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Psalm 22:7-8 All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; "He trusts in the Lord; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!"

In these weeks we consider the great suffering of Jesus. The physical pain He suffered was unimaginable as he poured out His life blood while hanging on the cruel cross. Yet this was only part of his suffering. He suffered separation from His Father and the weight of the guilt of every bitter thought, every evil deed. Then to add insult to injury in a very literal sense, He faced the mockery of people who thought they were doing themselves a favor by getting rid of Him. They were people he loved. They were people to whom He had proclaimed the kingdom of God. They had seen Him heal the sick and raise the dead. They were supposed to be His chosen people, His peculiar treasure among all of humanity that had been created by Him. Here they were mocking Him, making faces at Him, taunting Him regarding the miraculous power of His Father to deliver him, the power He had shown to them as He delivered so many from demons and sickness. How this must have made His heart sick. "See from His head, His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down".

And yet, alongside the marvel of this great love and great suffering is the wondrous thought that all of this was for you and for me. A great mystery of the full atonement of Christ on the cross is that it was effective once and for all, for all time, and for all who will come. This sacrifice to end all sacrifices is just as effective today as it ever was. We can cling to the cross today, just as the thief next to Jesus could on that day. Jesus bore the pain and rejection and taunting on the cross so we could be free from sin. "Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned He stood. Sealed my pardon with His blood. Hallelujah! What a Savior!"

We live in a time when those who follow Christ and His Word face increasing opposition. Followers of Christ face mockery and scorn, and are held in contempt as evil-doers by a very mixed-up world. This should not surprise us because Jesus said if the world has hated me, they will hate you also. But let us take great hope and comfort in our great Savior who has endured far greater animosity than we experience: "Consider Him who endured from sinners such hostility against Himself, so that you may not grow weary or fainthearted." (Heb 12:3) He has not only blazed the trail for us, but He also walks with us in it. Let us remember these encouraging words of Christ - "I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world." (John 16:33)