

RELYING ON JESUS' EXAMPLE

WHEN GOD SEEMS SILENT

PRECEPT

PSALM 22:1

¹ My God, my God, why have you abandoned me? Why are you so far from saving me, so far from my cries of anguish? ² My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer, by night, but I find no rest. ³ You are enthroned as the Holy One; enthroned on the praises of Israel.

ISAIAH 53:5-6

⁵ He was pierced for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on Him, and by His wounds, we are healed. ⁶ We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

PROMISE

When we go through the valley of spiritual depression, we think that God has left us and stopped caring for us. In reality, we must know that He is the God of the valley, and whatever valley we're going through in life, He is there for us.

In Psalm 22, Jesus' cry of desolation, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?' does not mean 'Why have you left me forever?' for Jesus knew that He was leaving the world and that He was going to the Father (John 14:28; 16:10, 17). Jesus knew that He would rise again, He knew that He was dying for our sins. Jesus, who knew the words of Scripture as His own, knew well the context of Psalm 22. "In quoting this psalm, He is quoting a cry of desolation that also has implicit in its context an unremitting faith in the God who will ultimately deliver Him. Nevertheless, it remains a very real cry of anguish because the suffering has gone on so long and no release is in sight" (Wayne Grudem, Systematic Theology).

JESUS BELIEVED THE SCRIPTURES. Jesus knew what He was doing because He knew the Scripture very well. He is the Eternal word of God. When we go through the dark times of life, may our response also be to remember His Word in the Scriptures. Whether the Father completely turned His presence away or not, it seems that Jesus felt that way. His cry from this psalm is both in knowledge of its prophetic declaration of His work on the cross as well as an authentic emotional position in the moment He said it. Either way, we can be encouraged that even in feeling despair, Jesus went before us, leading the way in faithfulness. Jesus, too, knows what it is like to feel like God is far away, and he shows us what to do in those darkest moments: lean upon God's Word.

JESUS PRAYED MORE EARNESTLY. Another thing that we can learn from Jesus' example is when He knew His hour has come, He went to Mount of Olives and prayed at the Garden of Gethsemane. His prayer to the Father was so intense, full of anguish and pain. He knows he will be arrested, persecuted, and executed, yet this is what He did. In Luke 22:44 it says, *"Being in agony [deeply distressed and anguished; almost to the point of death], He prayed more earnestly, and His sweat became like drops of blood, falling down on the ground."*

JESUS COMMITTED EVERYTHING. When Jesus was finally on the cross and suffered enough to the point of death, instead of detaching Himself from God, He said in Luke 23:46, "Jesus crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit!'" Having said this, He breathed His last."

When God seems silent or far away, we must rely on Jesus' example of what to do, knowing He experienced the same thing. Like Jesus did, we are able to draw near to God in moments of spiritual depression by connecting to Him through His Word, praying to Him, and committing everything to Him.

PRACTICE

1. In Dark Valleys. How have you experienced drawing on the Word of God in a moment of need?

2. Forsaken. Have you ever felt like God had forsaken you? How did you survive it?

PRAYER

I. Church

- Pray that all our church members may extend God's love to their family and peers, shining the light of Christ.

II. Worship Services

- Pray that our first-timers will experience God and come back to know Him more.

III. Leaders

- Pray that our leaders will always be united in Christ, leading God's flock with a heart of a servant leader.

IV. Families

- May families love each other fervently. May He keep all families in perfect unity of love and mutual support.

V. Gospel

- Pray for the rapid spread of the Gospel. May God equip us to do this.

VI. Marriages

- May God grant Christian couples the strength to hold fast to their vows; to always love and honour each other.

VII. Grace

- Pray that God may grant us grace and wisdom to praise Him and honour Him in every facet of our lives.