

Palm Sunday 2016

My God, My God!

Psalm 22

“My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from me?”

Jesus tried so hard. He taught, healed, coaxed, scolded and eventually gave his life trying to open our minds and hearts to what he knew so well. Eventually his associates and friends abandoned him too. He must have felt like a total failure in the Garden. *“My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”* He knew what it felt like to feel abandoned.

*“My God, My God, I cry out day by day, but you do not answer.
My heart has melted within me, my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.”*

My father tried so hard. He was everything I could have hoped for in a father. He was funny, loving, a hard worker, and a man of strong faith. His was a simple faith. He likely didn't know what the word, theology, meant. He just lived from a deep place in his heart. And yet as he began to prepare for his ascent into God's place, he couldn't help but think that something wasn't right. He always thought something could be done to improve his health. He couldn't put together the truth that living and dying go together. He must have known what it's like to feel abandoned.

*“My God, My God, you made me trust in you. Do not be far from me.
Oh Lord, my strength, come quickly and save me.”*

We all try so hard. We've known hard times, failures, disappointments, misunderstandings, abuse, loss of hope. It's like something has gone wrong. We're innocent! This shouldn't be happening to us, it's not fair. We have known what it's like to feel abandoned.

My God, My God!

Jesus kept eyes on his Father and knew he was not abandoned. In the Garden, something happened in him. He moved from, *“Please. Father, let this cup pass from me,”* to *“Not my will but your's be done.”* He kept his eyes fixed on his Father, and he learned he was not alone. He became aware that his Father was with him, and he knew he was not abandoned.

“My God, My God, you have not forsaken us. You are not far from us.”

Dad kept his eyes on Jesus and he learned that God was with him, and that he was not abandoned. He came to peace and was able to joke with the nurses at the end in his wonderful fun-loving way.

*“My God, My God, I cried out day be day, and you answered me.
My heart is strong within me and my tongue no longer sticks to the roof of my mouth”*

When we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus when times are hard and seem hopeless, we too learn that God is with us. Something deeper than our hard times, failures, disappointments, misunderstandings, abuse, and loss of hope emerges in our hearts, and we know that God is with us, that we have not been abandoned.

*“My God, My God, we trust in you. We know you are not far from us.
Oh Lord, our strength, you have come, and you have saved us.”*

Thanks be to God!