

## **My God Why Have You Forsaken Me? - Psalm 22**

I had just eaten supper with my friends  
A feast really, of celebration  
The Passover, the feast of redemption

The irony is, it should have been a happy time  
A joyous time: A religious celebration  
An evening with my friends:  
A healing time, a hopeful time  
It should have been—but wasn't

You know how it is:  
The happy times that should be aren't  
Holidays are often the worst time  
And it was

We had eaten too much and drunk too much wine  
When Judas left to do his nasty deed  
It had to be—I knew it  
But his betrayal still hurt  
Stung me deeply-like a knife in my heart

And with that it began; the slide into darkness  
The head long plunge into miry pit  
Endless and bottomless, it always seems

I knew it would happen-knew it had to be  
But knowing it will happen—even knowing why  
Does not ease the pain  
The pain is real—not wanting it does not make it go away.

We left the table—we left the room  
We went to the garden: the Garden of Gethsemane  
I could not enjoy the evening air  
I could not enjoy the quiet  
The loveliness or beauty  
The garden would not be a place of rest that night  
It would be a place of agony

Come with me to that garden  
Listen to me quietly  
You know a place just like that place  
You've been there—felt the pain I felt

My heart is heavy, my soul is overwhelmed,  
Overwhelmed and heavy with the fear of what is  
and what will be  
Knowing and not wanting to know  
Trying to push the thoughts from my mind  
But always the thoughts return  
I can't stop thinking

My spirit is troubled:  
I want to be strong; but am afraid I will not be  
Not wanting to be afraid, yet knowing I will be

My heart is in anguish within me  
The terrors of death assail me  
Fear and trembling beset me  
Horror overwhelms me

Yes, I walk through the valley of the shadow of death  
I fear the evil, I fear the pain

Why must I endure? Hurt so much?  
I pray for courage  
It doesn't seem enough  
I pray to God  
Is there another way.  
Another cup to drink  
An easier path to take

The pain of knowing is the fear of death  
I weep tears of grief  
I sweat drops of blood  
My head aches with pounding throbs  
My brain feels as if it will explode.  
Is there another way? Another Cup to drink.

I am worn out calling for help  
My throat is parched  
My eyes grow weak  
Lord have mercy

I turn to my friends  
I ask them to understand—they do not comprehend  
I ask them to listen—they do not hear  
I ask them just to “be there for me”—they're too tired

I plead with them to hear me—and they argue  
I plead with them to wait—and they fall asleep.  
I cry out to them: “wake up, listen”  
And they let me down.  
You know how it is,  
It's like I have become a dread to my friends  
I am forgotten by them  
My companions avoid me  
Only darkness is my friend

I am lonely, so lonely—my soul is overwhelmed  
I have been forsaken—forgotten  
The weight of it all drags me down, down  
I am so tired, discouraged—depressed

So I get angry  
Angry at my friends  
Why don't you understand  
I don't think they want to understand  
In truth they cannot understand

Nevertheless I lash out at them  
Lash out with words, words that sting  
"I tell you the truth," I cry—  
And they argue with me  
"It isn't so," they say,  
"Think of all the good things  
"God loves you,  
"You have so much to be thankful for,  
"It's not that bad."

But it is that bad,  
"Can't you at least watch and pray?"  
"We're tired," they say  
"We're sleepy," they say  
"We're busy"  
They turn me off—they sleep

"Couldn't you give me one hour?"  
"Just one measly hour," I yell,  
I want to scream  
"Watch and pray", I plead  
but they only sleep

I am abandoned, I am alone  
I am in despair—depressed, full of grief  
I want to die, quickly, swiftly, without pain

So I get angry at God  
He seems far away.  
Even He has abandoned me  
Of all people:  
My God, my God why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from saving me?  
My Father, why will you not listen?

"If it's possible," I plead  
"If it is possible," I plead again and again

Finally in resignation, in desperation, I give up.  
My strength is gone  
My help is gone  
My hope is gone  
There is no sorrow, like unto this sorrow  
Finally in resignation and desperation, I give up

Not as I will—I have no will left in me  
The spirit is willing—the spirit is gone  
The flesh is weak—completely drained  
The hour is near—the hour is here

My head and my heart no longer communicate  
What I know I can not believe  
What I try I can not feel

My soul is overwhelmed with fear, with anger and with grief.  
As the deer pants for streams of water,  
So my soul pants for you, o God

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God  
When can I go meet with God?

My tears have been my food  
My soul is downcast within me

Why are you downcast, O my soul?  
Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God  
For I will yet praise him  
My Savior and my God.

—*Del Epp, used by permission.*