

Sermon Title: "When Silence is the Answer"

Biblical Passage: Psalm 22:1-5

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Passage Background and Summary

Psalm 22 is often considered a psalm of help or petition that moves from complaining to reaffirming one's trust in God. In Psalm 22:1-5, we see one of the complaints followed by an affirmation of trust. It begins with "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" While the psalmist is asking questions, there is still an honor and personal relationship replied in referring to "my God." The psalmist continues in asking questions as it relates to why God seems far and why God fails to answer. The psalmist can "find no rest." Yet, there is a shift in tone in verses 3 through 5 as the psalmist asserts, "Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel." The psalmist reflects on the trust of the ancestors in God, their cries, and the ways they "were saved." Thus, even amid the complaint, there is an affirmation of the character of who God is.

Sermon Points

When Marvin Gaye wrote, "What's Going On?" he approached Barry Gordy with the idea of doing an album centered on protest. He was told by Barry Gordy that he couldn't be too political as it would ruin his career and threaten the Motown Empire that Barry Gordy had built. Like Marvin Gaye, we have many questions, but we may be afraid of what the answer might be. This year, we may have some pressing questions for America. Why does America continue to treat Black people like animals? Why wasn't America ready for COVID-19? There are many questions we have, and sometimes those questions are addressed to God. Like the psalmist, we are crying out, yet God seems silent. We have questions for God, but we are afraid of what the answer might be. The psalmist is asking God questions, yet God remains silent. Why didn't God answer the psalmist's questions? It was because the questions being asked questioned God's character. When we find ourselves questioning God, we must remind ourselves of who God is. God is who God has always been. We must cling tightly to God's character as there may be times where we are told that "God is a fraud." Yet, we know who God is. We may not know where the next check will come from or who will be elected in November or why those around us are dying, but we can say to God as the psalmist said, "Yet you are holy." We must remind ourselves of who God is and of God's character. We can hear the testimonies of those who are starting a business, finishing up their last semester in school, buying a house, and more and remember and know who God is. We can reflect on the fact that God has a perfect track record in our lives. When it seems like God is silent, we can still trust God. As Rev. Chelsea Waite has discussed, the more we pray, the more the scales are tilting in our favor. We can hold on because God is getting ready to deliver on His promises and pour out blessings that will overflow into the lives of those around us. God will take us from waiting on it to walking in it.

Reflection Questions

1. Have you ever felt like God was silent? What were the circumstances?
2. What are some questions you have been afraid to ask of God? Of others? Of yourself?
3. What are some questions you have for God today?
4. Who is God to you and who do you know God to be?
5. How is God moving in your life and the lives of those around you during this time?
6. What are some moments God moved in your life that you can look to as a reminder of the character of God?