Psalm Ch42v1-11 - Hope In Our Troubles

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[0:00] I think we're going to be looking at a psalm together, so if you'd like to turn in your Bible, roughly the middle, Psalm 42. In a couple of weeks' time, we're going to be going back to Genesis, the first book in the Bible.

You may remember that over the last couple of years, we've been going through Genesis. We've looked at the life of Abraham, the life of Jacob, and in a couple of weeks, we're going to be looking at the life of Joseph, which will complete the book.
But before we do that, we're going to be looking at a couple of psalms. The psalms are really helpful to us in our lives and in our struggles.
So we're going to read Psalm 42 together now and look at it together. So let's hear God's word to us. As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.
My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. Where can I go and meet with God?
[1:30] My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, where is your God? These things I remember as I pour out my soul, how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the mighty one, with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.
My soul is downcast within me. Therefore, I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.
Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls. All your waves and breakers have swept over me.
By day the Lord directs his love.
At night his song is with me. A prayer to the God of my life. I say to God, my rock, Why have you forgotten me?
[2:49] Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy? My bones suffer mortal agony, as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, Where is your God?

Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Put your hope in God, For I will yet praise him, My Saviour and my God.
Well, let's pray together. We ask that you, Father God, the God of all compassion, would now, through your word and by your Spirit, pour out your comfort upon us in our troubles this day.
Meet with us and give to us what we need. And we ask this in Jesus' name.
Amen. So how are you? How are you?
[4:18] I'm doing fine. It's what we always say, isn't it, when we are asked the question. I'm fine.

Well, the writer of this psalm is anything but fine. Look at the beginning of verse 5. Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me? The writer is not in a good place. He is down and depressed. In fact, it seems to be an ongoing trouble through his life.
The questions are repeated. Look at verse 11. Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?
There's a shadow hanging over his life and it's not shifting. It's grey and dark, not bright and colourful.
[5:22] Now, while this can be hard, there is something refreshingly honest about this psalm and the author's experience. Some of you will remember a little while back last term we had Ivan and Carol Watson come and speak to us.

Carol reminded us that fine, F-I-N-E, stands for feelings inwardly not expressed.
You see, we feel the pressure, don't we, from others and from ourselves to always be positive and upbeat, to present this persona of one of absolute calm and peace.

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We want to be always able to go around with that permanent smile and friendly welcome and always to be able to say, I'm fine.
But the weight of pretending only breaks us and crushes us. You see, what we need is the words of this psalm.
[6:27] This poem helps us to express in words our inner feelings. It enables us to cry out in honesty before God to find hope in our troubles.

So, four things we're going to see from this psalm that will help us whenever we're down or depressed. It's a pattern that we can follow for ourselves.
So, here are the four things. We're going to look at praying with tears, voicing our troubles, speaking the truth and learning to trust.
So, tears, troubles, truth and trust. So, first, praying with tears.
Look at verse 3. My tears have been my food day and night. We all go through seasons when all we have is tears, broken dreams, hurtful experiences, shattered hopes, loss of family, the experiences of life that we go through bring heartache.
[7:53] And maybe that's the place you're in right now. Or maybe you've been there before. Sometimes all we have is tears. But our tears are not wasted.

Look, the writer is a firm believer in God. Look at the end of verse 8. He talks about a prayer to the God of my life.
Verse 9. I say to God, my rock. You see, he has a personal faith and belief. You see, Christians are not left with their tears.
They pray with tears. In other words, we have someone to go to with our disappointments and our losses. we have one who sees and knows and understands.
Our tears are never wasted because they express what is on our hearts as we cry out to God.
Verse 3.
[9:01] My tears have been my food day and night. second, voicing our troubles.

You see, as we pray, we are bringing our complaints and our troubles to God. Look at verse 1. As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.
The picture here is striking, isn't it? Just as a deer runs to escape the pursuing lion and longs for some respite, a coo-watered stream, so the writer is running from trouble and is longing for God.
We're not quite sure what the trouble is, but the response is right. He desires God, he needs God, he's panting for God.
But what makes our troubles perhaps so difficult is the feeling that in our longing for God, we find that God is absent.
[10:18] In our longing for God, we find that he is so often absent. This is expressed in two questions that we see in the psalm.

Where is God? And why has God? Have you ever asked those questions? Where is God? And why has God?
First question, where is God in my trouble? Look at verse 2. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
Where can I go and meet with God? God? It seems that whichever way he turns, it's a dead end. God, it seems, is to be nowhere to be found.
Where can I go and meet with God? Where is God when I desperately need him? Not only do we feel the absence of God in our troubles, but it seems that others all around us sense the same thing too.
[11:28] Verse 3. My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, where is your God? Well, they mightn't perhaps express it in those words to us, but we sense and we feel their thoughts, don't we?

Those Christians, they always go on about how good and how great God is, but look at their life, what a mess. Surely if you're a Christian, you shouldn't be down and depressed.
Where is your God now? We can feel a fraud. If only my faith was stronger, then God would help. If only I was a better person, then God would intervene. we can also begin to doubt. Maybe God is not kind, because if he was, then he would help me.
Perhaps God is not strong, because if he was, he would save me. Like the author, we can look back to better times.

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[12:45] Verse 4, these are the things that I remember as I pour out my soul, how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the mighty one, which shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.

It seems he is a long way from home, away from the days when he was safe, joining others as they went to the house of God, to the temple, but now he is struggling.
Where is God? God's love for us. For us, because of Christ, we don't need to go to a special place to meet with God.
We don't need a temple. We have access to God anytime, anywhere, but even with that knowledge, in our troubles, we can still feel the absence of God.
We long for his presence, we desire his touch, we need his intervention, we pant and we thirst, but our troubles are not quenched.
[13:57] The searching goes on, where can I meet with God? Where is God in my trouble? The second question leads on from the first.

It's not a where question, but a why question. why has God forgotten me? Amidst all the troubles and the feeling that God is absent, there is only one conclusion.
Look at verse 9 with me. I say to God, my rock, why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?
my bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, where is your God?
You see, we all go through seasons of suffering and the expectation is that God will stop it, or at the very least will somehow give relief.
if I'm sick, well, God will heal me. If I'm tired, he's going to give me rest. If I'm overwhelmed, God is going to end the turmoil.
[15:21] If I'm down and depressed, God is going to lighten my load. And because we don't quite feel it in the way that we wish, then it can only mean one thing.

Verse 9, God, my rock, why have you forgotten me? Why? Why did you let that happen?
Why am I on my own? Why do I feel this way? The psalm is both raw and real because it opens us up to the experience of one believer and it gives us the words to express our inward feeling.
You see, with God we don't need to pretend. We can take off the mask of those smiles and joys and we can voice all our troubles to God and we can pray with our tears and we can cry out, where is God in my trouble?
cry out, cry out, out, and so. this psalm is both raw and real. It shows us the experience of one believer and gives us the words to express our inward feelings.
[16:42] You see, with God we don't need to pretend. We can take off the mask of our smiles and joys and we can voice our troubles to God. We can pray with tears and cry out, where is God in my trouble? Why have you forgotten me?

Well, there is an answer. Third, speaking the truth. Look at verse 6 with me.
My soul is downcast within me. Therefore, I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.
The writer is far away from home in the land of the Jordan, way up north. He's high in the mountains. He's away from God's people and God's house.
But yet as he cries out to God, he also speaks truth about God. Look at the beginning of verse 6.
My soul is downcast within me. Therefore, I will remember you.
[17:53] You see, he's longing not for a place, but for a person. He remembers God. You see, if anything is going to get us through our troubles, it's by remembering who God is.

Two things we need to remember. First, God is over my troubles. Verse 7. Deep calls to deep, in the roar of your waterfalls, all your waves and breakers have swept over me.
It's like us being caught in a surging, cascading river, dragged under and pulled along. And just as you manage to break the surface for air, another wave comes crashing over.
Isn't that how life is? We seem so helpless as trouble after trouble sweeps over us. We get over one loss and then we're faced with another.
We come through one trial, only to be hit again. It seems there is no relief. But look how these troubles are described. Verse 7.
[19:07] Deep calls to deep, in the roar of your waterfalls, all your waves and breakers have swept over me. You see, our troubles are not random chance events.

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They are the roar of God's waterfalls. They are the waves of God's breakers. Yes, we struggle to understand why God allows it.
But it is not a chance. It is not a mistake. He is over your trials. He rules over your suffering. In our stormy troubles, we are safe and secure in the grip of God's sovereignty.
Second, God is present with love. Verse 8. By day the Lord directs his love. At night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.
You see, as the waves break over us, God is present with love. In every storm his love is steadfast. Look back with me to verse 3.
[20:20] My tears have been my food day and night. But yet in the tears, verse 8.

By day the Lord directs his love. At night his song is with me. In the day and through the night, God's love is upon you.
The truth is, there is nothing and no one that can separate you from his love. In fact, what we discover is that not only is God present with love, the troubles we face are signs of his love.
They are signs of love because they bring about God's good and pleasing purposes. One modern songwriter put it like this.
They write from a place of great trouble, having lost her husband early in their marriage. This is what she says. We pray for healing and for prosperity.
[21:28] We pray for God's mighty hand to ease our suffering. And all the while God hears each spoken need. Yet love is way too much to give us lesser things.

Because what if your blessings come through raindrops? And what if your healing comes through tears? And what if a thousand sleepless nights are what it takes to know God's near?
And what if trials of this life are your mercies in disguise? What if the troubles that you are going through right now and that you will go through are not random chance events?
But are God's mercies in disguise? You see, as we cry out to God, we also speak truth about God. We remember who God is. As we pray with tears, where is God in my trouble? We can say, God is over my trouble.
[22:43] As we pray with tears, why have you forgotten me? We can say, God is present with love. So remember who God is.

And speak that truth to your heart. Fourth, learning to trust. The purpose of praying with tears, voicing our troubles, and speaking the truth is so that we would learn to trust in God.
Two things. First, trust is fuelled by truth. Look how this happens. Look at verse 5.
Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? You see, in our troubles, we're to have a conversation with ourselves.
We are to ask ourselves questions. Why do I feel this way? Why am I worried or afraid? Why am I down and discouraged?
[23:52] It's then that we remember who God is, and we remember his character, and it causes us to trust. Look at the rest of verse 5. Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my saviour and my God.

We're to have a conversation with ourselves. Our hearts can tell us, God doesn't care. God has forgotten you. But we are to argue back to ourselves with the truth.
That God is good. God is kind. He will never leave me. We are to say to ourselves, Johnny, put your hope in God.
As we reflect and meditate on the unchanging character of God, it brings truth to our hearts that enables us to trust.
You see, truth fuels our trust. It helps us to see his glory and his greatness, so that we will put our hope in him.
[24:59] Second, trust is a continuous decision. Telling ourselves to hope in God is not a one-off event.

It's a continuous discipline as we go through life. Look how he repeats the same truth. Verse 11. You see, this is to be the pattern of our lives.
Every trouble that we face is an opportunity to consciously decide who or what I will trust in. Put your hope in God.
In fact, we are to follow the example of Jesus who prayed this very same kind of prayer. Who went to the Garden of Gethsemane and prayed with tears to his Father.

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Who voiced his troubles. Take this cup of suffering from me. Who spoke the truth to his heart. Not my will, but your will be done.
[26:23] And so Jesus entrusted his life, his sufferings and death to his Father. In certain hope that his Father would bring him through. If our Father God brought Jesus through.

So we who trust in Jesus can be guaranteed that he will bring us through. Trust is not saying that we know everything or understand everything.
Trust is continually resting in God my Saviour who is sovereign over all my troubles. And is always present with love in the midst of my troubles.
So there we have it. Tears. Troubles. Truth. And trust. Put your hope in God.
Truth. Truth. Truth. Truth. Truth. Truth. Truth.
[27:49] Truth. Truth. Truth. Truth. Truth. Truth. Plug into space... momos...

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