You see it in verse 23. “You who fear the Lord, praise Him!” “All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel!” You see it again in verse 26 – “The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the Lord.” “Let your heart live forever!” You who believe have not come here this afternoon simply to go through the motions of partaking of the elements. You have come here to truly remember and praise the Lord. Let your heart live forever is not simply a slogan that we might say to one another because we hope that one day that we will wake up and find that it so. This statement is made here so that we might wake up now, and realize that our God and our Christ would have our hearts respond to Him in praise and thankfulness for all that God has done for us. God has sent His Son, and He has suffered and died for us. With His blood and righteousness He had purchased redemption, the forgiveness of all of our sins. He has given us a new heart, and grace and wisdom and truth to guide us all the way to heaven; all the way to the arms of your Savior.

And now you have come to realize as it says in Proverbs 23: 17, that you should not let your heart envy sinners, but rather it will be good for you to be zealous for the fear of the Lord all day long.” “For surely there is a hereafter, and your hope will not be cut off.” This is one of the greatest reasons that you will want to praise Him here today. You will want to praise Him because you have come to fear Him. You do not fear Him with a craven fear. But you have come to fear Him as it is described in Hymn # 31 of our Hymnal. “O how I fear thee, living God, with deepest tenderest fears; and worship thee with trembling hope, and penitential tears.” “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom”, it says in the Bible. If that is so, then we should understand that it is not only our duty to praise God for what He has done for us in Christ Jesus. But it should be our joy and our delight to do so. And even if we are not the physical descendants of Jacob, we should realize that through Christ we are the spiritual descendants of this great patriarch.

Therefore we ought to glorify God and fear Him as He deserves. If He can save tricky Jacob, He can save me! If Jacob can wrestle with God and prevail, then I can too, because of the mercy of God to me in giving me Christ. Since we have Christ we can fear God in our worship of our God, and we can fear Him in the way that we live our lives. When you fear God you are having

regard to him, to do what He commands and you greatly desire to live in the way that the Bible shows you that you ought to live; in reverence, joy, and holiness. It is your greatest joy to love God and keep His commandments. Will you not covenant with the Lord, when you come down to the front now to partake of the communion, that you would like to be more zealous for God, and live in the fear of the Lord all day long? You want to regard Him and His word above all things and all people. And you want to do and keep His commandments out of a love for what He has done for you. Let's come down front now and have real dealings with our God during this time of our considering and remembering what He has done for us.

3rd – What should you remember as you come to the Lord's table today?

You should remember that you who were spiritually poor have been made spiritually rich by Christ's grace. You who partake of this Supper shall eat and be satisfied, for this is why Christ died. You should remember that Christ has said to you, "Let your heart live forever!" This is the response that we come with this afternoon to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus has paid His vows. His vow was to do all of God's will and fulfill His holy law. He has worked out our salvation on the cross and it was rewarded in His resurrection. But all of these things were done on our behalf. Now that He has accomplished redemption, He has vowed to carry on this glorious work in your heart until He brings you to perfection; until you are completely like Him. The vows of the Lord Jesus are binding upon Him. Now that He has died and is raised from the dead, He will bring many sons and daughters to glory by the power of His grace. We should come here this afternoon as those who are poor in spirit. We have nothing in ourselves to bring to God so that He might continue to show us His favor. But we are confessing anew and afresh, the power of Christ to save us and to sanctify us. He is not ashamed to call us brethren because both Christ Himself, and our salvation in Him, are of gifts of our God who has united us to Himself.

Christ is God's gift to poor believing sinners. We come here to feed on His faithfulness. "The poor shall eat and be satisfied." Are you a partaker of Christ's death? Have you His resurrection power working in your heart, bringing you along step by step on the path of righteousness? Then your heart wants to seek Him and you will praise Him here today. In partaking of these elements you are saying: I know that Christ's death satisfied my sin debt, and I know that because He lives I can be satisfied with all He shall bring me in this life and the next. This will be made especially apparent to every believer in the day of the resurrection. Christ is saying to us here today, "If you have partaken of Me, then let your heart live forever!" In other words, praise God the Father now for all that is coming. Praise the Lord Jesus for His dying for you. Praise the Holy Spirit who is the great Teacher and Comforter in your learning and growing in the knowledge of Christ; the one who gives you understanding in how you can glorify God. Let us now with a thankful heart and partake of the Supper.