

**“Easter in the Worst of All Places”  
(13<sup>th</sup> in our series, Jesus Everywhere)**

Psalm 22\*

Pastor Peter Hiett

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2012

*\*All scriptures are ESV unless otherwise noted.*

**Song:**

*Hallelujah* by Leonard Cohen

**Prayer**

Well Lord it's Easter and I'm supposed to preach....

I suppose some folks don't want to be here – relatives drug em' here and now the relatives are prayin' that I don't mess it up. Some folks are already disappointed 'cause I'm not a character like last year; I'm just me – confused and trying to talk about you – on Easter. Praise God.

Hallelujah and all that...Help me 'cause God sometimes I feel abandoned by You....why are You so far from helping me? I cry out to You and You don't answer. I lie awake and can't find rest. You're Holy, so they sing *“Hallelujeh. Praise the Lord.”* They call out to you in fancy churches – on TV; and You help them! But I'm a worm, not human. They all despise me. They mock me, laugh and say *“Look what God has done to him.”*

My God, my God, why? Why have you forsaken me?

...Amen.

**Sermon**

Have you ever prayed a prayer like that? (Ask for a show of hands and look around.) It seems kinda inappropriate, huh? It strikes the wrong note – especially on Easter. Well there may be no prayer more appropriate. My prayer was Psalms 22:1-8 – just paraphrased a bit. Psalms 22 – a Psalm of David.

*“I heard there was a secret chord that David played and it pleased the Lord but you don't really care for music, do ya?*

*It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth, the minor fall, the major lift...*

*The baffled king composing Halleluheh....”*

Psalm 22. Let's read it

To the Choirmaster: According to the *Doe of the Dawn*. [A Psalm is a song and the Psalms are the songbook of ancient Israel. And they sung this one to the tune *“The Doe of the Dawn.”* They sang it in worship in the Temple. For a 1,000 years they sang what I prayed. They sang Psalm 22.] A Psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup> *My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?*

*Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?*

<sup>2</sup> *O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer,  
and by night, but I find no rest.*

<sup>3</sup> *Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel.*

[He's “enthroned on praise” – literally Hallelujeh. (That's what it means in Hebrew – “Praise the Lord” and that's what He chooses for His throne; not wealth or power – Hallelujahs)]

<sup>4</sup> *In you our fathers trusted;*

*they trusted, and you delivered them.*

*<sup>5</sup> To you they cried and were rescued;  
in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*

*<sup>6</sup> But I am a worm and not a man,  
scorned by mankind and despised by the people.*

*<sup>7</sup> All who see me mock me;  
they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;*

*<sup>8</sup> "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him;  
let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"*

Psalms 22:1-8

And he goes on like that ... they all sang it and David wrote it *"My God, my God why have you forsaken me?"* Imagine, he thought God didn't hear; he thought God didn't know. I wonder where he was when he cried out *"My God, my God – Why? Why have you forsaken me?"* Maybe he was in the Cave of Adullam; forsaken by Saul the King. Remember? [The prophet anointed him king. He experienced great victories and massive popularity until Saul grew jealous and hunted him like a criminal.] David lost everything and hid in the Cave of Adullam, buried in betrayal and rejection. Have you ever been there?

Maybe he was lying on the ground in his house, buried in shame; forsaken by his own hard heart. Remember when Nathan confronted him saying *"You are the man. The murderer, the adulterer who took Bathsheba and murdered Uriah. Now the Son of David will die."*

Maybe he was an old man fleeing Jerusalem; fleeing Absalom, his son who murdered Amnon, his brother; stole the throne and raped his father's wives. And so David was forsaken by his own flesh and blood.

Maybe David was in Hell. He says that in the Psalms. Psalm 18 *"The chords of Sheol – Hell – entangled me."* Psalms 30 and 86, he writes that his soul was in Hell. Psalm 139:8 *"If I make my bed in Hell..."*

Do you ever feel like David? Forsaken by everything and forsaken by God. That must be Hell – The deep, the Abyss, Sheol.

In Psalm 6 David writes *"In Hell who will give you 'hallel' – praise?"*

Solomon writes *"There is no work thought wisdom or knowledge in Hell – to which you are going."*

It must be hard to pray in Hell and impossible to sing in Hell. Yet Psalm 22 is a song and a prayer and it sounds like it comes from Hell. How do you sing about Heaven, when you feel like Hell?

I have this memory stuck in my brain. Seriously, I've chewed on it for 17 years and wondered if God was trying to tell me something ...

I remember my 3 year old daughter, Becky, standing in front of the TV, watching *The Little Mermaid* and screaming *"Keep singing Ariel, keep singing!"*

It must've been at the end of the movie when Ariel gets her voice back. At the start of the movie, she loses it to the Sea Witch. Actually she trades it for legs because she wants to be human because she's fallen in love with a prince who's heard her singing by the sea. So the witch tempts Ariel to make herself in the image of the Prince. So she can live in his world and become his bride. She has 3 days to win his love, or forfeit her soul to the witch's prison in the depths of the sea.

Clip from movie *The Little Mermaid*

Ursula: *Go ahead. Make your choice. (begins to sing) I'm a very busy woman and I haven't got all day. It won't cost much – just your voice. You poor unfortunate soul. Its sad but true, if you want to cross a bridge, my sweet, you've got to pay the toll; take a gulp and take a breath and go ahead and sign the scroll. Flotsam and Jetsam, now I've got her boys. The boss is on a roll. This poor unfortunante soul.*

Ariel signs the scroll.

Ursula begins to chant a spell and tells Ariel to sing. Ariel begins to sing.

Ursula: *Keep singing.*

Ariel's voice is a light within her throat and the light emerges from Ariel's body and Ursula grabs it as she laughs in her evil voice.

Lightning and lights surround Ariel as her legs are formed. She is then guided to the surface by her friends, Flounder and Sebastian.

So she tries to make herself in the image of the Prince and it works; except she has no voice, no word, no song. And so the he doesn't know her.

We are tempted to make ourselves in the image of God and it worked (Genesis 3:22); it worked except we have no voice, no word, no song. To use the Biblical terms, we have knowledge, but no faithfulness; no love. We can't speak the language of the Kingdom of Heaven. And if we can't speak the word or sing the song, the Prince may say *"Depart from me, for I never knew you."*

Well the Sea Witch said *"Keep singing"* for she wanted to take Ariel's voice. But Becky yelled when Ariel was getting her voice back. All Hell was breaking loose; the sun was going down and the Sea Witch had just about trapped Ariel, her father, and the Prince in Hell. But Ariel got her voice back, started singing, and that's when Becky would start yelling *"Keep singing Ariel. Keep singing."*

Well, how do you sing in the midst of Hell? How did David sing in Hell? How did Jonah pray in Hell? Jonah 2:1-2. The belloy of the fish was the belloy of "Sheol." In the beast, in the depths of the sea, Jonah was in Hell – 3 days and 3 nights. How do you sing: How do you pray in Hell?

Do you believe in Hell? No, of course you don't. You may believe there is a Hell, but no one believes in Hell. That's what makes it Hell - not believing is Hell.

Like Solomon said *"There is no thought, knowledge or wisdom in Sheol."* In Scripture, belief means trust and trust means faith. Faith in nothing is to be entirely alone. That's Hell.

No one believes in Hell – well except of course for one and only one and He believes, He prays, He sings in Hell – it's called Easter.

Now when I say *"You don't believe in Hell,"* I'm referring to Hell #1. In Scripture, there are at least 3 different realities that we often refer to, with the one English word, Hell. The first you can't believe in, the second is belief itself and the third is the boundary between the other two.

The Bible uses the Hebrew word, *"Sheol"* and the Greek word, *"Hades"* to describe Hell #1 - *"Outer darkness where men weep and gnash their teeth."* Thank of it over here.

**Hell #1**

Sheol/Hades  
FaithLESSness

- Darkness
- Death
- Lies
- Isolation
- Chaos
- The Experience  
of God's Absence
- No Singing

It's a place of Darkness, Death, and Lies which is separation from Light, Life, and Truth. It's a prison of lies, hiding people from truth and God is Truth. "The chief punishment of the Liar is not that he is no longer believed, but that he can no longer believe." And that means he can no longer connect ... he's isolated, alone, in prison of Self. This place is chaos and the void – the absence, not substance; desecration, not creation.

*"In Hell, there is no music" writes Calvin Miller, "an agonizing night ... as songless as a shattered violin."*

*"The sound of harpists, musicians, flute players, and trumpeters will be heard in you no more"* writes John in Revelation 19.

No singing. No Faith. No Hope. No Love.

And all feel forsaken – Hell #1. Think of it here.

Now think of Hell #2 over here

**Hell #1**

Sheol/Hades  
FaithLESSness

- Darkness
- Death
- Lies
- Isolation
- Chaos
- The Experience  
of God's Absence
- No Singing

**Hell #2**

The Fire  
FaithFULLness

- Light
- Life
- Truth
- Love
- Logos
- The Experience  
of God's Presence
- All Singing

It's Fire, but Scripture is clear *"Our God is a consuming Fire."* So it's not the Experience of His Absence but the Manifestation of His Presence.

It's Light that burns the Darkness – Life that raises the Dead.

It's Truth that consumes Lies and Love that binds everything together.

And God is Light, Life, Truth, Love and Fire. God is Fire. God speaks His Word.

His Logos into Chaos – Creating All Things

And then Filling all things with Himself – Holy Fire.

The finished Creation is Creation filled with God – completed by God.

In JRR Tolkien's novels – God sings all Creation into existence and He sings all disharmony into harmony in the end.

In C.S. Lewis' novels – Aslan sings Narnia into existence.

That's because in the Bible, God sings all things into existence. He speaks a word and the Word is the Logos – the Logic. Music is Logic; complicated harmonies of meaning. Even physicists say all creation is the manifestation of vibrations on superstrings vibrating in multiple dimensions.

God sings Creation into existence and He still is and so all discord, He will harmonize to himself with His song – His Word and all emptiness He will fill with His Spirit – His Holy Fire.

So in the New Heaven and New Earth, all Sorrow is turned into Joy and all Sin filled with Grace. And everyone sings. It's all singing and God is enthroned on the "Hallelujahs" - *"A lamb standing as if He'd been slain."* (Rev. 5).

You know a better word for Hell #2 is really Heaven.

<b>Hell #1</b> Sheol/Hades <i>FaithLESSness</i>	<b>Hell #2</b> The Fire <i>FaithFULLness</i>
-Darkness -Death -Lies -Isolation -Chaos -The Experience of God's Absence  -No Singing	-Light -Life -Truth -Love -Logos -The Experience of God's Presence  -All Singing

It's all things, filled with God and God is Eternal, so this place is eternal (Hell #2). And this place (Hell #1) is temporal. It exists in Time, in the After Life, in the depths of the Earth and yet it begins on the surface of the Earth – while we still walk the Earth. David wrote *"The chords of Sheol entangled me."*

Hell #1 is temporal and Hell #2 is eternal. In fact, Hell #1 gets destroyed by Hell #2. "Hades" gets destroyed by the Substance of Heaven.

Revelation 20:14 *"Then death and Hades (Hell #1) were thrown into the Lake of Fire (that is Divinity, "Theion" - Hell #2).*

Revelation 21:4 *"Death will be no more."* One day this whole Earth will be flooded with Fire. And its happening already. It started on Pentecost.

So, Hell #1 (Think of it here.); Hell #2 (Think of it here.); and Hell #3 (Here.)

Hell #3 is the boundary between the other two – the boundary between Hell and Heaven.

<b>Hell #1</b> Sheol/Hades <i>FaithLESSness</i>	<del>Heaven</del> <del>Hell #2</del> The Fire <i>FaithFULLness</i>
-Darkness -Death -Lies -Isolation -Chaos -The Experience of God's Absence  -No Singing	-Light -Life -Truth -Love -Logos -The Experience of God's Presence  -All Singing

A better word for Hell #3 is Judgment.

Hell #1	Judgment Hell #3	Heaven Hell #2
Sheol/Hades FaithLESSness		The Fire FaithFULLness
-Darkness -Death -Lies -Isolation -Chaos -The Experience of God's Absence  -No Singing -Temporal		-Light -Life -Truth -Love -Logos -The Experience of God's Presence  -All Singing -Eternal

It's the place where Heaven burns Hell.

It's the place where the New Creation conquers the Fallen Creation; where the Kingdom of God defeats the Kingdom of this World.

On Palm Sunday Jesus said *"Now is the Judgment of this World."* And He was speaking of His Cross. He was crucified just outside the city walls of Jerusalem and remember the New Jerusalem is His Bride. Just outside the walls of Jerusalem was "Gehenna."

Hell	Judgment	Heaven
Sheol/Hades FaithLESSness	Gehenna FaithFULLness Destroys FaithLESSness	The Fire FaithFULLness
-Darkness -Death -Lies -Isolation -Chaos -The Experience of God's Absence  -No Singing -Temporal		-Light -Life -Truth -Love -Logos -The Experience of God's Presence  -All Singing -Eternal

- "The Valley of Hinnom."
- The boundary between Jerusalem and this World .
- The place Jesus burned their trash.
- The place where the Faithfulness of God consumes the Faithlessness of this World.
- The edge of Jerusalem.

Hey, did you know that Ariel is another name for Jerusalem? Ariel means "Lioness of God" and you all know Jesus is a lion. Well 2,000 years ago, Ariel had completely lost her voice, and the Word of God, Lion of Judah, Jesus the Christ, hung nailed to a tree, just outside her city walls.

Well Ariel, how do you sing about Heaven when you feel like Hell? How do you sing "Hallelujah" when you feel forsaken?

Did Jesus ever feel forsaken?

St. Paul writes that *"Jesus descended into the lower parts of the earth."* (Ephesians 4:9)

St. Peter writes that *"He preached to the spirits in prison; preached the Gospel ... even to the dead."* (1 Peter 3:19 & 4:6)

St. Matthew writes *"That as Jesus hung on the tree, a great darkness covered the land (from noon until 3) and then Jesus began to sing ... And when He sang, the earth shook, the veil ripped, and tombs were opened."*

Did you realize that He sang? And He sang what David wrote. He cried *"My God. My God, why have you forsaken me?"* And I believe He felt forsaken for He was in Hell – He was in my Hell, your Hell, David's Hell and Jerusalem's Hell and Ariel's Hell. So He cried *"My God. My God."* But not just because He felt forsaken. He was referencing a song – a song they all knew, a song they had been told to sing for a 1,000 years. See in Jesus' day, there were no chapter and verse numbers in Scripture or the Psalms. So, to reference a song, they'd quote the first line, then expect you to know the rest and sing the rest.

So, check this out:

On the cross, Jesus quotes David and sings his song. But to be more accurate ... some time around 1,000 BC, David quotes Jesus and sings His song – sung on the Cross. As Scripture says, He was slain from the Foundation of the World. And He is the eternal Word of God spoken into the void that is now Creation. Jesus sings in Hell – let's read it:

To the Choirmaster:

According to the Doe of the Dawn.

A Psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup> *My God, my god, why have you forsaken me?*

*Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning?*

<sup>2</sup> *O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest.*

<sup>3</sup> *Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel.*

<sup>4</sup> *In you our fathers trusted; they trusted and you delivered them.*

<sup>5</sup> *To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame.*

<sup>6</sup> *But I am a worm, and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people.*

<sup>7</sup> *All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads;*

<sup>8</sup> *"He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"*

<sup>9</sup> *Yet you are he who took me from the womb; you made me trust you at my mother's breasts.*

<sup>10</sup> *On you was I cast from my birth, and from my mother's womb you have been my God.*

<sup>11</sup> *Be not far from me, for trouble is near, and there is none to help.*

<sup>12</sup> *Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me;*

<sup>13</sup> *they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion.*

<sup>14</sup> *I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast;*

<sup>15</sup> *my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death.*

<sup>16</sup> *For dogs encompass me [Gentiles] a company of evildoers [the Sanhedrin] encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet [This is in the Dead Sea Scrolls – we have parchments written long before Christ was crucified – "Pierced my hands and feet."]*

<sup>17</sup> *I can count all my bones – they stare and gloat over me;*

<sup>18</sup> *they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.*

<sup>19</sup> *But you, O Lord, do not be far off! O you my help, come quickly to my aid!*

<sup>20</sup> *Deliver my soul from the sword, my precious life from the power of the dog!*

<sup>21</sup> *Save me from the mouth of the lion! You have rescued me from the horns of the wild oxen!*

<sup>22</sup> *I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:*

<sup>23</sup> *You who fear the Lord, praise him! All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him, and stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!*

<sup>24</sup> *For he has not despised or abhorred the affliction of the afflicted, and he has not hidden his face from him, but has heard, when he cried to him.*

Psalm 22:1-24

Catch that? Jesus felt forsaken; yet He just sang that He's not forsaken. That's Faith – Faith in who His father is. And His father didn't turn His face away. In fact, *"God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself"* writes Paul. The Father sees sinners. It's sinners that can't see the Father. The Father saw Jesus; but Jesus no longer saw His father. He was blinded by Sin – our Sin – our Hell. We create Hell by covering our ears and shutting our eyes.

*"Good beats upon the damned incessantly [writes C. S. Lewis] as sound waves beat on the ears of the deaf, but they cannot receive it. Their fists are clenched, their teeth are clenched, their eyes fast shut. First they will not, in the end they cannot, open their hands for gifts, or their mouths for food, or their eyes to see."*

*"Then no one can ever reach them?"* someone asks.

*"Only the Greatest of all can make Himself small enough to enter Hell."*

Jesus is the greatest of all and He emptied Himself to enter our hearts and enter our Hell. I hope you see the death of Jesus on the Cross was not what God needed in order to love us; the death of Jesus on the Cross was what we needed in order to love God: that is see God and sing "Hallelujah" from the heart.

Next line (God creates the praise on our lips):

<sup>25</sup> *From you comes my praise in the great congregation; my vows I will perform before those who fear him.*

<sup>26</sup> *The afflicted shall eat and be satisfied; those who seek him shall praise the Lord! May your hearts live forever!*

<sup>27</sup> *All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before you.*

<sup>28</sup> *For kingship belongs to the Lord, and he rules over the nations.*

<sup>29</sup> *All the prosperous of the earth eat and worship; before him shall bow all who go down to the dust, [Like Isaiah and Paul write "Every knee will bow and every tongue give praise;" every tongue will sing "Hallelujah." Next line.] even the one who could not keep himself alive.*

<sup>30</sup> *Posterity shall serve him; it shall be told of the Lord to the coming generation;*

<sup>31</sup> *they shall come and proclaim his righteousness to a people yet unborn, that he has done it. ["It is finished."]*

Scripture tells us that just before Jesus died, He cried out *"It is finished"* and then He delivered His Spirit. That's the Holy Spirit, the Holy Fire, the Word of God, the Voice of God.

And it descends into Ariel, the Church, His Bride, at Pentecost as she begins to sing "Hallelujah;"

and it descends on Jerusalem as she gathers in the Temple and sings Psalm 22; it descends on David as he sits in some cave feeling forsaken, but speaks his heart to God writing *"My God, my God;"*

it descends on us as we cry *"Abba, Daddy, Father;"*

*"when we cry Abba Father, it is the Spirit himself bearing witness with our spirit that we are children of God,"* says Scripture.

When each of my children was an infant, I'd hold him or her in my arms and say it over and over and over again *"Daddy, Dadda, Daddy – say Dadda."* I'd give them the Word. A Hebrew father would say *"Say Abba. Say Abba."* And you see, Jesus is how our Father gives us the Word. Jesus is God's Word given to us so we can speak the "Hallelujah;" so we can learn the language of Heaven; so we can sing the song that is Heaven.



As infants, my children were surrounded by me, but they couldn't truly commune with me until they received my word and returned my word – *"Abba - Daddy."*

We may be surrounded by Heaven, but until we receive God's Word and speak God's Word, we remain alone and to be thoroughly alone is Hell. God's Word is Jesus and it means "God saves.

The language of Heaven is Grace and the song is "Hallelujah"

Hell is temporal but the song is Eternal.

God is the singer and Jesus is the song.

From the Cross, the song descends upon the church and upon Jerusalem;

it descends upon David;

it descends upon Jonah in the belly of the Beast, in the depths of the sea in Hell.

Jonah starts to pray; Jonah starts to sing; it's a song like Psalm 22 ending with *"salvation belongs to the Lord"* and the Beast can't stomach the sound and vomits him on to the land.

At the Cross, *"Christ's divinity was hidden under his humanity like a fish hook under bait"* writes St. Gregory of Nyssa in 395 AD and Satan *"like a ravenous fish gulped it down."*

At the Cross, Hell swallowed Heaven and Heaven wouldn't stop singing. Satan swallowed the Song. And Jesus shattered the dominion of Hell. Like a singer that shatters a glass house with His song. Jesus sings and shatters our hard hearts.

Breaking glass with song/voice Video

Whatever will not move to the resonate frequencies of Heaven is shattered by the Sound of Praise. And so the Israelites sang and the walls come tumbling down . Paul and Silas sang in prison; the earth shook and the doors flew open.

Jesus sang on the Tree and the earth shook and the tombs were opened.

The Song breaks the Power of Hell

Yet it's in Hell, or at the edge of Hell, that we learn the song;

- it's on the Hill of the Skull, at the foot of the Cross that we meet the Singer and His Song;
- it's at the end of the 6<sup>th</sup> day that we find our voice or He finds us – the 6<sup>th</sup> Day.

*I've heard there was a secret chord, that David played and it pleased the Lord. But you don't really care for music, do you? It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth, the minor fall, the major lift...*

Music is based on a 7 chord scale; like the 7 days of Creation. In a major chord, we hear a perfect harmony; but in a minor chord , one note is one half step off –

- a minor chord makes us long for a major chord;
- a minor chord makes us long for harmony – completion.

*... but you don't really care for music, do you? It goes like this, the fourth, the fifth, the minor fall*  
...

You see the fall on the 6<sup>th</sup> chord makes you long for the 7<sup>th</sup>; the Fall on the 6<sup>th</sup> Day makes us long for the 7<sup>th</sup> Day. I believe Scripture reveals: We're all living in the 6<sup>th</sup> Day of Creation; still being made in God's image and learning to long for the 7<sup>th</sup> Day – God's Rest.

Well, at the minor fall, David didn't stop singing because Jesus didn't stop singing. David played the chord – He surrendered the dischord.

He played the secret chord – the minor chord.

He surrendered his pain, shame and sorrow.

He sang *"My God. My God, why have you forsaken me?"*

And Jesus met him there and finished the song – singing dischord into harmony; turning Sin into Grace and forsakeness into Faith.

And David knew he couldn't write that song. David knew he couldn't finish that but the song finished David. *"A baffled King composing Hallelujah?"* Maybe you're a "baffled King" composing Hallelujah - the very Throne of God.

Well,

It happened when David felt forsaken.

It happened when he was stripped of all Honor, Power, and Glory.

It happened when David failed and his world failed and his God seemed to fail.

It happened *"there in those caves"* writes Gene Edwards.

*There in those caves, drowned in the sorrow of his song, and in the song of his sorrow, David very simply became the greatest hymn writer, and the greatest comforter of broken hearts this world shall ever know.*

But of course, 3,000 years later we know ...

It really wasn't David – It was Jesus in David.

It was Easter – Jesus rising from the dead in David.

But David learned to sing the song in Hell.

There's a reason for the cave, the bottom of the sea, and the outer darkness – it's there we learn to sing the song. It's the same song that holds the stars in the sky; the same song that opens every lily. But we can't hear it, or know it, till we see it; see Him standing in the darkness.

It's the darkness that makes us love the light.

It's Shame that makes us long for Mercy.

It's despair that makes us long for Love.

And surrendered despair is a prayer – *"God save."* *"God save"* Yeshua is literally the name of Jesus. So surrendered despair is prayer – it's Praise to the Savior – it is The Savior.

Well just think of it, David really did feel Forsaken and yet he was entirely not Forsaken for God was in Christ, in David, speaking David's feelings of despair.

And so, David spoke the word of God as the Word of God spoke David.

As if they died together and rose from the grave together. It really is too difficult for words and so I'll tell a story, a true story.

Several years ago, around three in the morning, in the living room of my house, Susan and I were praying with a friend who had battled Hell and the Prince of Darkness all her life. Her father was a Satanist and she had been subjected to trauma worse than you can imagine. We'd seen God do miracles and drive out demons. But this night, God revealed some memories and exposed some horrors that my friend just couldn't bear. At one point she literally fell on our

floor, writhing in pain. She cried out *"I don't know what to do! Tell me what to do!"* And I literally had no voice:

She felt forsaken by God;

And I felt forsaken by God – for I had no explanation and nothing to say.

And then I had a thought – it terrified me and I wondered if it could even be said. But I grabbed her head and I spoke into her ear. I said *"Say this. Say this. 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?'"* And she did – she screamed it and immediately she froze. I could tell she was having a vision. She froze and then she melted and then she told me the vision. She said

*"All at once I saw myself. I saw my old sinful self nailed to the Cross and then I saw my religious self (that condemned my sinful self); she was nailed to the same Cross. And then I saw Jesus and He was nailed to us, nailed to the Cross; and I watched as we all died. And then all at once I saw myself standing at the foot of that Cross in a beautiful, white wedding gown."*

So even though she felt defeated by Satan, imprisoned in Hell and forsaken by God; she still surrendered despair in the form of a prayer and that's called Faith and it's not of herself. That song is a Gift. It's the Word of God rising from her grave. My friend's name is Ariel; she's the New Jerusalem; the Bride of Christ, whose found her voice. Or I should say her voice found her.

Clip for *Little Mermaid*

Scream from Ursula and the shell that is holding Ariel's voice falls and breaks and the "voice" goes back into Ariel and she begins to sing.

Prince: *Ariel? You can talk. You're the one.*

Ursula: *Eric, get away from her.*

Prince: *It was you all the time.*

Ariel: *Oh Eric, I wanted to tell you.*

Ursula: *Eric, no!*

Ariel finds her voice and sings for her Prince. Ariel finds her voice. And we find our voice at the Cross.

So Ariel finds her voice but that's when the Sea Witch (Ursula) really gets angry. So together, now, Ariel and the Prince still must battle. And that's when Becky would start yelling at the TV *"Keep singing Ariel - keep singing."*

And I think that's what God was saying to me and is saying to us:

*"Keep singing Ariel - keep singing."*

*"Keep singing Church - keep singing."*

*"Keep singing until you see the song is finished."*

I started it and I finish it and it becomes eternal.

But I'm calling you to sing it, with me, in this place and time. The pain is temporal but the song is eternal.

Clip from *Little Mermaid*

Ariel and the Prince are standing on the side of the ship and everyone is singing in the background. King Triton makes a rainbow over the sea on the horizon. Everyone in the water is waving to the ship. Ariel and the Prince kiss.

In the end Ariel gets her legs and her voice by Grace. And in the end, we're made in the image of God and speak the Word of God by Grace. In the end we know the Good and freely choose the Good –

Our Lord, who is Himself, the Song.

So, how do you sing about Heaven when you feel like Hell?

### **Communion**

On the night that He was betrayed – in the worst of all places at the worst of all times, Jesus the Prince took the bread and He broke it saying, *"This is my body given to you. Take, eat; do this in remembrance of me."* And in the same way, after supper, having given thanks, He took the cup and said, *"This cup is the Covenant, the New Covenant; in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it all of you and do it in remembrance of me."* This cup is the Fire and this cup is the Song.

So do you feel forsaken? I mean just a little bit. Do you feel forsaken? Maybe you feel forsaken by others, by yourself, by God. There's a reason you feel forsaken; it's so you can see this (points to the Communion table) and seeing this you could meet the Prince and let Him finish the Song.

So do this for me, would you? Just close your eyes and tell Him, just tell Him. You realize you can always talk to Him because He is wherever you are because He descended into the depths of the earth and even the depths of your heart. Wherever you are, you can talk to God, in the name of Jesus. Tell Him.

Now open your eyes and look. You see this. Do you feel forsaken? He's forsaken with you and that means you're most truly and really not forsaken. *"Behold I will never leave you nor forsake you,"* He says. And so look at Him; believe Him; and sing His Song. Hallelujah. Hallelujah for who you are.

We invite you to come forward, take a piece of the bread and dip it in the cup. After you take Communion, there will be members of our Prayer Ministry Team in each corner. They'd love to pray with you if you'd like to pray with them. But do you see what this is Ariel. You come forward and receive the Song; ingest the Song. Jesus says, *"I want you to know the Song. Ingest me."* Ingest the Song and then sing the Song. Hallelujah.

### **Benediction and Prayer**

Hallelujah. He's Risen. He's Risen – yes He's Risen Indeed! He's rising in you. He's risen in you and He's rising in all of you – all the parts of you, every corner of you. So, when you get confused; when you get bewildered; when it feels like Hell – you just remember, you're a baffled King composing Hallelujah. So keep singing Ariel, keep singing! Don't stop singing. Keep singing.

In Jesus' name. Amen.

*Disclaimer: The author has not edited this document. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio or video version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*