

Pray: Open our minds and hearts to your word. If there are any who do not believe, convict them and bring them to repentance. If there are any who continue to play the christian game, expose their heart, peel back the layers, and bring them to repentance. For the true believers, the repentant, humbled, and lowly forgiven ones: demonstrate your heart to those who suffer, those who sorrow, those whose hearts and eyes cry, waiting on your answers. God Almighty, open our hearts to see Your heart for these who hurt. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Sorrow, Lament, Despair, Anxiety, Depression, Suffering

Reasons: Sin, pain, death, sickness, wayward children/grandchildren, wayward homegroup members, people who lie about/to us, people who are unjust, unkind or just thoughtless.

How have you dealt with these bad feelings, caused by your sin, someone else's sin, or just the effects of sin (Gen 3) (fall, causing sickness, pain and death)?

How do you respond when YOU FEEL LIKE God is silent? When He doesn't answer at all (the way you wanted Him to), or later than you thought you could possibly endure?

What does scripture say about this?

*Turn to Psalm 42 & 43. Read it.*

Many believe that Ps 42 & 43 were originally 1 psalm (headings, thoughts, repetition). We don't know who wrote the psalm, but it was written for the sons of Korah who were the levitical performers. What we do know is that there is a lot going on in this Psalm.

Normally, I would start with God, since he is mentioned in some form (God, Thy, Thee, Thou, You, Him) 33 times in 16 verses.

1. But I want to start with the psalmist instead. Let's look at the chapter.

**v.1-2 Soul thirsts, pants**

**Why do animals pant? HEAT. The psalmist is letting us now from the first verse that his circumstances are bring heat.**

**v.3 My tears have been my food day and night**

**Sorrow so great you find yourself crying at night, in the morning, at lunchtime...tears that never seem to cease.**

**v.3 While they say...Where is your God?**

v.4 remembering happier times, times of worship and delight with others...

v.5 Despair...disturbed....

v.6 despair...

v.7 waterfalls, a switch from the heat and drought of v.2 to being overwhelmed in v.7

v.9 Asking God, WHY? Why are oppressors allowed to oppress?

v.10 shattering bones, adversaries...WHERE IS YOUR GOD?

v.11 DESPAIR...DISTURBED...

43:1: ungodly nation, deceitful, unjust...

43:2: why have you rejected me...

43:5: Despair...Disturbed...

and God is mentioned 33 times...

2. What does this tell us about God?

The psalmist does say...

v2 - When shall I come and appear before God?

v7 - Thy Waterfall, Breakers, waves rolled over me...

v9 - Why hast thou forgotten me?

43:2 - Why hast thou rejected me?

So what does the psalmist know of God? Is He an arbitrary judge who just lets evil things happen? Is He powerless to be unable to keep bad things from happening? We have to understand how the psalmist sees God.

Let's look through the OT:

**1. God allows anxiety, depression, sadness, suffering**

Eccl 7:13-14 - See the work of God, for who is able to straighten what God has bent? In the day when there is good, be of good cheer, but in the day when there is evil, see God has made the one as well as the other.

Lamentations 3:31-33 - For the Lord will not reject forever, For if He causes grief, Then he will have compassion according to his abundant lovingkindness. For he does not afflict from His heart, or grieve the sons of men.

Job 1:21 - Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I shall return there. Yahweh gave, and Yahweh has taken away. Blessed be the name of Yahweh.

2:9-10 - Then his wife said to him, "Do you still hold fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" Then he said to her, "You speak as one of the wickedly foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God and not accept calamity?" In all of this Job did not sin with his lips. ( Job's friends sat with him without speaking for seven days and seven nights)

## **2. God doesn't cause sin and doesn't sin, But he does punish sin.**

Psalm 5:4 For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.

Habakkuk 1:13 *Your* eyes are too pure to approve evil, And You can not look on wickedness with favor.

Exodus 34:7 He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.

I don't live with blinders thinking that the only people sitting here, hearing this are true, repentant Christians. I must speak to those who may not be repentant. The unbeliever, and the one who plays church. What encouragement Psalm 42 has for today will not make sense.

The unbeliever: You may be one who has heard this before, or you may be one who has never heard this before. You just don't see the eternal peril your soul is in, or in the words of one of our sons, I know the truth, I just don't want to give up my "fun". Please hear this clearly. In rejecting God and his Word, there is no compassion, no mercy, no kindness from God for you. Romans 3:10, 3:23, 6:23 is all you have. I call you to agree with God that your sins separate you from Him. You are incapable of fixing the separation from God and only Christ sacrifice, paying the death mentioned from Romans 6:23 for you will save you, not you yourself. Only Christ. I urge you, repent.

To the one playing church: You also are in great danger. You sit in church, you know the songs, you've heard the sermons, you've gone to Sunday School and know all the answers. You make it to every Sunday, every activity (Mission's Banquet, Homegroup, help set up and tear down

chairs or sound equipment), you may have walked an aisle, said a prayer 20 years ago and got baptized. But...you have never repented. You like our unbelieving friend, have not accepted what Christ has done, because you think all of the things you have done, get's you a little closer to God. It doesn't.

Matt: 7:21-23 says ““Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven *will enter*.” Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, in Your name did we not prophesy, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name do many miracles?’ “And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; <sup>a</sup>DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.

Your “good” things are lawlessness, filthy rags as Is. 64 says. You too, need to repent.

Psalm 138 says “For though the Lord is exalted, Yet he sees the lowly, but the one who EXALTS HIMSELF He knows from afar.

Prov. 3 says God scoffs at the scoffers, but gives grace to the humble.

Only the repentant, the humble, the lowly can know...

### **3. God is, from His heart, a God of compassion, mercy.**

Exodus 34:6-7 Yahweh, Yahweh God, Compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children and the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations.

God who is slow to anger, abundant in lovingkindness, compassionate and gracious is repeated throughout the OT.

Numbers 14:18; Deuteronomy 4:31; 2 Chronicles 30:9; Nehemiah 9:17, 13:22; Psalm 86:5, 15, 103:8, 145:8; Lamentations 3:32; Isaiah 63:7; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; Nahum 1:3

Let's return to Ps 42 & 43

We have seen the struggles, difficulties of the psalmist. Now let's see how he sees God and look for ways we can use Ps 42 & 43 in our own Sorrow, Lament, Despair, Anxiety, Depression, Suffering. We will not be pulling out everything in these psalms. We will focus on a few. There are many things we can glean from this psalm about how we deal with our sorrows/suffering.

42:1-2 The writer is in a heated situation. What is the longing for? For God. For the living God. When will I come and appear before God? The psalmist knows where he must turn. He knows who is compassionate and gracious. In your last difficult situation, where were you longing? longing for someone missing by death, distance, or their own decisions? Longing for days of old, “in my old church”, “when I was in HS, those were my best days”, “In my old job” The psalmist did this too. v.4.

v.3 Tears have been my food night and day. Sometimes, the grief is so deep that you cannot even eat.

v.5 He rebukes himself. He reminds himself where his focus should be. (Hope translated Wait for)

But Greg, I’ve done that. It doesn’t help. Those feelings come back. My mind goes back to that struggle, that missing person, that previous time...

Look at v.6

The psalmist is still in despair. You might be too. Therefore, there for a reason. The psalmists response...Because I am still in despair, REMEMBER...The psalmist drives his mind back to God’s past faithfulness. the land of the Jordan.

Look at v.7

All of this is allowed by God. Your waterfalls, Your breakers, your waves....

look at v. 8

He is reminding himself again, of God’s compassion (lovingkindness). even in the sleepless nights...God’s songs and prayers to him is the psalmists response. During your sleepless nights, what is your go to? Reading trash novels, surfing the internet, playing games? From the psalmist example what should you go to on those sleepless nights? a pair of headphones and some worship music (so as to not wake up the entire house). Having trouble calming your mind enough to pray. Open your bible to the psalms and let the Bible’s own prayerbook be your prayers. Ps. 42&43 would be a great place to start.

v. 9-10 Things haven’t gone away. They might have gotten worse. Look at the psalmists focus. GOD MY ROCK...have your forgotten me? mourning because of oppression, bones shattering adversaries reproaching...WHEN THEY SAY, WHERE IS YOUR GOD? They see God has not answered and they mock you for your faith. Much like Job’s wife did to him in Job 2:10.

v.11 The writer rebukes himself again. See, it didn’t go away for him either. The feelings, the struggles, the battles haven’t gotten better, they have gotten worse. But where is his focus. WAIT FOR GOD. I SHALL STILL PRAISE HIM.

So, does it get better?

Ps. 43:1-5

1 - Knows God is a God of justice, unholy nation is causing suffering...lying people are causing suffering, evil men are causing suffering... Things are NOT better.

2 - psalmist knows the TRUTH...the God of my strength...still asks why. Why have you rejected me?

3 - Your light, Your truth - let them lead me.

What leads you when you are being lied about, evil people or an evil nation making life difficult. Where should your focus be? Where has it been? Where have you put your trust? yourself (I can get myself out of this, I will fight this), do you ignore it and hope it goes away? Get yourself busy to distract yourself? Where does the writer of the psalm go? God's light, God's truth. He has already done that. Christ came, the light of the world, and we have His word, the scriptures. In those most difficult times, when feelings seem rampant and out of control, like the psalmist, direct your mind to Christ and His Word.

So, it's finally over..right? God's finally taken away the pain, the difficult, the sorrow, the absences... We are done....

5 - Why are you in despair, why are you disturbed?

WAIT FOR GOD, for I SHALL STILL praise HIM.

HAS GOD TAKEN THE PSALMIST OUT OF THIS?

HAS GOD FIXED THE PROBLEM?

HAS GOD TAKEN AWAY THE BAAD FEELINGS?

HAS GOD DIRECTLY ANSWERED HIS QUESTIONS (FORGOTTEN, REJECTED?)

We get to the end of this psalm, and the despair is still there. The disturbed, unsettled feelings are still there. God has allowed this, what he has bent, no one can straighten. The difficulties are still present causing the same feelings (or worse) than when we started.

So, What do we do?

1. Godly people know what to do with bad emotions.

v. 2 - Thirst for God in the heat of the situation

v. 5 - Wait for God - through the despair

v. 6 - Remember what God has done - when He is not acting now

v. 8 - sing and pray - when you cannot sleep or eat

v. 9 - Remember, when you think God has forgotten you, He is your Rock.

v.11 - Wait for God - through the despair

43:2 - God is your strength, through feelings of rejection

43:3 - Let God's light and truth guide you.

42:5 - Wait for God - through the despair

2. Know how to ask God “Why” in the right way. Take your laments to God.

— Jesus Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34 (theos) ( contrasting pater in Matt 26)

— Job 7:20, 10:2, 10:18, 13:24

3. Cling to the truth, despite the circumstances.

— Job 2:10

— v. 5, 11, 43:5 Wait for God, for the salvation of His presence.

— v. 9 - Remember, when you think God has forgotten you, He is your Rock.

— 43:2 - God is your strength, through feelings of rejection

— 43:3 - Let God’s light and truth guide you.

— Ps. 73:21-24

Pray:

— for those enduring suffering and sorrow

— for those walking through it with others

— for those judgmental of those suffering

— for compassion, mercy and trust for us to be more like Christ in this.

## References:

TIL 366: Models of Lament (feat. Ernie Baker)

Truth in Love

1. Can godly people lament? 2. How to ask “why” questions biblically. 3. Examining Psalms 42 and 43. 4. How to apply Psalms of lament in everyday life.

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