

CALL OUT

A STUDY OF THE PSALMS

CALL AND RESPONSE

What's the first thing you think of when someone shouts, "Marco!"? Chances are someone called back, "Polo." Marco Polo traveled the Silk Road from Italy to China in the 13th century. He was an explorer and merchant. And for some unknown reason, his name gets shouted repeatedly every Summer in pools all across America—on a continent he never knew existed.

In the game Marco Polo, it is against the rules to stay silent when the hunter yells, "Marco." In a similar way, God has called out to us. How will we respond?

In Week 1, we studied Psalm 1, looking at the ultimate choice we all have to either follow God's Word and receive his blessing or follow the path of sin and receive God's judgment. After that first Week, we looked at a new section of our playbook covering 3 different psalms. Each one showed how God has been calling out to the world to know and follow him. He spoke through general revelation (in Creation), special revelation (his Word), and numerous miraculous actions for his covenant people, the Israelites.

This Week, we begin a 6-Week section regarding six different ways to *respond* to God's revelation of himself. These various circumstances and responses are only a *sampling* of our innumerable needs which God desires to meet. Each Week looks at one particular benefit for those who follow him in obedience to his Word. Some of these psalms may sound familiar while others may not. The first of these is Psalm 22 which Jesus himself referred to during his ultimate sacrificial act of obedience on the cross.

PSALM 22:1–8

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? ² O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.

³ Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. ⁴ In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. ⁵ To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.

⁶ But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. ⁷ All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; ⁸ "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

"So when I fight, I'll fight on my knees. With my hands lifted high, Oh God, the battle belongs to You. And every fear I lay at Your feet, I'll sing through the night. Oh God, the battle belongs to You."

The battle belongs to God. When we're despised and forsaken, Christ knows what that feels like. When we face ridicule for our faith, we're in good company. Scan the QR code to worship how God fights for us.



DISCUSSION

What are some of the negative things people turn to when they're sad or upset?

ICEBREAKER

1. What does this psalmist question? (1)

2. What does he know to be true? (3-5)

3. What reason do the critics give for mocking the psalmist? (8) (see Study Notes)

4. Who spoke these words originally? Who fulfilled them prophetically? (1) (see Study Notes)

OBSERVATION

5. In what ways *do you* versus *should you* seek comfort when you feel helpless or alone?

INTERPRETATION

APPLICATION

When you feel alone or helpless, know that you're not. You have people in your corner. You have people who've got your back. Don't go it alone. Talk to your Coach.

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STUDY NOTES

GOT YOUR BACK

Check out the QR code for an encouraging post on Facebook.



We see stories like this every once and a while, bullied kids getting help. Unfortunately, it's uncommon enough that these stories get highlighted when it should be the norm. Bullying remains a huge problem and social media has only made things worse. Cyberbullying is a new frontier to which most adults can't relate. At the end of the day, nobody deserves to get bullied. And, everybody should have somebody watching their back.

I think most people know the feeling of walking into a helpless situation. The kind of situation where you'd love to have someone bigger, stronger, or smarter right there beside you—but you didn't. To varying degrees, we all know the feeling of being alone and feeling helpless.

GOD BRINGS COMFORT TO THOSE WHO FEEL ABANDONED

Psalm 22 identifies its author as David who cries out in desperation, ***"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*** While we don't necessarily know what circumstances David faced while he cried out, his life had many moments of struggle and pain. Some of these moments were self-inflicted and some were not. Although we sometimes view David as spiritually super-human, he had all the same flaws that you and I share.

Whether by his own sin or some other circumstance, David felt totally alone. He felt so alone that he thought even God had stopped paying attention, ***"O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest."*** This didn't stop David from remembering and reminding himself who God was and what he had done. ***"You are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame."***

Although David remembered God, his critics rebuked him for it. These enemies made him feel worthless and defenseless. David stated, ***"But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people."*** A worm in the Old Testament is often associated with spoiling rot or even death. This image reminds us of the fragile nature of life—not only is he small and worthless, but he is surrounded by decomposition.

All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!" Here we come to the real issue. David's enemies mocked and scorned his faith in God's provision. As you seek to trust God through your trials, your enemies may mock your faith too. As much as it hurts us, it's not about us. They're really lashing out at God.

CALL OUT TO GOD AS YOUR COMFORTER

1,000 years after David called out to God in Psalm 22, Jesus Christ hung on the Cross at Golgotha. He was suspended by metal spikes through his wrists and ankles. To take a breath, he had to pull against the spikes to raise himself up enough for his lungs to take in air. Most victims of crucifixion eventually died of suffocation when they were too tired to raise themselves up.

Jesus had been arrested, beaten, slandered, shamed, tortured, and made to carry his own method of execution outside the city. As he hung, death only moments away, ***"Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"*** (Matthew 27:46).

We hear this verse quoted each year around Easter, but many people still don't realize that Jesus was quoting David in Psalm 22. The question for many asks if Jesus' cry was a genuine prayer to God or if he sought to apply Psalm 22 to himself as a prophecy. I think the answer is simply, "yes." Psalm 22 is *both* a prayer *and* a prophecy—referred to some 24 times in the New Testament.

Like David, Jesus was mocked and shamed. He felt alone. Jesus' cry reminds us that what he suffered on the Cross was far greater than the physical pain. Lots of people were crucified by the Romans. Jesus' suffering wasn't limited to the physical, but the spiritual battle as well. However, "Whereas David's suffering was for himself, Jesus' suffering was on behalf of sinners."

As I stated earlier, David's enemies mocked and scorned his faith in God's provision. Christ was God's provision—the only hope for humanity's sin—and he was mocked and scorned as well. Psalm 22 reminds us all that Jesus suffered for us to bring us into a relationship with God.

All of us feel helpless and alone at times, forsaken. We must remember who God is and continue to remind ourselves of what he has done. We might not always feel like it, but we got the God of Heaven's Armies at our back. The battle belongs to him.