

# Never Forsaken

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During His ministry the Lord often quoted scripture. So we should not be surprised to find verses in the Old Testament that the Savior quoted in the New. But I was caught off guard one day when I read the first verse of Psalm 22: “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

I had never considered that the Savior may have been quoting sacred writings when He spoke those words in His agony on the cross (see Matthew 27:46). That idea led to a profound spiritual realization.

Almost all of us at some time have wondered, “O God, where art thou?” (D&C 121:1). That question has entered my mind most often during moments of spiritual uncertainty or distress.

For that reason the Savior’s words seemed to beg the question: Did His cry also rise from uncertainty—even doubt? Did it mean that there was a question for which my all-powerful, all-knowing Savior had no answer in the very moment my salvation depended on His power to provide all answers and overcome all things?

Reading this psalm taught me that, though these words indeed give soul-wrenching expression to the “paralyzing despair of divine withdrawal,” which He may have anticipated but not fully comprehended, they were *not* an indication of doubt.<sup>1</sup>

The very act of calling out to His Father in His greatest hour of need using words from holy writings was not only an evidence of



*The Savior’s reference to holy writings assured me that we are never forsaken.*

faith but also a profound teaching opportunity. Though Psalm 22 begins with a question, it is an expression of profound trust that God does *not* forsake:

“Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them.

“They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded” (verses 4–5).

Using the psalmist’s experiences as a foreshadowing of the Savior’s suffering, the psalm foretells the mocking (verses 7–8), the false trial and coming torture (verses 11–13), His pain and suffering (verse 14), His thirst (verse 15), the wounding of His hands and feet (verse 16), and the casting of lots and parting of His garments (verse 18).

Though the Savior quoted only the first verse, the remainder of the psalm stands as another testimony that He is the promised Messiah, that His suffering fulfilled prophecy, and that He trusted in His Father completely.

This understanding brought my soul an overwhelming reassurance that my faith was not misplaced. But even more powerful than learning that Jesus had not doubted and was delivered was the testimony in that psalm for the times when I wonder if God has forsaken *me* or when I worry that He has not heard *my* cry.

“Ye that fear [God], praise him; all ye the seed of Jacob, glorify him; and fear him, all ye the seed of Israel.

“For he hath not despised nor abhorred the affliction of the afflicted [Jesus]; neither hath [the Father] hid his face from him; but when [Jesus] cried unto him, *he heard*” (verses 23–24; emphasis added). ■

#### NOTE

1. See Jeffrey R. Holland, “None Were with Him,” *Liahona* and *Ensign*, May 2009, 87.