

I will yet praise Him

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Date: 08 December 2019

Preacher: John M. Davidson

[0 : 00] turn back with me please to that portion of scripture that we read in the Lord's Word at Psalm 42. Psalm 42. And we'll take us out.

We'll look at verse 5. Psalm 42 and the beginning of verse 5. Well-known words from the Psalter. Verse 5 of Psalm 42.

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

We don't have to live long in this world before we feel sorrow or pain or anguish or distress.

And as the Lord's people, as Christians, we are not kind of supernaturally immune from suffering from anxiety or suffering from depression or any of these things that may beset us.

[1 : 21] And as you read the scriptures, you will see many of the Lord's people who suffered in many ways and who pointed toward the one who would suffer greatly for us.

And I often think, for instance, the Lord Jesus in Gethsemane and before he goes to that cross. And I wonder to myself what scripture was going through his mind as he knew what was ahead of him, as he was about to be forsaken by his father and suffer.

Not just physically, but spiritually in a way that we cannot fully comprehend. I wonder what was going through his mind. Perhaps I think it might have been these few words there.

You know, to be human is to feel loss and emotional pain sometime in our lives.

[2 : 36] And this psalm really is about faith that is tested. The psalmist is tested. And in the testing, he expresses genuine cries to the God whom he loves, the God whom he serves.

And you can get that sense of the deep pain and depression in his soul when you look at Psalm 42 and at verse 3. My tears have been my food day and night.

And if you look at verse 10 of the same psalm, As with a deadly wound in my bones. As with a deadly wound in my bones.

He says, you know, the way he is feeling within his soul. It is not just this occasional sense of sorrow. It is prolonged. And it is crushing his bones.

That's how he describes it. It is a deadly wound. It is crushing my bones. That verb crushing in Hebrew is the same verb that is used to kill.

[3 : 46] The way I feel, O Lord, is killing me is what he is saying. And the way I feel, O Lord, it may be fatal. That is what he is saying to the Lord.

And he is expressing the hurt and the anguish of the mockery that he is getting from his enemies. They are confounding to his misery.

And you can see it's all pointing to Jesus. As he was mocked. And how he felt. And how he felt.

Now the psalmist here. There is a clue here as to perhaps the psalmist is in exile. As the people of God were cast out of the promised land. And they were sent into exile for 70 years.

And there is a clue here that that is where he has written the psalm. He has been persecuted. And he is expressing the depth of his pain.

[4 : 45] You see that in verse 7. Deep calls to deep, the psalmist says, at the roar of your waterfalls. You see that?

Lord, there you are waterfalls. He is not saying it's the devil. He is not saying that it's the Babylonians.

He is not saying it's his enemies. He is acknowledging that this God whom he serves is absolutely sovereign. And in full control of his life.

And of his circumstances. Deep calls to deep. And the same word is mentioned at the very beginning of scripture in Genesis 1-2.

Now the earth was formless and empty. And darkness was over the surface of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the water. And he knows that he's in the depths.

[5 : 44] And he knows that it is only the Lord God who can do anything for him. Jonah experienced this quite literally. And he used a similar language in his distress.

From inside the fish, Jonah prayed to the Lord as God. He said, in my distress, I called out to the Lord. And he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead, I called for help, Jonah says. And you listened to my cry. You hurled me into the depths, O God. Into the very heart of the seas and the currents.

They swirled all about me, O God. He says, and all your waves and all your breakers, they swept over me. Because the Lord had put him in that place where Jonah had nowhere else to turn.

The Lord has put the psalmist into this place where the psalmist had nowhere else to turn.

Sometimes the Lord will put you into a situation and me into a situation where we have nowhere else to turn.

[6 : 57] Because he is God. And we must let God be God. And sometimes we may become confused.

Sometimes we may become perplexed. At what the Lord is doing in our lives and in our experience. But you must continue to trust in this God.

Because he knows better than you and he knows better than me. And the psalmist knows that. He knows that the Lord has put him into the depths. And the Lord has put him there for a reason.

You see, the secret things belong to the Lord our God. But the things that are revealed belong to us and to our children. Listen to the French common language version of the Bible.

You make the torrents roar, O Lord. One flood calls to another. You make them all roll over me. I am completely submerged.

[8 : 02] That's how they translate that. The psalmist is in that place.

Where he has no option but to cry to the Lord. Many of the Lord's people have been put into these situations. Not only in the scriptures but throughout history.

The great preacher Charles Spurgeon. Who was used mightily by God. He suffered terribly with depression. And listen to his words.

My spirits were sunken so low. That I could weep by the hour like a child. And yet I knew not what I wept for.

You see Spurgeon battle against what he called his causeless depression. His whole life he describes it as this shapeless, undefinable, yet all be clouding hopelessness.

[9 : 12] He says. This cannot be reasoned with, he goes on. Fighting this type of depression, he said, is as difficult as fighting with mist.

For anyone in here today. Who is sorrowful of heart. And low in their spirits.

You are in exalted company. Because tested faith. Expresses genuine cries.

It expresses the heart's deepest pain and depression. The psalmist expresses abandonment and rejection by God.

Look at verse 9 of Psalm 42. What does he say? I say to God, my rock, why have you forgotten me? Have you ever been in that situation where you feel like you have been forgotten by God?

[10 : 17] That is where the psalmist is. He feels as if he's been forgotten by God. And then he goes on in Psalm 43 and at verse 2.

What does he say? Why have you rejected me? He feels as if he's gone from forgotten to rejected. And he's crying out to the Lord.

Why? Why? Why have you discarded me? Why have you expelled me? Why have you rejected me? Why? Because he is not being forgiven.

He has not been forgotten by God. He has not been rejected by God. Even although his mind is telling him things that are false.

He has not been forsaken. He has not been discarded. He has not been forgotten. because one who would come later would make sure of that.

[11 : 14] One who would come later would be the one who would be discarded, rejected and forgotten by God as he hung on a cross.

As he hung on a cross. Listen to John Calvin talking about the way he felt when he was low. When we are for a long time weighed down by calamities and when we do not perceive any sign of divine aid, this thought unavoidably forces itself upon us.

Has God forgotten us? Even the great theologian himself. Our pilgrimage is not an easy pilgrimage. There is times in our experience as the Lord's people where our faith will be tested to the very core. Or if it has not, in the future it very well may be.

But the Lord knows best. The Lord knows. And what the Lord is doing in your life and my life is that he is taking us.

[12:43] And he is taking us through these waters. And he's taking us through that fire. And then he's taking us through the waters again. Then he's taking us through the fire again.

And he's doing it because he's refining you. He's testing you. He's changing you. He's moulding you. He's sanctifying you.

He's making you into the image of Jesus himself. And there are times in our lives where we must remind ourselves and the psalmist does exactly that.

The psalmist will remind himself of the gospel. And in his depths he is expressing this longing for God.

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. Little does the psalmist know it, but he is in a good place.

[13:46] Why is he in a good place? Because his soul is thirsting after God. His soul is thirsting after God.

For the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? He says in verse 2. You know, there are times in our Christian experience where we backslide.

And we become worldly. We become materialistic. And sometimes we may forget about the Lord.

And we're good and we're happy and things are going well.

Is that a good place to be? No, the psalmist even in the depths. He's in a good place because he's thirsting and he's longing after Christ. And he's wanting to be near to God.

He's wanting to be in the presence of God. He is expressing that longing for God. The young deer is pursued by hunters and he needs water.

[14:57] So too do we need that water. That living water. And the psalmist knows that it is only the Lord God that can give him that life-giving water.

And if he's in exile, if he's in Babylon for the 70 years of exile and he's looking back to better days.

He's looking back to better days when he was in Jerusalem and he was going up with the throng.

He was going out on the Sabbath and heading for the temple, worshipping God.

And these days are gone now for him. He's a prisoner in a foreign land. And it tells us here that he was a son of Korah.

This man had a very important job in his former life before captivity. You know, because his family history is a remarkable family history.

[16:00] This family of Korah, they knew all about grace and forgiveness. Because if you remember, and if you go all the way back to Numbers and at chapter 16, they were Levites with a rich history.

They were the worship leaders in the tabernacle. And then in the temple. They were men of influence used by God. So why did they know all about grace and forgiveness?

Well, the original Korah, their father, their ancestor, all the way back in Numbers 16, he rose up and he rebelled against Moses and Aaron.

And he rebelled against God. The family rebelled against God in sin. And they all perished because the ground opened up and they fell in.

But yet Korah's sons were saved. The Lord God spared Korah's sons. And Korah's sons, they would become the worship leaders in the tabernacle and then in the temple.

[17:13] Can you imagine them? Can you imagine the gratitude and the thanksgiving they would have felt in their hearts that they were not consumed? By the Lord the same way as their father was.

The Lord spared them. The Lord spared them. Every time you see a psalm by any of the sons of Korah, you can imagine the gratitude within their hearts that they were spared.

That is why we are here today. Because we too have been spared.

They rebelled against God and they rebelled against Moses and yet they were spared. You and I have rebelled against God and we too, if we are in Christ, have been spared.

Is your faith and your trust in this God here this day?

[18 : 32] Do you know what it is to be spared? Are you seeing something of the nature and the character of this God today?

That no matter how black your heart may be, you can still be spared.

You can still be forgiven. Only you can answer that question.

This psalmist knew all about grace and he knew all about forgiveness because his own ancestors were judged by God and yet the sons were spared.

William Cowper, the great hymn writer, suffered terribly with anxiety and depression also.

[19 : 37] And he used to be comforted by his minister. His minister was none other than John Newton. And he used to comfort and go to visit Cowper and read the word of God and they used to pray together.

And these are Cowper's words. Oh, for a closer walk with God, a calm and heavenly frame, a light to shine upon the road that leads me to the Lamb.

Where is the blessedness I knew when first I saw the Lord? Where is the soul-refreshing view of Jesus and his word? What peaceful hours I once enjoyed, how sweet their memories still.

But they have left an aching void that this world can never fill. You know, there are times, even as Christians, where we can become so low and we can forget all that the Lord has done for us and we look back maybe 20 years ago, 30 years ago, 5 years ago, a year ago, when we were first converted and we look at them as good days.

And they were good days. We were alive. We thirsted after God. We wanted to be at every fellowship. We wanted to be at every prayer meeting.

[20 : 56] But as time goes on, sometimes we can become cold. And sometimes we can drift away.

And sometimes we can feel that perhaps the Lord has left us. But the Lord has promised that he will never leave his people.

He will never forsake his people. That is why Jesus had to come. He would be forsaken.

He would be stricken. So that you and I would never be forsaken. No matter how we feel. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[22 : 21] Amen. addressed in these psalms is a God of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And it is bold because it insists that all such experiences of disorder are a proper subject for discourse with God.

Nothing is out of bounds in our prayers to God. Nothing precluded or inappropriate. Everything properly belongs in this conversation of the heart. The Lord knows it all anyway.

You know, everything to do with this psalm points forward to Christ, to the one who can sympathize with us. What does he say in Gethsemane? My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death. My Father, it is possible, may this cup be taken from me, but not your will, but not my will, but your will be done. Tested faith expresses genuine cries. And everything points to Christ. Two points to go and we'll have to do them another day. The second point is tested faith expresses genuine empathy. The psalmist does not use his experience as a barometer for the love that the Lord has for him. We must not equate spiritual blessing with circumstantial needs. The psalmist knows that he belongs to God. And he reminds himself, look at verse 5, hope in God, for I shall again praise him. He is my salvation and he is my God. Perhaps your life is going well. Perhaps it is not. Perhaps it is not. Perhaps it is not. But if the days that you are down, and if there are days where you become depressed and low and you are a child of God, hope in God, for I shall again praise him. My salvation and my God. Let us pray.