

THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

PSALM 22-29

Crucifixion was the cruelest form of punishment ever devised by man. The Jewish historian, Josephus, called it “the most wretched of deaths.”

The origins of crucifixion are unclear. We know it was practiced by the Persians around 500 BC – but it was perfected by the ancient Romans.

PSALM TWENTY-TWO is a fascinating chapter. Its preface reads, “To the Chief Musician. Set to “The Deer of the Dawn.” A Psalm of David.”

King David wrote this psalm around 1000 BC - 500 years before the Persians - 600 years before the Romans. Yet Psalm 22 is a narrative of a man who is experiencing the hideous, heinous torture called “*crucifixion*.”

On the cross Jesus quoted from this psalm. Evidently, David’s thoughts in Psalm 22 eclipse David’s experience. Under the inspiration of the Spirit he is writing prophetically about the Suffering Savior - His pain and agony.

Psalm 22 mentions 33 different details fulfilled by Jesus on the cross. This chapter conveys the *grunt and grief* behind God’s *grace*.

The four Gospels provide, “A perspective of the cross” - the facts of the story – *when, what, where*. The NT Letters give, “A perspective on the cross” - the *why*. But in Psalm 22 is “A perspective from the cross.”

This chapter focuses on *Who* – on the Savior Himself and

His feelings on the cross. Psalm 22 is some of the holiest ground in Scripture.

Verse 1 **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”**

Over 40% of the OT references quoted in the NT come from the Psalms. To understand the NT you need to know the Psalms.

And nowhere is that truer than in Psalm 22:1... On the cross of Mount Calvary our Lord Jesus quoted the first line of Psalm 22...

Jesus recited in Aramaic, **“Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani.”** Hebrew was the Temple language. Jesus used the street language as he quoted verse 1.

This constituted one of the most mysterious and monumental moments in the history of the universe. The sin of all mankind was thrust upon the innocent, sacrificial shoulders of Jesus. *The Lamb receives His load.*

Jesus was God. He had lived forever with the Father in a perfect, unbroken fellowship. Sin had never interrupted the Godhead's holy harmony. Jesus had lived a perfect, flawless, sinless life.

But on the cross the sin of the world was thrust upon Jesus. Imagine the shock - the horror and terror - Jesus felt to sense a single speck of sin, let alone the sin of the whole world. Suddenly, the Father turned His back on the Son. God became estranged from God.

The Son was separated from the Father, so we could be united.

God gave me a tiny glimpse of what He felt when he heard His Son cry out, **“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”** When Zach was 2 years old he contracted an infection that got into his bloodstream.

He was hospitalized so antibiotics could be administered intravenously.

Before the nurse stuck the needle into his little arm she warned Kathy and me that Zach would wonder why we were allowing her to hurt him.

She suggested we leave. Kathy returned to the room, while I stood outside the door. I'll never forget Zach's blood-curdling scream, **“I want my Daddy, where is my Daddy?”** I could've clawed through the door.

Standing in the hospital corridor with tears rolling down my cheeks the Father spoke to my heart, ***“Now Sandy, you know what I endured when My Son died for You...”*** I've never known His love as strong! God's love for me, and His love for you, made the Father wait outside the door!

Verse 1 continues, **“Why are You so far from helping Me, and from the words of My groaning? O My God, I cry in the daytime, but You do not hear; and in the night season, and am not silent.”** The psalmist feels abandoned by God. He cries out, but God doesn't answer.

He's misinterpreted *God's silence* as *God's absence*.

God the Father turned His back on God the Son, when Jesus paid the penalty for our sin, *but He was not abandoned*. The Father was faithful!

The psalmist praises God. Verse 3, **“But You are holy, enthroned in the praises of Israel.”** Here’s a by-product of praise. It constructs a throne for God’s presence. Praise creates conditions conducive for God to work.

“Our fathers trusted in You; they trusted, and You delivered them.

They cried to You, and were delivered; they trusted in You, and were not ashamed. But I am a worm, and no man; a reproach of men, and despised of the people.” Jesus was fully human, but when the weight of sin fell upon Him, He felt less than man. He felt like a worm, not a man.

The Hebrew word translated **“worm”** is a derivative of a word meaning **“crimson.”** A flower, a crocus, indigenous to Israel produced a dye used to color Israel’s royal garments. This flower was the home of a worm.

The dye was made by crushing the worm with its pedals. For the king to be clothed in royal robes the worm had to be crushed. And for us to be clad in righteousness, Jesus also had to be crushed.

Verse 7 **“All those who see me ridicule Me; they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, “He trusted in the LORD, let Him rescue Him; let Him deliver Him, since He delights in Him!”** Hear in these words the jeers and mocking that was hurled at Jesus while He hung from the cross.

“But You are He who took Me out of the womb; You made

Me trust while on My mother's breasts. I was cast upon You from birth.”

Both the psalmist, and the child from Nazareth, had relied on God from an early age. “From My mother's womb You have been My God. Be not far from Me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help.”

God protected Jesus since His birth. He told Joseph in a dream to take Jesus to Egypt to escaped Herod’s slaughter of the Bethlehem babies.

Now Jesus is at the end of his life, and once again trouble is near.

“Many bulls have surrounded Me; strong bulls of Bashan have encircled Me. They gape at Me with their mouths, like a raging and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water, and all My bones are out of joint; My heart is like wax; it has melted within me.” The cross contorts the body and puts stress on the joints... The loss of oxygen caused Jesus’ blood to grow thick and heavy. This made His heart sluggish. It eventually ruptured.

Jesus literally died of a broken heart.

“My strength is dried up like a potsherd (a cracked piece of pottery), and My tongue clings to my jaws; You have brought me to the dust of death.” On the cross Jesus’ throat was so parched they took a wet rag to moisten his lips so he could utter his final words.

“For dogs have surrounded Me; the congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My

feet...” They did it with nails.

The victim of a crucifixion suffered excruciating pain. He was attached to a wooden scaffold by seven inch iron spikes driven through His hands and feet. The victim’s body weight rested on these wounds.

Listen to Dr. Truman Davis describe what the crucified endured from a medical viewpoint. “As the arms fatigue, great waves of cramps sweep over the muscles, knotting them in deep, relentless, throbbing pain.

With these cramps comes the inability to push Himself upward.

Hanging by His arms, the pectoral muscles are paralyzed. The intercostals (The muscles between his ribs that form the chest wall.) are unable to act. Air can be drawn into the lungs, but cannot be exhaled.

Jesus fights to raise Himself in order to get even one short breath.”

Each time Jesus pushes on His wounds to draw a breath incredible pain ricochets through His body.... There are two ways a victim dies...

One was through suffocation. This was hastened by the executioners. They’d break His legs so He could no longer push himself up.

Two is by cardiac arrest. The blood lacked oxygen so it got heavy and sluggish. As it flowed into the lower extremities the pulse doubled, and the victim’s blood pressure was cut in half. Eventually the heart ruptured.

When the Romans came to break Jesus’ legs, He was

already dead. We know Jesus died of a broken heart. He endured crucifixion for us.

Verse 17 “I can count all My bones. They look and stare at Me.” Jesus is speaking as He’s stretched out and naked hanging on the cross.

“They divide My garments among them, and for My clothing they cast lots.” The psalmist predicts Roman soldiers will roll dice for Jesus’ cloak.

“But You, O LORD, do not be far from Me; O My Strength, hasten to help Me! Deliver Me from the sword, My precious life from the power of the dog. Save Me from the lion's mouth and from the horns of the wild oxen! You have answered Me.” The Bible says Satan is like a roaring lion.

Here wild animals are seen as scavengers that feed on a corpse.

After the crucifixion, when they laid the body of Jesus in the grave and closed it with a stone, in essence they laid Him in the lion's mouth.

If the wild animals could've eaten His body they would've, but the grave had no claim on Him. Jesus was innocent of wrongdoing and when He cried for God to save Him, the Father answered. He was resurrected.

The tone of the psalm now changes - from *crucifixion* to *celebration*.

Verse 22 gets quoted of Jesus in Hebrews 2:12. “I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You.”

Today, He's alive and well! Jesus visits the places where God is worshipped. He sits among us. He hangs out with His people!

“You who fear the LORD, praise Him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify Him, and fear Him, all you offspring of Israel! For He has not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted; nor has He hidden His face from Him; but when He cried to Him, He heard.”

On the cross Jesus was *forsaken - not forgotten*. The Father heard His prayer, and recognized His righteousness. His sacrifice was accepted.

“My praise shall be of You in the great assembly; I will pay My vows before those who fear Him. The poor shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek Him will praise the LORD. Let your heart live forever!

All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall worship before You.” The psalmist sees the day when all the nations of the earth will worship the risen Lord.

“For the kingdom is the LORD's, and He rules over the nations.

All the prosperous of the earth shall eat and worship; all those who go down to the dust shall bow before Him, even he who cannot keep himself alive. A posterity shall serve Him. It will be recounted of the Lord to the next generation, they will come and declare His righteousness to a people who will be born, that He has done this.”

In Hebrew the phrase "that He has done this" is a single word, "finished." This is what Jesus cried on the cross, "It is finished."

All that needed to be done, was done. Our role is to believe!

PSALM TWENTY-THREE is a favorite and familiar psalm. The Shepherd's Psalm may've been written in David's younger years, as a shepherd tending his family's flocks in the fields of Bethlehem.

The song is in 3 stanzas: Sheep's **provision, protection, promotion.** Grazing in the field - passing through the gorge – and the gift of glory...

Verse 1 "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want."

David knew being a shepherd was an exhausting vocation. It required vigor and vigilance. The main challenge was the sheep themselves.

Lions were known for their **strength** – and deer for their **steady footing and swiftness.** But sheep were renowned for their **stupidity.**

If one sheep walks off a cliff all the others will follow.

In July of 2005 in Istanbul a group of Turkish shepherds met to eat breakfast. While they were inside the café, they watched 1500 of their sheep jump off the same cliff. The local paper reported, "In the end, 450 dead animals lay on top of one another in a billowy white pile."

The tragedy cost the owner of the herd \$100,000. Sheep are dumb. It's impossible for them to survive without a vigilant, on-the-job shepherd.

David admits he's like a dumb sheep. He's thankful the Lord is his Shepherd. In Psalm 20-21 the Lord is a **Soldier**... In Psalm 22 the Lord is the **Savior**... Now in Psalm 23, the Lord is my **Shepherd**.

Remember John 10:11 Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd."

He begins, "The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want." I like the way the little boy quoted verse 1. He told his mom, "The Lord is my Shepherd. I've got all I want." That's not a bad interpretation.

David is saying the Lord satisfies all his needs - physical and spiritual.

"He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters." It's impossible to *make* a sheep lie down. Only a contented sheep will lie down. Sheep rest and relax only when four things occur...

They have to be **free from fear - free from friction - free from flies - and free from famine**. If they *feel safe - are at peace - they're not pestered - and they're full* - then they'll relax. And this is how Jesus satisfies...

Neither will a sheep drink from a river or stream with running water.

It had to be still water - free from turbulence. Sheep need peaceful surroundings. In our hearts Jesus wants to lead us to peaceful places.

Keep in mind pastures in Palestine were not flat grazing lands like you find on the plains of Texas. Israel is covered with mountainous terrain. Pockets of pasture are hard to find. A shepherd had to lead his flock.

The Lord knows the pasture we need. It may be hard to reach. It may take a while to arrive. But He knows how to get us there if we follow Him.

“He restores my soul...” Literally, **“He lifts up the downcast.”** The phrase *“downcast”* originally referred to a sheep that had flipped over on its back.

This was devastating, for a sheep can't right itself on its own. The blood rushes from its legs. It becomes immobile. The shepherd has to massage the legs, stimulate the blood flow, and then stand the sheep upright.

Likewise, there are times when we fall and can't get up on our own. Yet our Shepherd doesn't leave us to be eaten by the jackals. He does what it takes to massage us, and get us going again. He makes us upright.

“He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.”

Sheep are not just stupid, they're stubborn. They refuse to be driven. They have to be led. The shepherd coaxes them and draws them.

Once an Israeli tour guide saw a shepherd with his flock and pointed this out to the group. Later he saw another man with a whip driving his sheep. The group felt misled. *Had their guide been wrong?*

The guide shouted to the man, “*Shepherds don’t drive their sheep. What are you doing?*” He replied, “I’m not a shepherd. I’m a butcher.”

Hey, Jesus is the Good Shepherd. He wins our trust, and we willingly follow Him. Satan though is the butcher. He drives us against our will.

Verse 4 “*Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.*” At times the best pasture is on the uppermost slopes.

The shepherd leads his sheep through the valleys to get to the mountain peaks. He navigates dangerous ravines and ledges. At times the flock is a single step from death, yet the Shepherd is there with his staff to grab a sheep that’s about to slip, or a sheep that’s straying off course.

A shepherd’s staff had a hook on the end that could grab the sheep.

A shepherd’s rod was a weapon to fend off predators.

There are times when Jesus leads us through “*the valley of the shadow of death.*” But don’t forget this terminology. For the follower of Jesus death is but a “*shadow.*” And a shadow is harmless. Don’t be afraid of a shadow.

The shadow of a dog doesn’t bite. The shadow of a sword doesn’t cut.

Death is but a shadow. It doesn’t take our life - it just ushers us into a better, eternal life. Jesus is with us in “*the valley of the shadow of death.*”

Verse 5 “You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies...” At the end of our trials God promises to exalt us in the presence of those who’ve harmed us. There’s a sweet vindication.

“You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.” In the end God honors us and pours His blessing on us! We’re not just full, but sloshing over!

“Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever.” The psalmist says the man who follows his shepherd ends up *hounded by happiness* his whole life.

Did you hear about the couple with three kids? They thought they would name their children “*Surely*”, “*Goodness*”, and “*Mercy*”... but they were worried the kids might follow them all the days of their lives...

PSALM TWENTY-FOUR is also a psalm of David.

It begins, “The earth is the LORD's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein. For He has founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the waters.” One of America’s most cherished beliefs is the right to private property and individual freedom.

Our constitution protects these rights against government intrusion.

And this is fine as far as it goes... But with God there’s no such thing as private property and individual freedom. “The world and those who dwell therein” belong to God. The *created* are accountable to their *Creator*.

“Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place?” We all belong to God, but we’ve fallen short of His glory.

Who is worthy to enter His presence and dwell in His Temple?

Verse 4 “He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.” Here’s the cover charge.

You’re allowed in if your *hands are clean* and your *heart is loyal*. The *filthy dealer* and the man who *flirts with other gods* are barred outside.

“He shall receive blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is Jacob, the generation of those who seek Him, who seek Your face. **Selah**” Despite clean hands and a loyal heart David still acknowledges our righteousness and salvation are gifts from God.

He desires for the nation – for all Jacob – to seek after God.

The remaining verses of the song are thought to have been sung by David as he danced in the streets as he brought the Ark to Jerusalem.

Some people see these verses as a prophetic picture of the day when the risen Lord Jesus ascended to heaven with victory in His hands.

It’s also interesting Psalm 24 is one of the psalms used by the Jews in their daily liturgies. [On Monday they meditate on](#)

Psalm 48 – on Tuesday, Psalm 82 – on Wednesday, Psalm 94 – on Thursday, Psalm 81 – on Friday, Psalm 93 – the Sabbath psalm is 92 – on Sunday, Psalm 24.

Remember Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Psalm 24 may also reflect parts of Jesus' Triumphant Entry that day.

Verse 7 “Lift up your heads, O you gates! And be lifted up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in.

Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O you gates! Lift up, you everlasting doors! And the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory?

The LORD of hosts, He is the King of glory.

PSALM TWENTY-FIVE is a psalm of David's repentance, but it's not a gloomy confession. Real repentance is also laced with hope and faith.

This is one of nine psalms that are an acrostic – each verse is designed to correspond with a succeeding letter of the Hebrew alphabet.

The acrostic format helped with memorizing the psalm. Here are the other acrostics: Psalm 9-10, 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119, and 145.

Verse 1 “To You, O LORD, I lift up my soul. O my God, I trust in You; let me not be ashamed; let not my enemies triumph over me. Indeed, let no one who waits on You be ashamed; let those be ashamed who deal treacherously without cause.” Waiting on God is time never wasted.

“Show me Your ways, O LORD; teach me Your paths. Lead me in Your truth and teach me, for You are the God of my salvation; on You I wait all the day.” David asks the Lord, “Show me... teach me... lead me...”

He’s never complacent. He’s always learning. He’s not always on *the go* – at times God requires him to wait – but He’s always on *the grow*...

In Jesus’ school of discipleship there are no *short semesters*, or *cram courses*, or *cliff notes*. Spiritual maturity takes time. It takes years.

“Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses, for they are from of old.” Mercy is not a new method for God. It’s not a NT invention. God is known for His mercy and kindness - “from of old.”

“Do not remember the sins of my youth, nor my transgressions...” How many of us have prayed this prayer? *Forgive us the sins of my youth.* Whenever my kids say, “Come on dad! Look at what you did when you were a kid...” I cut them off. I tell them, “If you guys don’t turn out better than me you’re really selling yourself short.” My generation did some stupid, sinful stuff. *Please Lord - don’t recall the sins of our youth.*

“According to Your mercy remember me, for Your goodness’ sake, O LORD. Good and upright is the LORD; therefore He teaches sinners in the way.” The Lord knows that a lot of sin – especially youthful sins - is the result of sheer stupidity. This is why “He teaches sinners in the way.”

God takes the time to take the repentant sinner under his

wing and instruct him. He doesn't just tell us *what to do*, but He *shows us how*.

“The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way.” Notice God teaches sinners, but the humble are those who learn.

“All the paths of the LORD are mercy and truth, to such as keep His covenant and His testimonies. For Your name's sake, O LORD, pardon my iniquity, for it is great. Who is the man that fears the LORD? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. He himself shall dwell in prosperity, and his descendants shall inherit the earth. The secret of the LORD is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant.” Fear the Lord, and He'll whisper to you His secrets. He'll make you privy to His mysteries.

“My eyes are ever toward the LORD, for He shall pluck my feet out of the net. Turn Yourself to me, and have mercy on me, for I am desolate and afflicted. The troubles of my heart have enlarged; bring me out of my distresses! Look on my affliction and my pain, and forgive all my sins.

Consider my enemies, for they are many; and they hate me with cruel hatred. Keep my soul, and deliver me; let me not be ashamed, for I put my trust in You. Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait for You.

Redeem Israel, O God, out of all their troubles!

PSALM TWENTY-SIX may've been written by David while on the run from Saul. For a time David sought refuge among Israel's enemies, the Philistines. Rejected by King Saul, he

turned to the king of Gath.

And the Philistine king gave him the city of Ziklag.

David used Ziklag as base of operation. He conducted raids against the cities of the Philistines, and then would lie to the king about his activities.

Yet apparently some of David's countrymen assumed he'd committed treason - allied himself with the king of Gath - and had forsaken his God. They stirred up slanderers against David. He prays in Psalm 26...

“Vindicate me, O LORD, for I have walked in my integrity. I have also trusted in the LORD; I shall not slip. Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my mind and my heart. For Your lovingkindness is before my eyes, and I have walked in Your truth. I have not sat with idolatrous mortals, nor will I go in with hypocrites. I have hated the assembly of evildoers, and will not sit with the wicked.” David has not – or will not – worship another god.

He asks God to search his heart for treachery. He knows he's innocent. He's done nothing but walk in truth. David asks God to vindicate Him. He'd never ally himself with God's enemies - the gods of Baal or Dagon.

Verse 6 “I will wash my hands in innocence; so I will go about Your altar, O LORD, that I may proclaim with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all Your wondrous works. LORD, I have loved the habitation of Your house, and the place where Your glory dwells.” David was accused of consorting with the enemy – of hanging out in evil places.

But he reaffirms his favorite place is where God's glory

dwells.

This is what I examine when I want to know what's behind the veneer.

You'll know a man's heart by the places he frequents. Where does he hang-out? If he loves God he'll love **“the habitation of God's house.”**

“Do not gather my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloodthirsty men, in whose hands is a sinister scheme, and whose right hand is full of bribes.

But as for me, I will walk in my integrity; redeem me and be merciful to me. My foot stands in an even place; in the congregations I will bless the LORD.” Though David was a fugitive from his homeland, and unable to worship in God's habitation, it was still his love and desire. And he has hope. He looks forward to standing again in the congregations.

PSALM TWENTY-SEVEN is another psalm of David.

“The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

When the wicked came against me to eat up my flesh, my enemies and foes, they stumbled and fell. Though an army may encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war should rise against me, in this I will be confident.” What faith! Though an army camps against him, David won't fear. He's still not outnumbered. **One plus God always equals a majority.**

Here's David's confidence, **“One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the**

LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.”

All the great men of God down through the ages have had one commonality. They’ve been men with a single, primary passion.

One goal dwarfs all other concerns. They want to know God – to dwell in His presence – to behold His beauty – to inquire of His wisdom.

Thomas a Kempis wrote, **“It is too small and unsatisfactory whatever You bestow on me, apart from Yourself.”** God could give him kingdoms and treasure, but without God Himself it would all be worthless.

A man named George Matheson once prayed, **“Whether You come in sunshine or rain, I would take You into my heart joyfully. You are Yourself compensation for the rain. It is You, and not Your gifts, I crave.”** He would rather have the rain with God – than a host of sunny days without Him.

Yet here’s our problem - we get distracted and bored with life. For some reason we've always got to have something tangible with which to play.

I’ve taken up golf – I got a new bass boat – I’m deer hunting – or I’m selling Tupperware – I bought a gym membership. There’s nothing wrong with these activities per se... unless they’re substitutes for what matters.

David had one occupation. **“One thing I have desired...”** He seeks God.

He wants to know God, see His beauty, and inquire of His knowledge. I like this word **“inquire”** – the Hebrew means **“to**

dig or plow.” David wants to *dig into God*. He wants to plow in and get to know God and His ways.

“For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; in the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock.” A young pastor was traveling on foot over some of England’s most difficult countryside – near the Cheddar Gorge – when a storm struck.

He found shelter under a rock overhang. There he penned a song.

Augustus Toplady wrote these words, “Rock of Ages, cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee.” His song became a famous hymn.

Here David writes similar words. His life was full of treacherous terrain. He faced many storms. Here David asks God, “Hide me upon a rock.”

“And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD. Hear, O LORD, when I cry with my voice!

Have mercy also upon me, and answer me. When You said, “Seek My face, “My heart said to You, “Your face, LORD, I will seek.”

In the Hebrew “face” and “presence” are the same word. To seek God’s face is to seek His presence. David longs for an awareness of God.

Notice too, David's desire is in response to God's invitation. When You said, “Seek My face, “My heart said to You, “Your

face, LORD, I will seek."

God is the initiator. His Spirit prompts us, and stirs up a desire within us to know Him – to seek His face. He invites us to break up life's monotony. To get above the boredom and taste heaven – yet how do we respond?

Are we too busy? Are there other things we'd rather do? Or do we come enthusiastically, and reply, "Your face LORD, I will seek."

Verse 9 "Do not hide Your face from me; do not turn Your servant away in anger; You have been my help; do not leave me nor forsake me, O God of my salvation. When my father and my mother forsake me, then the LORD will take care of me." David is pondering a worse case scenario. Even if his closest human ties unravel, God will still be faithful to him.

"Teach me Your way, O LORD, and lead me in a smooth path, because of my enemies. Do not deliver me to the will of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence.

I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living." A *lost heart* is the result of an *abandoned hope*. Lose hope and you'll lose heart.

If you're sure of the outcome – if you know that your future includes God's goodness - then you can withstand anything for the moment.

"Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!" When David got his eyes off the Lord he lost heart. But while he waits on

the Lord, God strengthens his heart.

PSALM TWENTY-EIGHT is also a psalm of David.

It begins, “To You I will cry, O LORD my Rock...” An Irish preacher once said, “Christ is the only solid rock. All others are *sham-rocks*.”

“To You I will cry, O LORD my Rock: do not be silent to me, lest, if You are silent to me, I become like those who go down to the pit.”

Once, a godly lady was lying on her death bed.

One of the bystanders in the room thought they were about to lose her. She was about to die. He commented, “*She’s sinking fast.*” That’s when the lady lifted up in her bed, and replied, “*You can’t sink through rock!*”

When your life is built on the solid rock you will never sink!

“Hear the voice of my supplications when I cry to You, when I lift up my hands toward Your holy sanctuary.” It’s a good thing to lift up our hands to God’s holy sanctuary. We’re surrendering our will and reaching out to Him.

“Do not take me away with the wicked and with the workers of iniquity, who speak peace to their neighbors, but evil is in their hearts.” David asks God to protect him from the hypocrites. Who *speak peace but seek blood*.

In verse 4 David asks God to judge the wicked. “Give to them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavors; give them according to the work of their hands; render to them what they deserve.

Because they do not regard the works of the LORD, nor the operation of His hands, He shall destroy them and not build them up.”

Psalm 28 is an “Imprecatory Psalm.” The word “imprecate” means “to curse.” This is one of several psalms where the Holy Spirit inspires the writer to call down judgment and utter curses on God’s enemies.

This style of psalm teaches us many lessons. I think it shows us that God has empathy with a heart that desires righteousness and fairness.

We need to couple mercy with justice - but it’s a godly desire to want justice served. We should want God to right wrongs, and punish evil.

Of course, these psalms also teach an obvious lesson - God will judge sin... CS Lewis once wrote, “If the Jews cursed more bitterly than the pagans it was because they took right and wrong more seriously.”

Verse 6 “Blessed be the LORD, because He has heard the voice of my supplications! The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in Him, and I am helped; therefore my heart greatly rejoices, and with my song I will praise Him. The LORD is their strength, and He is the saving refuge of His anointed. Save Your people, and bless Your inheritance; shepherd them also, and bear them up forever.”

Notice we’re God's inheritance! Gold means nothing to God. In heaven He uses gold to pave the streets. It’s nothing more than shiny asphalt.

In heaven beautiful pearls are used like rawd iron – to make

gates.

God's inheritance is His people. We're His special treasure!
He saves, blesses, shepherds, carries, shelters, and makes
strong His people!