

And so it was for his disciples - they came to see, as Jesus hoped they would, that this psalm shows us the meaning of Calvary. That is why the writers of the New Testament refer to this psalm, directly and obliquely, almost more than any other passage of the Old Testament.

I have read this psalm aloud at the conclusion of the Stripping of the Altars service on Maundy Thursday evening dozens of times, and yet every time in my heart I echo the words of Leslie Stradling in his book "Praying the Psalms" - "As we stand rebuked by his unique example of faith and spiritual courage ..... the whole Christian Church praises him for his sacrifice and for his saving death".

### **"DAVID'S CROWN - Sounding the Psalms!"**

*by Malcolm Guite, published by Canterbury Press: ISBN 978-1-78622-306-7*

### **PSALM 22**

Before he shares with us the golden crown  
He comes to share with us the Crown of Thorns.  
Our hurts and hates close in and hem him round,

mock and humiliate him. All the scorn  
with which we blaspheme God in one another  
are concentrated here among 'the horns

of unicorns', the lions' mouths, the slather  
of our devouring wickedness. He takes it all  
and gathers it into Love. He gathers

all of us, and by atonement makes  
our Peace with God. He speaks to us of mercy  
even as we pierce him. No-one slakes

his thirst. I tremble at the Mystery,  
for Christ himself is crying through the psalm,  
to suffer my dereliction for me.

### **LENT COURSE 2022**

<b>9th March</b>	<b>Noël Hector</b> on <b>Psalm 42</b>
<b>16th March</b>	<b>Joshua Fowler</b> on <b>Psalm 117</b>
<b>23rd March</b>	<b>Caroline Sackley</b> on <b>Psalm 63</b>
<b>30th March</b>	<b>Nicholas Maddock</b> on <b>Psalm 22</b>
<b>6th April</b>	<b>Tim Daplyn</b> on <b>Psalm 95</b>

*Notes on all of these Psalms are available at the back of each church  
or from the Church Office*

## **The Benefice of EAST CLEVEDON - LENT COURSE 2022**

*Diocese of Bath and Wells*

### **PSALM 22** (NIV / CCP)

- 1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me,  
so far from my cries of anguish?
- 2 O my God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer,  
And by night also, but I find no rest.
- 3 Yet you are the Holy One;  
you are the one Israel praises.
- 4 In you our ancestors put their trust;  
they trusted and you delivered them.
- 5 To you they cried out and were saved;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.
- 6 But as for me, I am a worm and no man,  
scorned by all, and despised by the people.
- 7 All who see me laugh me to scorn;  
they hurl insults, shaking their heads.
- 8 "He trusts in the Lord," they say, "let the Lord rescue him.  
Let him deliver him, since he delights in him."
- 9 Yet you brought me out of the womb;  
And laid me on my mother's breast.
- 10 In you have I trusted ever since I was born;  
you have been my God even from my mother's womb.
- 11 Do not be far from me, for trouble is near at hand,  
and there is no one to help me.
- 12 Many bulls surround me;  
mighty bulls of Bashan close me in on every side.
- 13 Roaring lions that tear their prey  
open their mouths wide against me.
- 14 I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint.  
My heart has turned to wax; it has melted within me.

- 15 My mouth is dried up like a potsherd,  
and my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth;  
you lay me in the dust of death.
- 16 Dogs surround me, a pack of villains encircles me;  
they pierce my hands and my feet.
- 17 All my bones are on display;  
people stare and gloat over me.
- 18 They divide my garments among them  
and cast lots for my clothing.
- 19 But you, Lord, do not be far from me.  
You are my strength; hasten to help me.
- 20 Deliver my soul from the sword,  
my precious life from the power of the dogs.
- 21 Rescue me from the lion's mouth;  
save me from the horns of the wild oxen.
- 22 I will declare your name to my people;  
in the assembly of the peoples will I praise you.
- 23 All you who fear the Lord, praise him!  
You descendants of Jacob, honour him!  
Revere him, all you descendants of Israel!
- 24 For he has not despised nor ignored  
the suffering of the afflicted one;  
Nor has he hidden his face from him  
but he has listened to his cry for help.
- 25 From you comes my song of praise in the great assembly;  
before those who fear you will I fulfil my vows.
- 26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied;  
all those who seek the Lord will praise him -  
may your hearts live forever!
- 27 All the ends of the earth will remember and turn to the Lord,  
and all the families of the nations shall bow down before him,  
28 for dominion belongs to the Lord  
and he rules over the nations.
- 29 All the rich of the earth will feast and worship;  
all who go down to the dust will kneel before him -  
those who cannot keep themselves alive.
- 30 Posterity will serve him;  
future generations will be told about the Lord.
- 31 They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn:  
that He has done it!

## PRAYER

Restless with grief and fear,  
those abandoned by the world turn to you, O Lord;  
In every moment of trial, good Lord deliver us;  
O God most Holy, O God most strong;  
whose eternal Wisdom is the Cross  
of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. **Amen**

## REFLECTION

This psalm's opening verse is one of the most searing cries of anguish and dereliction in the Bible, and since Jesus himself quotes this verse on the Cross, it is also perhaps the best known. The first 21 verses delineate the authors trials and tribulations, yet they are also shot through with expressions of hope and faith. Former Tory Cabinet Minister Jonathan Aitken was inspired to write his book "Psalms for People under Pressure", by his time in prison. In it he states that the author of this psalm "is bewildered by God's silence, but he does not lose his faith in God's presence".

Verses 22 - 31 (*possibly added later*) take this sense of faith and trust in God and His ultimate purposes forward most powerfully, ending with the ecstatic shout:

" future generations will be told about the Lord.  
They will proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn:  
that God has done it!" *i.e.:* He has conquered death and hell!

This triumphant ending is, I believe, the reason why Jesus quoted the opening verse on the Cross, to direct those watching to the fact that God would vindicate him for his faithfulness to his Heavenly Father.

And that, I believe, is also why St Luke deliberately omitted these words of Jesus from his account of the Crucifixion, as he was writing for a Gentile readership. They would not have known the psalm, and how it ends, and so would have concluded, as I have heard protestant preachers say and seen them write, that Jesus suffered "a dark night of the soul" on the Cross, believing himself to have been abandoned by God. But verse 24 states that exactly the opposite is the case!