

Why Have You Forsaken Me? Honest To God (Psalm 22)

Though circumstances often times do not bring joy and they can bear upon us so heavily that we feel forsaken by God and what is going on seems the truest thing about us, what is greater still is the unchangeableness of God's promises to us. Is it not in the deepest, darkest, hardest points of life when all feels against us, that we cling to Him more tightly? Is it not then where faith meets its greatest test and we prove what we really believe?

1. Have you ever experienced the words of this Psalm? Have you ever felt forsaken by God? What were the circumstances leading up to that? What finally broke through, what truth set you free, what was it about God's character that rescued you?
2. Why do we have a sense that God should not be forsaking us? What do you think believers typically think about what it means to be in Christ? Should it not include suffering? Should we always 'feel' intimate with the Lord?
3. How does a sense of immense suffering and the feeling of forsakenness lead us to treasure the Cross? How could a hard road like this end up in worship? When God hand-crafts these circumstances for our lives, what is His ultimate value in doing it? What is His point?
4. How have hard circumstances in the past given you a greater platform for worship, praise, thanksgiving and contentment in your life? Are you only worshipping and content when you get what you want, or does this theme carry when you are hurt, needy, desperate and sometimes feeling forsaken by God? How do you personally respond on the 'forsaken' days?
5. How can you follow the example of Jesus, who when persecuted, did not revile back and blessed those who hurt him? How can you prepare yourself when evil confronts you in the form of another person, to return good for evil and use this opportunity to bless instead of curse?
6. Looking back on your life, how has God used the hard stuff in your life to form you into His image? During those times, what did you have to cling to? How did those circumstances prove to be a megaphone for you to praise Him, believe Him and worship, instead of shrinking back into self-pity?
7. How has your life bounced from pain to belief? Do you know that suffering is not wasted in the lives of believers? Do you know that the God who sometimes to be forsaking is actually orchestrating something so wonderful that it births imperishable prizes?
8. How might you encourage others now who feel forsaken from God? How is God at work in their lives and what is He trying to accomplish? How can you be a conduit to help their eyes and hearts refocus on eternal things happening instead of the temporariness of their circumstances?