

# **Sermon for the Funeral of Rolland John Brady**

**Date:** March 30, 2019

**Location:** St. John's Lutheran Church, Austin, MN

**Old Testament:** Psalm 22

**Epistle Reading:** 1 Corinthians 1:20-25

**Gospel Reading:** Matthew 27:45-47  
John 19:28-30



**Sermon Title:** Jesus our Good Shepherd



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**TEXT: PSALM 22**

<sup>1</sup> **My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?** Why are you so far away from helping me, so far away from the words of my groaning? <sup>2</sup> My God, I cry out by day, but you do not answer— also at night, but I find no rest. <sup>3</sup> Yet, you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. <sup>4</sup> Our ancestors trusted you. They trusted, and you rescued them. <sup>5</sup> They cried to you and were saved. They trusted you and were never disappointed.

<sup>6</sup> Yet, I am a worm and not a man. I am scorned by humanity and despised by people.

<sup>7</sup> All who see me make fun of me. Insults pour from their mouths. They shake their heads and say, <sup>8</sup> “Put yourself in the LORD’s hands. Let the LORD save him! Let God rescue him since he is pleased with him!” <sup>9</sup> Indeed, you are the one who brought me out of the womb, the one who made me feel safe at my mother’s breasts. <sup>10</sup> I was placed in your care from birth. From my mother’s womb you have been my God.

<sup>11</sup> Do not be so far away from me. Trouble is near, and there is no one to help. <sup>12</sup> Many bulls have surrounded me. Strong bulls from Bashan have encircled me. <sup>13</sup> They have opened their mouths to attack me like ferocious, roaring lions. <sup>14</sup> **I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax. It has melted within me.** <sup>15</sup> **My strength is dried up like pieces of broken pottery. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.** You lay me down in the dust of death. <sup>16</sup> Dogs have surrounded me. A mob has encircled me. They have pierced my hands and feet. <sup>17</sup> I can count all my bones. People stare. They gloat over me. <sup>18</sup> They divide my clothes among themselves. They throw dice for my clothing.

<sup>19</sup> Do not be so far away, O LORD. Come quickly to help me, O my strength. <sup>20</sup> Rescue my soul from the sword, my life from vicious dogs. <sup>21</sup> Save me from the mouth of the lion and from the horns of wild oxen. You have answered me.

<sup>22</sup> I will tell my people about your name. I will praise you within the congregation. <sup>23</sup> All who fear the LORD, praise him! All you descendants of Jacob, glorify him! Stand in awe of him, all you descendants of Israel. <sup>24</sup> The LORD has not despised or been disgusted with the plight of the oppressed one. He has not hidden his face from that person. The LORD heard when that oppressed person cried out to him for help. <sup>25</sup> My praise comes from you while I am among those assembled for worship. I will fulfill my vows in the presence of those who fear the LORD. <sup>26</sup> Oppressed people will eat until they are full. Those who look to the LORD will praise him. May you live forever. <sup>27</sup> All the ends of the earth will remember and

return to the LORD. All the families from all the nations will worship you <sup>28</sup> because the kingdom belongs to the LORD and he rules the nations. <sup>29</sup> All prosperous people on earth will eat and worship. All those who go down to the dust will kneel in front of him, even those who are barely alive.

<sup>30</sup> There will be descendants who serve him, a generation that will be told about the Lord.

<sup>31</sup> They will tell people yet to be born about his righteousness—**that he has finished it.**

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Grace to you and peace in Jesus' holy name. Amen.

Today we have to listen a bit more closely. We have to do that because the words we needed to hear are from One who is exhausted from the battle. The words are from One who is being beaten and tortured to death.

The Temple Authority has attacked Him. His disciples have abandoned Him.<sup>1</sup> His family accused Him of being mind-crazed.<sup>2</sup> The soldiers have battered Him viciously.<sup>3</sup> The other criminals have cursed and ridiculed Him.<sup>4</sup>

...and now we listen.

It's not the sounds of whips, the fists, or the hammer-falls that we will listen to. It is His words. Words that, now today so many years later, still resonate deafeningly in the ears of all people. The hammer has struck the nails. Each of them is securely planted in the rough hewn wooden beams. The cross has been lifted up.

...and there, hanging between Heaven and Earth is Jesus Christ our Lord.

As we listen, we will learn that every word He uttered from that cross was for others. Not one word was spoken for Himself. Even in that horrid place of pain Jesus was thinking only about us, those He came to save. He is still teaching even while He is tortured to death. So great is His love for us.

He is innocent of all crime, or even any unpleasant thought. He has done no unkind thing to anyone, yet there beaten so severely He no longer looks human,<sup>5</sup> hangs One who has every right to ask, "Why?" to ask, "What have I done?" He has every right to think of no one but Himself, because everyone else has turned on Him.

He was beaten and mocked. Even the two other crucified criminals mocked Him.<sup>6</sup> The whole world had nothing but contempt for Him. In spite of all of that He



1 **Mark 14:50** – Then all the disciples abandoned him and ran away.

2 **Mark 3:21** – When his family heard about it, they went to get him. They said, "He's out of his mind!"

3 **John 19:2-3** – The soldiers twisted some thorny branches into a crown, placed it on his head, and put a purple cape on him. 3 They went up to him, said, "Long live the king of the Jews!" and slapped his face.

4 **Matthew 27:44** – Even the criminals crucified with him were insulting him the same way.

5 **Isaiah 52:14** – Many will be shocked by him. His appearance will be so disfigured that he won't look like any other man. His looks will be so disfigured that he will hardly look like a human.

6 **Luke 23:39** – ... the criminals hanging there insulted Jesus by saying, "So you're really the Messiah, are you? Well, save yourself and us!"

will not lash out. He will not condemn. He will not curse. He will endure the continued slow tedium of waiting for the time of His death to come.

Now, lean in, He's about to say something...

My God, my God,  
why have you forsaken me?<sup>7</sup>

Remember I said, "Not one word was spoken for Himself." That sounded kind of personal. Well remember way back in the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve sinned by purposefully rebelling against God. They were punished, but they were also given a promise. A promise of One who would come to make all things right again.<sup>8</sup> That One has come and His name is Jesus. He came, true God without beginning or end. Present even before creation, and participating in the process of creating all that is, including you.<sup>9</sup>



Many animals were sacrificed from the time of Adam and Eve's sin<sup>10</sup> to the time of Jesus' life. All of those sacrifices covered sin the way cloths covers our body. Jesus, the Babe of Bethlehem, was born to be a very special sacrifice. A sacrifice that would not cover our sin, but take away our sin.<sup>11</sup> Jesus would be the one time, perfect sacrifice for all sin. He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world because He was born to be the final one time perfect sacrifice (the very pascal<sup>12</sup> Lamb, or Passover Lamb) that He pays the debt for all sin.

This is why Jesus was born, and now we are looking to that time when the great holy war is being fought. When our Champion takes the field of battle and engages the enemy with powers and forces that we cannot imagine.

While the roman guards are nailing Jesus to posts of wood, Lucifer is collecting all of his forces for one final onslaught of contempt and hatred against our Savior and our Champion. As the cross is lifted up, and Jesus hangs from those nails, Satan is readying his final and mightiest assault. It is in that moment that all

7 **Matthew 27:46** – About three o'clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" which means, "My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?"

8 **Genesis 3:15** – I will make you and the woman hostile toward each other. I will make your descendants and her descendant hostile toward each other. He will crush your head, and you will bruise his heel."

9 **John 1:3** – Everything came into existence through him. Not one thing that exists was made without him.

10 **Genesis 3:21** – The Lord God made clothes from animal skins for the man and his wife and dressed them.

11 **John 1:29** – John saw Jesus coming toward him the next day and said, "Look! This is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

12 'Pascal' is Hebrew for 'Passover.'

the powers of Hell are let loose against Jesus to try to get Him to doubt, to give up, to despair. For Satan Jesus must be brought down! He must fail or all is lost.

If that was not enough God the Father, who has held His anger for sin until this time,<sup>13</sup> also unleashes the full wrath of Almighty God on Jesus. Both Heaven and Hell are pummeling Him with hatred. Hatred by God the Father and all of Heaven, because Jesus chose to become, not just the One who bears our sins, but to become sin itself;<sup>14</sup> to become that very thing that our heavenly Father hates most. Also hatred from Hell because if Jesus wins Hell loses everything, and the devil wants you to suffer eternally with him, because by hurting you he hurts God.

Still there is more. The very creation Jesus made<sup>15</sup> is holding Him in contempt. The Temple leaders, who should have been pointing people to Jesus as the Messiah, are the ones condemning Him to this death by torture. The people He came to save are shouting, “Crucify Him!”<sup>16</sup> His disciples and closest friends have abandoned Him, and even denied knowing Him.<sup>17</sup> So Heaven, Hell, and Earth are all lashing out at Jesus with fury.

In all of the created universe, and all of Heaven and all of Hell, Jesus was utterly alone. There is no more horrible place in Hell than the place to which Jesus went for you. Reeling in pain Jesus screams out, “My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?”<sup>18</sup> That looks like despair. That looks like failure. That looks like Jesus is crying out for Himself. That looks like doubt.

That is what it looks like to us, but Heaven and Hell know differently. Jesus, even in that hour of horrid torment, is actually thinking only about us. He is still teaching us where to find our hope and where to put trust, in God. Jesus is not crying out in panic, despair, or desperation, He is quoting the Scriptures. He is quoting Psalm 22.

Jesus is not lamenting His situation, He is boldly declaring His station. He, through the Holy Scriptures, is teaching that He is the Holy Christ of God. He is shouting for all who are there to hear: for the Pharisees and Sadducees, for the Roman guards, for His followers, for His haters, for all of Heaven, and for all of Hell, and for you as well. He is shouting out that He alone will save you no matter

13 **Romans 3:25** – God showed that Christ is the throne of mercy where God’s approval is given through faith in Christ’s blood. In his patience God waited to deal with sins committed in the past.

14 **2 Corinthians 5:21** – For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. (ESV)

15 **John 1:3-4** – Everything came into existence through him. Not one thing that exists was made without him. He was the source of life, and that life was the light for humanity.

16 **Luke 23:21** – They began yelling, “Crucify him! Crucify him!”

17 **Luke 22:54-62** – ... but Peter denied it by saying, “I don’t know him.” ...

18 **Psalm 22:1**

what it takes. Even if it means really, and very literally, screaming in Hell while He is still alive. Which is exactly what He is doing. He is taking the Father wrath, and Satan's rage, and all creation's hate, all because of you. He really loves you that much.

...but He's not done teaching. He speaks again, "He said, "I thirst."

Listen to the very middle of Psalm 22.

I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint.

My heart is like wax. It has melted within me.

My strength is dried up like pieces of broken pottery.

My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth.<sup>19</sup>

"I thirst." The Psalm describes a man suffering from dehydration, desperate for a drop of water. Up to this point Jesus has refused every drink He was offered.<sup>20</sup> That is because those drinks were laced with drugs to reduce the pain. Jesus will not taking the easy route. He went to the cross to suffer for you, but you see, now the battle is over.

It might not look like it, but Jesus has already won the war. It is over, and He is just finishing His last lesson to us. Moments before His death He is still teaching; He is still showing us the way home. John the disciple, who was actually there watching all of this, records it this way. He wrote:

After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the Scripture, "I thirst."<sup>21</sup>

After such a battle you would be thinking about your rest, your time off, your break from the work. Jesus just keeps on working and thinking about us, those He came to save. He is still bringing our eyes back to the Bible. For all who will hear He is still pointing to Psalm 22, the suffering Savior Psalm.

The next thing that Jesus says is, "It is finished." Finally He is done, right? No. Listen to the last verse of Psalm 22.

They shall come and proclaim His righteousness to a people yet unborn, that *He has finished it*.<sup>22</sup>

19 Psalm 22:14-15

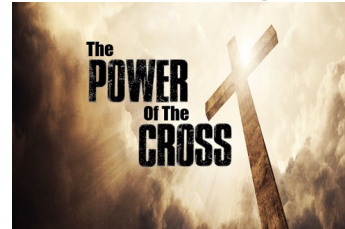
20 Matthew 27:33 – They gave him a drink of wine mixed with a drug called gall. When he tasted it, he refused to drink it.

21 John 19:28

22 Psalm 22:31

Jesus said, “It is finished.”<sup>23</sup> That may have meant, ‘here ends the lesson.’ It certainly meant the work was done. It also showed the Psalm had been sung.

Those words, “it is finished” meant the battle was over and He had won. Those words were the battle cry of a victorious warrior. “It is finished!” It meant you had been saved, just like the Scriptures said you would be saved. Jesus has done it.



“It is finished.” That did not mean that He was finished. It didn’t mean that He gave up. It meant that He took all that there was to take. He took every ounce of the Father’s hatred for your sin. He took every morsel of scorn that Lucifer could spit out, and all of the contempt creation could concoct, and if necessary He would have taken still more.

...but there was no more to take. There was nothing left. It was finished. The hate was finished. The work was finished. The Psalm was finished. Jesus’ last words were singing a hymn to save you. Saving you was the only thing on Jesus mind.

That is why the very next Psalm is Psalm 23 which reads:

The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.

He makes me lie down in green pastures.

He leads me beside still waters.

He restores my soul.

Even though I walk through the valley  
of the shadow of death,

I will fear no evil,  
for You are with me.

Surely goodness and mercy shall pursue me all the days of my life,  
and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.



May Jesus make that true in your life.

Amen.