

**Psalm 69: 16-21; "Draw near to my Soul and Redeem it", A Communion
Sermon delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on October 1st, 2006 in the Morning
Worship. Part of a series on Christ's passion, death,
and Resurrection as noted in the Psalms and remembered.**

Last month when we came to the Communion table we looked at the first 15 verses of this Psalm and we saw that David's prayers and the prayers of Christ were all mixed up together so that it was hard to distinguish in some verses who is being referred to. There is a reason for this. It is because Christ had to undergo sufferings that were deeper and greater than David's, in order for David to be able to face his trials and distresses and sufferings in his journey through life. This is something that we need very much to remember in our journey through the Christian life. We are being conformed more and more to the blessed image of Christ after we become a Christian. Part of that conformity is our sufferings which produce proven character in us. Christ bears the guilt and the shame of all of our sins and we have come here to give Him eternal thanks this morning for what He has done. Christ's sufferings for us are redemptive. That means that He buys us back from sin by His suffering for us. The sufferings that we bear after we are converted are all related to what He wants us to come to know about ourselves and about Himself, so that we will grow in respect to salvation. Christ went farther and deeper in His sufferings than we ever will in ours, because He was bearing every punishment that our sins deserve. And that punishment was laid upon Him as a substitute, so that we would never have to bear God's anger and wrath due to our sin, for all eternity. There is no eternal punishment to be borne by a Christian for his sins because God's wrath has been turned away from him and has been laid upon Christ. "There is therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." But there are none-the-less, sufferings for a Christian to undergo that are part of the Father's loving discipline exercised towards him when he strays from the path of righteousness. And there are sufferings which come to the believer because he is consciously identifying himself with Christ and with what is right.

David experienced both, as we see in these verses, and we will experience both as well. God can answer David's prayers because God the Father is looking at the sufferings that His only-begotten Son will undergo for him in the future, while David is praying for deliverance, even before Christ died. God can answer our prayers for salvation, for help, and for deliverance because He has regard today, right now, for the sufferings of His Son which took place two thousand years ago in the past. This is the glory and power of the salvation which is in Jesus Christ. David looked forward to Christ to have his prayers answered, and we look back. What was it that Jesus Christ had to do, to purchase our redemption so that our prayers for deliverance would be heard? This applies to both the time when we were seeking forgiveness for the first time as well as other times after we are converted. We will come to the table in a few minutes and I hope that you will remember 4 things that the Lord Jesus had to suffer for us so that our prayer would be answered, "Draw near to my soul and redeem it.

1st of all- Jesus had to suffer His Father's hiding His face from Him.(Verse17)

David in verse 16 says, "Hear me, O Lord, for Your lovingkindness is good; turn to me according to the multitude of Your tender mercies." "Do not hide your face from your servant." David knew how great and extensive the goodness of the Lord are. He calls the number of ways that the Lord shows His goodness, a multitude. They would be too many

to count. He calls them tender mercies. He knows that God is tender in the way that He thinks upon believers, there is a gentleness, an awesome thoughtfulness in God as He thinks upon those who are His own. I do not know if David had written Psalm 31 by this time in his life, but perhaps he could remember the words of verse 19, "Oh how great is your goodness, which You have laid up for those who fear You, which You have prepared for those who trust in You in the presence of the son of men!" "You shall hide them in the secret place of Your presence from the plots of man; You shall keep them secretly in a pavilion from the strife of tongues." But now David pleads, "Do not hide Your face from Your servant, for I am in trouble; hear me speedily." Draw near to my soul, and redeem it." Deliver me from my enemies, he cries out in prayer to God. He does not yet sense the presence of God or understand Him to be coming to his aid.

Now think of Jesus Christ. If anyone ever knew just how good the lovingkindness of God is, it certainly would be God's son. God the Father always had a great love and delight in His Son from all eternity. He had always had a face which was beaming at Him; always had a face that was shining upon Him. He had always and forever in the past been satisfied with His Son, and Christ Himself had never known a time when this love and the expression of it on "His Father's face" had ever been anything but pure approval and perfect satisfaction in all that He did. Proverbs 8: 29 says, "When He assigned to the sea its limit, so that the waters would not transgress His command, when He marked out the foundations of the earth, then I was beside him as a master craftsman; and I was daily His delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in His inhabited world, and my delight was with the sons of men." God the Father and God the Son planned all this together; the creation of the world, and the Lord Jesus knew how good everything was that was created. But now, He who the "Brightness of His Father's glory, Sunshine of His Father's face" was in real trouble, surrounded by enemies; those of His own people who should have been His friends and even His worshipers. They do not believe in the good things that He had come to do for them. They did not believe that He is their Messiah, the promised Seed of the promises given to Abraham. They are giving their vote and their approval to put Him to death. Many of them do not understand that even though they are religious, that they do not know God. They will make Him suffer for telling them the truth. They arrest Him in the garden, they take Him before their Sanhedrin. They find him guilty on false charges and they convince the governor, Pontius Pilate to crucify Him. They pierce His hands and his feet. And He knows that all this is in accordance with His Father's plan, and He has willingly agreed to it. He could face all of this as the Son of God, beloved of His Father, but now as He looks down from the cross, He realizes that something is happening that is worse than all that has gone before; His Father is turning His face away! "Oh Father," He cries, "Do not hide Your face from Me!" "I am your servant." This is worse than all that has gone before. To be forsaken by His Father; nothing could be more grievous. Think of the best friend that you have, the person that you are closest to in this world; and think of them hiding their face from you and forsaking you at the time when you need them the most. This is what the Lord Jesus endured without blaming God His father. He knew that God was holy even so; but how much it hurt. Do you see, all you who are beloved of the Father, that Jesus had to do this so that you would be saved? Jesus had to do this so that you would never be forsaken eternally. Jesus had to do this so that you would be better able to endure the trials that you will go through as a Christian.

2ndly- I would have you to remember that Jesus suffered reproach, shame, and dishonor, for David, and for everyone who believes in Him, for their redemption.(Verse 19)

"You know my reproach, my shame, and my dishonor; My adversaries are all before You." "Reproach has broken my heart, and I am full of heaviness." When David was driven out of Jerusalem by his own son Absalom, there were many things said of him and to him which were not true and not kind. He had to bear this reproach because in his sin with Bathsheba there were certain disciplinary consequences that came to him from God. But we should also notice that the conclusions of some of the people around him, about what was happening to him, were entirely wrong. See 2 Samuel 16: 7 and 8. So also, there were many things that were said to the Lord Jesus, to His face, during His ministry; that were slanders, that were malicious, and that were untrue, which He had to bear for our sakes. A reproach is a charge that is brought against a person, designed in such a way as to make it evident to them that things that they have done or the way that they have lived their life is foolish or wrong or stupid. It is when another person, or a group of people speak against you to prove something about you in order to establish your real or supposed guilt. Jesus was guilty of nothing. But, to some people, He was to be blamed anyway. This is what many of the Jewish people of His day thought when He came preaching to them that they needed to be saved. The reason that Jesus came into the world was to bear witness to the truth. But the false religious system that the Jewish leaders had built up around the Scriptures and the Law of God was at odds with what Jesus came to bring to them, and to teach them. He had come to set them free from sin and to correct their false impressions of what true religion really was; and yet, they will reproach him for it.

A good example of this is found in John chapter 8. In this chapter Jesus is attempting to show the Jews "who had believed in Him", verse 31, that they needed to abide in His word if they were to be set free from their sin. "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed." "And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." They did not want to believe that they were slaves to sin and they were rejecting His word. He finally has to tell them in verse 44, "You are of your father the devil, and the desires of your father you want to do." "He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him." "when he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is liar and the father of it." "But because I tell you the truth, you do not believe Me." "Which of you convicts Me of sin?" "And if I tell the truth, why do you not believe Me?" "He who is of God hears God's words; therefore you do not hear, because you are not of God." Then the Jews answered and said to Him, 'Do we not say rightly that You are a Samaritan and have a demon?' This what they say to the Lord of Glory, the One who their people had waited for centuries to see, and to hear His words! Such is the strength of fallen, but religious human nature. It rejects Christ and dishonors Him. "Jesus answered, "I do not have a demon; but I honor My Father, and you dishonor Me." "And I do not seek My own glory; there is One who seeks and judges." "Most assuredly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word he shall never see death." Then the Jews said to Him, 'Now we know that You have a demon!' Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and You say, 'If anyone keeps My word he shall never see death.'" "Are You greater than our father Abraham, who is dead?" "And the prophets are dead, who do You make Yourself out to be?"

You see, it is this kind of reproach that Jesus bore for our sakes. Perhaps you can think about this truth and apply it to you your own life before you became a Christian. You were willing to reproach Christ too. You were not willing to say that you were a slave to sin. You

were willing to reject the Bible as being the Word of God. You were willing to dishonor Christ by rejecting His identity as the Only Savior and Lord of sinners, and even to dishonor Him before others. Others needed to be saved from their sins, but you didn't believe that you needed to be saved. You thought that you were a better person than that! You see, this is what Jesus had to bear from and for you. Are you not thankful this morning that it says in Hebrews 12: 2, that He "endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God?" Remember what He did for You on that day that He died, when He bore the reproach of wicked men in His life and in His death; that this was done also, for your reproach of Him. Then you will also come to understand that bearing the reproach of unbelieving people that are trying to be religious, but are really self-righteous, is part of what it means to be a true Christian. It will break your heart and cause you to be full of heaviness sometimes. You must expect this, and you must by the grace of Christ, endure it for Christ's sake. But we must also have the joy set before us of closer communion with Christ. This is the "fellowship of His sufferings." Let us ask ourselves when we come to the table this morning whether we are seeking the glory of the Father in all that we say to others. Let us ask ourselves if we have been guilty of seeking our own glory, or whether we have reproached others who have tried to show us more about what it means to be a Christian? See how meekly and patiently the Lord Jesus bore these things, and study to be like Him yourself. But let us understand that reproach is something that breaks the heart of the one who is sincerely trying to do the right and the loving thing. It is only Christ who could bear our reproaches and the reproaches that they laid upon God Himself. "The reproaches of those that reproached Thee, fell upon Me," says the Lord Jesus in verse 9 of this psalm. People will reproach God when they think that they can. But ask Him for the grace in the observance of the ordinance this morning to take away any true reproach from you, that which is related to your sins, and pray for the grace be more like Christ, and not one who seeks to reproach others.

3rdly- Jesus had to suffer the loss of all comfort and encouragement from people around Him. (Verse 20)

"I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none." This is what Jesus had to bear for you and me. "He was despised and rejected of men," it says in Isaiah 53: 3. It goes on to say that "He was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief." "And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him." At the cross God not only hid His face from His Son, but we also, "as it were", "hid our faces from Him." "He was despised, and we did not esteem Him." Reproach, and not being esteemed or pitied, have a way of breaking the heart. They have a way of killing the spirit of a man and they take away his joy and peace. Jesus suffered in this awful way for us as well. When David was going through his trials with his son Absalom, at least some of the people remained faithful to him. When Job went through his awful trial, even his own wife urged him to "curse God and die." And his 3 friends who came to comfort him only turned out to be his accusers and no comforters at all, when all the while Job was suffering not for his sin, but for his doing righteousness. The Lord Jesus was in this very condition when He suffered for our sins and even worse because He deserved the adoration and worship of all men and instead could not find comfort or pity in his greatest time of need. "Have pity on me, have pity on me, O you my friends, for the hand of God has struck me," are Jobs words in Job 19: 21. "Why do you persecute me as God does, and are not satisfied with my flesh?" But as Job later found out, it was not God Who was persecuting him, but rather it was Satan who was trying to destroy him because he was a righteous man who God was boasting in.

But with the Lord Jesus, He was surrounded by many enemies; Satan, demons, the self-righteous leaders of the Jewish people and others who were arrayed against Him for political reasons. "My adversaries are all before You," Jesus reminds His Father in prayer. "I looked for someone to take pity, but there was none."

Not even your disciples, Lord Jesus? No not even the disciples. "I looked for comforters, but I found none." Truly, this is a sad comment upon human nature and should show us the reason that each one of us needed Jesus to die for us. Judas, one of his own disciples, betrayed Him. Peter, one of His most ardent admirers and personal friends, denied even knowing Him, that night before he died. All of his disciples were sleeping for sorrow during the time of His most intense agony in the garden. When the mob came to arrest Jesus a few moments later, they all forsook Him and fled. When he was crucified, those few loyal women who remained to watch, could only look on from afar. And so his enemies and adversaries now could revile Him. In Matthew 27: 38 and following it says, "Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and another on the left." "And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself!'" "If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross." "Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save.'" "If He is the King of Israel, let Him come down from the cross, and we will believe Him." "He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'" Certainly Jesus looked in vain at that time for any comfort or pity. This also He experienced on our behalf so that we would be pitied and comforted by both God and men of his choosing. He could not come down from the cross, for if He did, there would be no salvation, no eternal comfort or encouragement, that would come to any man. Everything rested on His shoulders and He was most assuredly victorious.

Some have said that Jesus died of a broken heart, but I do not think that it was the case. In the gospel of It says that "reproach has broken my heart" in verse 20 and "I am full of heaviness." But I want you to come closer with me now and listen to the final point of my sermon after we come down to the front and assemble together to take the supper.

4thly- Jesus had to suffer great thirst on behalf of His people.(Verse 21)

No comfort and no encouragement and no pity came to Jesus from either God or man when He was hanging upon the cross. Everything that men were doing to Him was designed to mock His Kingly efforts to conquer our sin in His bearing it. There is one action of theirs that is particularly noted in our text and in all four of the gospels. It is found in verse 21. "They also gave me gall for my food, and for my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink." There were actually two offers made to the Lord Jesus when it was understood that He was "dying of thirst." John Gill says, "Christ, when on the cross, was athirst, which was occasioned by a fever that usually attended persons in his circumstances." It is apparent to me that there were at least 2 times when Jesus was offered something to drink, one before he was crucified. This first time, it was an act of derision, the soldiers were mocking Jesus' being a king. Matthew 27: 33 says, "And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, 'Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink." "But when He had tasted it, He would not drink." This was before the crucifixion and perhaps also after they crucified Him. Mark 15: 22 says, "And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull." "Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it." It says in Luke 23: 36 that "the soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine." This was

after they crucified Him. These offers Jesus consistently refused and He did so for our sakes. His refusal was so that the pain and His clearness and consciousness of feeling it would not be deadened or refused in any way. In these offers there was a mockery that was refused, and a terrible thirst that was unquenched. Jesus "endured the reproach and despised the shame" here. This was on our behalf. He is saying, "My sufferings are not for myself, but for sinners everywhere, so that they will have their hunger and thirst for righteousness satisfied." "I will thirst so that they may drink, and drink deeply of what I have come to do here for them." "I will suffer thirst now, so that the one who believes in Me shall never thirst."

Then there was the second time that something was offered to Him, and that was toward the close of His time upon the cross. In Matthew 27: 45 and following it says, "Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land." And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' "Some of those who stood there when they heard that, said, "This Man is calling for Elijah!" "Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink." Mark's gospel says the same thing. But when we come to John's gospel we find one of those grand touches of insight that only his gospel shows us. It says in Chapter 19, verse 28, "After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!'" "Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth." "So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished." "And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." You see there was something that Jesus refused to drink in His sufferings for us; that is the sour wine mingled with gall. And there was something that He received while still on the cross; that is the sour wine. Why the difference in the two? One reason is, that in the second case, Jesus knew that all things had already been accomplished. All He needed to do was to drink and He could then dismiss His spirit. For, you see, Jesus did not die of a broken heart. He died with a shout of triumph. When He had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished.'" "And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit." Mark 15: 37 says, "And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last." He is saying, "I am triumphing through these sufferings." "I will receive the sour wine now as a token of this triumph."

In our text in Psalm 69, verse 18, we are given another insight into what Jesus was praying at the time of His triumphant death. He is saying, "Draw near to my soul and redeem it.; Deliver me because of my enemies." This prayer was answered by the Father in Jesus' being raised from the dead, which fact we also come to remember at this table now. I hope that you will now remember the things that Jesus suffered for you that I have mentioned to you this morning from this text and that as you eat the bread and drink that cup that you will remember God hiding His face from Jesus so that He could make His face shine upon you. Remember the reproach, the shame, and the dishonor done to Him so that you could be highly regarded by God. Remember the loss of comfort and encouragement that He experienced, and that for your eternal comfort. And remember that He was thirsty so that you will never thirst spiritually. May the Lord feed our souls with this today.