

BIBLE STUDY

by Vern Gunderman

My God, Why Have You Forsaken Me?

Psalm 22 and Mark 15:34

Objective

That youth discover at least two ways to deal with feelings of forsakenness.

Opening Devotion

O Heavenly Father, You would have every right to forsake us. But You promised that You would not, and we thank You for keeping Your promise.

Bless us now and in those times when we feel forsaken by those about us and by You. In the Name of Jesus, who experienced forsakenness for us. Amen.

Hymn: "O God, Forsake Me Not" (LSB 731) (This hymn can be sung to the melody of "Now Thank We All Our God," which may be more familiar.)

Scripture Reading

Read John 10:11-18a, 27-29.

Prayer

L: Let us pray for ourselves and for all the people of God—for all who live feeling forsaken at this time because of famine, war or natural disaster, that they may have courage, hope, patience and friendship. Lord, in Your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For all who feel forsaken because of the evil deeds of their family or friends, that they may have hope and a spirit of forgiveness. Lord, in Your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For all whom we have forsaken in their time of need because of our selfishness, indifference and looking out for ourselves first, that they may have courage and we may have time for amending our ways. Lord, in Your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

L: For ourselves who feel forsaken because we are not smart enough, attractive enough or good enough, that we may acknowledge Your acceptance of us and therefore accept ourselves. Lord, in Your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

L: That when we have done wrong and deserve to be forsaken by You, that You would continue to Good Shepherd us so that even we cannot pluck ourselves out of Your hand. Lord, in Your mercy:

C: Hear our prayer.

Benediction

Bible Study

Read Psalm 22 and Mark 15:34.

The Situation: The psalmist is experiencing deep despair. His friends even suggest that God has forsaken him, too. (It reminds us of the consolation Job received from his friends.) The sufferer can think of no reason, no sin, that should cause this sense of being forsaken.

Describe the effects of the sense of forsakenness on the psalmist.

If the psalmist and Jesus had acted upon their feelings of forsakenness, what do you think each would have done?

Make a list of situations that leave people feeling forsaken today.

Act out ways in which people demonstrate that they are feeling forsaken.

The reasons: We are determined to be logical, to show causes and effect. We are forsaken because...

Does the psalmist give reasons for why he feels he has been forsaken? Is it possible that he has sinned and is unaware of it or aware of it and unrepentant?

Reflect again on the reasons why Jesus felt forsaken.

Reflect on your reasons for feeling forsaken. Must there always be a reason? Does God forsake His people?

Can feelings of forsakenness be unrelated to events or causes?

Some responses:

When feeling forsaken one is often overwhelmed by despair. Despair may lead to a radical act to end the pain. But there are alternatives. The psalmist recalls the mighty acts of God in the past. Our Lord commends His Spirit to His heavenly Father.

Recall some of the saving acts the psalmist could draw on.

For us, God's saving acts include the Sacraments. In what ways might recalling our baptismal covenant and sharing in the Eucharist be useful to one feeling forsaken?

The psalmist speaks of a "triumphant hope," even before he is healed. Put your "triumphant hope" into a single sentence, write it out and stick it in your wallet for ready reference when you feel forsaken. Share it if you wish.

Originally published in *Resources for Youth Ministry* 84:1.

Revised and updated for thESource in January 2013.