

& 43

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Preacher: Mike Loosa

[0:00] Man, after that, I don't know that I need to be up here. I feel through the worship, through song, Brad through that prayer, I feel pretty ministered to already.

Nevertheless, I believe the Lord has prepared a word for us this morning from Psalm 42 and 43. Good morning, my name is Mike, one of the elders here at Shoreline. And again, just want to welcome you to this church this morning.

Two and a half months ago, we set out on a journey through the Psalms. We've covered 11 different Psalms since Pastor Dave, who's back by the way. Welcome back, Dave. Since Pastor Dave kicked us off on June 12th prior to his sabbatical.

Wisdom Psalms, Psalms of praise and thanksgiving, Psalms of trust, Psalms of kingship and covenant, and Psalms of lament. And today we're covering two more Psalms of lament, actually. Psalm 42 and 43. So really, Mike? More laments, you might ask. It seems we've covered enough of those by now. I actually had the same thought.

[1:04] Ironically, I picked Psalm 42 a few months ago because I thought that we weren't going to be covering the theme of suffering much this summer, just in a cursory review of the Psalms and their themes.

But I was wrong. And a few weeks ago, Andrew said this, that for whatever reason, it seems like the Holy Spirit is highlighting this theme for our church. If you've ever made your way through the Psalms, it should come as no surprise that lament dominates the Psalter.

And if you're a human on planet Earth who's lived more than a few years of life, you can probably understand why. In Psalm 90, verse 10, Moses says about our lives that their span is but toil and trouble.

They are soon gone, and we fly away. Dave Moynihan said last week as he preached from Psalm 63 that even if we haven't experienced times of devastation, we most certainly will in this life.

We try so hard to shield ourselves from difficult circumstances, especially in this country, yet try as we may, the futility of this present world inevitably manifests itself in our lives through suffering and pain.

[2:11] Carl Crabtree said the same thing yesterday as he opened before the workday at OCF. You see, we find ourselves in quite a similar situation as the Old Testament saints who penned these laments.

For just as they were living in the interim between God's promise and the fulfillment of that promise, so as one commentator writes, the Christian community also finds itself living in the interim between the inauguration of God's kingdom and its final realization, right?

Between the first break of dawn and the full light of day, therefore, it knows the trial of faith which is poignantly expressed in the laments of the Psalter. Today, then, we are looking at the trial of faith expressed in Psalm 42 and 43.

Now, why both Psalms? Why two of them? Well, as I read through the text in just a minute, you will notice the similarity between these two Psalms. In particular, you will notice that the repeated refrain of verses 5 and 11 of 42 is again repeated in 43 verse 5.

In addition, verse 2 of 43 is almost identical to verse 9 of 42. You'll see that chapter 3 really brings to resolution chapter 42, and only chapter 42 contains an inscription.

[3:25] A little mysterious. No one seems to know why these two Psalms were ever separated, but many believe they were originally one Psalm or, at the very least, that they surely go together. So we are treating them together today.

There is yet a bit more mystery surrounding the inscription, which reads this, Now, to the choir master is a clear indication that this Psalm was written to be sung by the congregation, and, you know, we just sang a modern rendition of that earlier.

Mascal, on the other hand, it's an unknown term. There is a whole lot of speculation, and commentators say lots of different things. They think it's a musical or liturgical term, but really, we just don't know. And finally, the text says, of the sons of Korah.

But some believe this was actually penned by King David for the sons of Korah because of how much the situation seems to be his fleeing from Absalom, like we talked about last week.

But others believe this is a forced conclusion and that there's no reason not to conclude it was actually written by the sons of Korah. So, you know, Jim Gancars, when he taught us from Psalm 46, taught us that the sons of Korah were the singers and the worship leaders in Israel, and that seems to fit with Psalm 42 and 43, so that's kind of how I'll talk about it today.

[4:39] So, without further ado, let us read Psalm 42 and 43. You can actually click. It'll be on the screen as I read. As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God.

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my food day and night while they say to me all the day long, Where is your God? These things I remember as I pour out my soul, how I would go with a throng and lead them in procession to the house of God, with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. 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.

My soul is cast down within me. Therefore, I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mazar. Deep calls to deep, at the roar of your waterfalls. All your breakers and your waves have gone over me.

[5:47] By day, the Lord commands His steadfast love. And 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?

Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, Where is your God? 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. Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people.

From the deceitful and unjust man, deliver me. For you are the God in whom I take refuge. Why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Send out your light and your truth. Let them lead me. Let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling. Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God my God.

[6:52] 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. This is the word of the Lord.

Heavenly Father, God, teach us through this word. Lord, life is filled with hardship and pain, and this psalm shows us how to undergo it well.

And so we ask, Lord, that you would instruct us, that you would encourage our hearts for those that are in the midst of this pain, in the midst of hardship, and that we might, God, leave here able to praise you no matter what we're going through.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Amen. So this psalmist's lament goes through three distinct stages, each concluding with that same repeated refrain. So we're going to look at each stage and then spend time considering how this applies to our lives today.

So the first stage, oh yeah, it's already there, look at that, worked. The first stage is longing for God. So those who were here last week will note the psalm opens very similarly to Psalm 63.

[8:04] Both express a deep longing for God, employing an analogy related to water and thirst. Here pictured is a deer panting for streams of water, which in arid Israel would often dry up for much of the year.

Just as that deer craves a nourishing and life-giving drink from the stream, so the psalmist yearns for a soul-satisfying drink from the living God. See, the psalmist is clearly separated from the

gathered worship of Israel.

It was in the corporate gathering where God's presence would most clearly be manifested among Israel. There they would make sacrifices to God and receive mercy for sins. There they would hear the word of God proclaimed.

There they would sing to God songs of praise and thanksgiving and simply put, as Brad read earlier, Psalm 63 verse 2, there they would behold God's power and glory.

The psalmist here remembers the joy and gladness of those times, but now he is far removed from such experiences. He is in utter despair, in a place of profound sadness and grief, so much so that he says, my tears have been my food day and night.

[9:11] This place of despair is compounded by the fact that he's being taunted by some enemy who questions where his God even is. The psalmist concludes the first stage of his lament by questioning the state of his own soul, then urging himself towards hope in and praise of God.

From the depths of his grief and despair, he chooses to set his mind on the reality of his place in God's family and on the glorious truth that God is his salvation, moving himself towards worship. So he instantly feels better, right? He moves into a season of victory in his life, right? No. He doesn't. See, that would be the feel-good American ending to this psalm, but this here is real life. He is still in despair. The situation is not resolved. Nevertheless, there is a shift. This second stage is remembering God.

I want to reread verses 6 through 11 here. My soul is cast down within me. Therefore, I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mazar.

[10:21] Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls. The waters have gone over me. By day, the Lord commands his steadfast love, and 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? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with the deadly wounds in my bones, my adversaries taunt me while they say to me all the day long, where is your God?

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. Verse 6, we learn the psalmist's location.

He's up in the northeast territory of Israel, far from Jerusalem, as we presumed from the first few verses. But, even off in remote lands, separated from the tabernacle and from the gathering of the saints, he is able to cast his mind on God in the midst of his suffering.

The suffering is still intense, no doubt. Verse 7, poetically and vividly makes that clear. The psalmist feels as one at the mercy of a raging torrent, pulled helplessly underwater, then released back up for a moment of light and a breath of air, and then dragged down to the depths again.

[11:35] Yet, the remembrance of God results in a shift. In verse 8, for the first time, the psalmist addresses God by his covenant name, Yahweh, indicated by LORD in all caps.

Yahweh is the faithful, promise-keeping God of Israel, who, he says, commands his steadfast love over him. Yes, right there, in the midst of his despair, the psalmist experiences and revels in the steadfast love of the Lord.

He then refers to God as the God of my life in verse 8 and God my rock in verse 9. But still, he has questions and doubts, which he brings honestly before the Lord.

He feels forgotten. He questions why God is allowing him to be oppressed. He laments the taunting of these enemies, which feels to him like some incurable wound. The psalmist concludes this second stage with the same repeated refrain, again, confronting the feelings of his soul and urging himself towards hope and praise.

Can you feel the struggle of this psalmist? Can you feel this battle between hope and despair? The image of verse 7, right, that deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls, all your breakers and your waves have gone over me, that image is played out within the psalm itself so that we too can feel this onslaught of grief and despair like waves washing over us, interrupted by brief moments of light and air in between.

[13:08] And at the conclusion of chapter 42, the psalmist is still in despair. But as we move into chapter 43, there is yet another shift, and this final stage is the psalmist trusting God.

No doubt the psalmist is still caught in the torrent, battling hope and despair, faith and doubt, but the overall trajectory is up towards trust and hope in God even as his trials persist.

So let's reread this portion. Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people. From the deceitful and unjust man deliver me, for you are the God in whom I take refuge. Why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Send out your light and your truth. Let them lead me. Let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.

Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God my God. Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?

[14:13] Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. Chapter 43 opens in petition. Throughout 42, the psalmist made no request of the Lord, but in this second stage, he remembered God's sovereign love, and that moves him to actually lay his requests before God.

He prays for God to avenge the wrongdoing that's been done to him, to take up his cause and defend him, to deliver him from his enemies. Mentioned before, 43 verse 2 is nearly identical to 42 verse 9.

The psalmist declares God to be his refuge, in other words, his shelter, his safety, his strength, and yet in the same breath, he again brings his raw questions before the Lord, questions which to him remain unanswered.

But in verse 3, the psalmist moves on from these unanswered questions and doesn't look back. He returns to petition, asking God to send out your light and your truth.

Let them lead me. See, his attention, it's turned once again to communion with God as his prayer here is to be led back to the tabernacle. Light and truth, we might think, are speaking of God's word but actually convey more so God's mercy or favor and his faithfulness.

[15:30] They're personified as messengers of God that will carry him back to the tabernacle from where he was driven, back to the presence of God where he belongs. This petition is then followed in verse 4 by a hopeful expectation that this will come to pass.

No longer is he stuck on a past memory of what was but rather the bright hope of what's to come, referring to God here as God my exceeding joy. In other words, God the source of all my joy, my greatest delight.

How far the psalmist has come. The psalm concludes with the same repeated refrain, except considering how the psalmist has progressed, we cannot read it this time with the same dark and gloomy tone in which we read it previously.

We must read it with a hopeful note. If the psalmist played in a minor key before, here he plays in a major key. So those are the three stages that we see of the psalmist's lament and having experienced them with him, what does this actually mean for you and for me?

You see, you and I will likely never be in the same situation as the sons of Korah, but we walk through various seasons of suffering in this life. And the psalmist shows us how to suffer well.

[16:48] He provides a model for us to follow as we endure our own periods of grief and despair. And I want to draw out five points of application from this text. Five points.

First one, recognize your thirst for God. Recognize your thirst for God. See, whether we realize it or not, all of us thirst for God.

Like God has hardwired a deer to crave water and to seek it out. He has hardwired the human soul to crave fellowship with him and to seek it out. See, you and I were made for communion with God. If you don't believe that claim, I'm not going to defend it right now, but I would be happy to speak with you after the service. But the more we try and satisfy that craving with other sources of nourishment, the less we realize that what our souls truly yearn for is communion with the living God.

See, over time, we dull that spiritual longing. The New Testament calls this quenching the spirit. And we do that by satisfying our fleshly desires instead. But the psalmist here, from the get-go, he helps us to see that our deepest longing is in fact God himself.

[18:00] He says, As a deer, pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I

come and appear before God?

From his most dark and despairing place along his journey, he recognizes that what his soul actually craves is God. And that sets him off on the right trajectory to find hope even in the midst of his despair.

If you're in a place of suffering, right now, if you feel disconnected from the Lord, recognize that the deeper longing in your soul is for fellowship with him rather than deliverance from your circumstances.

Yes, long, long for deliverance from your despair. Long for it. But see that your longing for God runs deeper in your soul. And if you do this, this will set you off on a course towards joy and hope even when they feel beyond reach.

recognize your thirst for God. The second thing here that the psalmist shows us, confront your emotions and guide them into truth. Now, some of you in this room may think, or rather feel, that you can check out because you're not emotional.

[19:18] But I've seen even some of the most supposedly unemotional engineers in this room exhibit emotion. we are all emotional beings in different ways and to varying degrees.

And I know that for me personally, if I let my natural human emotions go unchecked, they will lead me astray. Every time. They will lead me down a path of self-centeredness.

They will distort my thinking and perspective. They will draw me away from God and his word. And this is why the psalmist keeps confronting his emotions. Three times he directs these questions at his own soul.

Why are you cast down, O my soul? Why are you in turmoil within me? See, he forces himself to stop and to think and to reason, to consider his actual state.

And then, after confronting his emotions, he guides them into truth. He preaches to himself. What does he say? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

[20:19] Now, eight weeks ago, Rob Buttermore preached from Psalm chapter 130, a psalm of lament from a place of sin. And in that, he quoted Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones and I'd like to use that quote or part of that quote again today because Jones was actually addressing Psalm 42 and 43 in his book called *Spiritual Depression*.

Listen to this. He said, the main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand. You have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself.

You must say to your soul, why are you cast down? What business have you to be disquieted? You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself, self, hope in God instead of muttering in this depressed and happy way.

And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, who God is and what God is and what God has done and what God has pledged himself to do. Then, having done that, end on this great note.

Defy yourself and defy other people and defy the devil and the whole world and say with this man, I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance, who is also the health of my countenance and my God.

[21:37] It's probably quoting the KJV there. Now, do you know who the anti-example of this is in scripture? Can anybody think of a whiny prophet who let his emotions go unchecked until God confronted him?

Anybody? Jonah. Jonah, we find in chapter 4, is exceedingly angry and then he's exceedingly glad and then he's exceedingly angry again and in his mercy, God confronts Jonah saying, do you do well to be angry, Jonah?

Do you do well to be angry? Do you remember Jonah's response? Anybody? Yes. Yes, I do well to be angry, angry enough to die.

Now, the book ends with a big question mark, right? We're left wondering, did Jonah actually, did he allow the reality of God's mercy and compassion to reshape his heart? We actually don't know.

That's one of the questions I want to find out in heaven someday. Now, I'm not saying, I'm not saying that when you feel depressed or in despair that you're in sin. I'm not saying that this morning.

[22:48] Life is filled with hardship and pain. We are going to feel those things, but what we do with these emotions is crucial. Do we, like Jonah, just wallow in our despair and let it spiral us out of control, or do we employ the practice of the sons of Korah, confronting our human emotions, preaching truth to ourselves in the midst of that despair, and then allowing our hearts to be reshaped and guided instead by God's word.

Confront your emotions, guide them into truth. Now, another key means for our hearts to be guided and shaped by God is through prayer, and that's what we see here.

The psalmist does not experience real change until he remembers the Lord and then goes before him in prayer, and that's our third application point. Simply, go to the Lord.

Probably the application point of every sermon ever. If we recognize our soul thirst, right, that's point number one, it only makes sense that we would go before him in prayer, and the psalmist models for us how to do that.

So the first thing here, go to the Lord honestly. Now, notice that in 42 verse 9 and 43 verse 2, the psalmist, he brings his honest questions straight to the throne room of God.

[24:12] He says, why have you forgotten me? Why have you rejected me, God? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? The psalmist, he lays bare his heart before the Lord.

Now, all over scripture, and especially the psalms of lament, we see this kind of questioning modeled for us. Andrew talked about it a few weeks ago when we looked at Psalm 119, and I want to just add a couple thoughts to this discourse to help us see that we can and should even bring our raw feelings and emotions before the Lord.

First thing I want to mention here is that God is omniscient. God knows everything. David says in Psalm 139, you discern my thoughts from afar, and even before a word is on my tongue, behold, O Lord, you know it all together.

See, whether you bring your honest questions to the Lord in prayer or not, he already knows them. He already knows them. Second, God is unmoved by anything.

As we saw, Pastor Dave preached from Psalm 2, we saw that God is the one seated on his throne who sits in the heavens laughing at the rebellious nations. Friends, he is in complete sovereign control, reigning supreme, and your questions are not going to change that.

[25:31] Don't be afraid that your questions are going to somehow bump him off his throne. He's omniscient, he is unmoved, and third, as the psalmist recalls, God is a God of steadfast love.

God is a place of refuge. God actually, he wants us to come before him with not only our raw questions, but also, as the psalmist shows us, our unfiltered requests.

And God invites us to bring them before his throne. Friends, there is no better place to bring them because there, in God's presence, he will help us to work through these questions, and he will respond to our requests.

Now, that response may not come when we want it, right? Many of you have experienced this. So, we must go to the Lord persistently.

Honestly, persistently. Now, we don't know how long the psalmist's season of grief actually lasted. See, we can read this whole lament in just a couple minutes, but maybe the suffering lasted for a couple years.

[26:44] Regardless, it's clear that the psalmist was not delivered from his circumstances immediately, and maybe that's why God had the psalms separated. Maybe he wanted us to end 42 and he's in despair still, and then the resolution comes in 43, but yet even still, he's not delivered.

But the psalmist persisted in prayer, right? The psalmist made the Lord his refuge. Time and again, he kept going to the Lord. So too for us, brothers, sisters, so too for us, one encounter with the Lord will not necessarily move you past your despair.

The seasons of sadness that life brings vary widely in duration, sometimes just a day, sometimes 10 minutes, think your kid's temper tantrum that maybe happened this morning, sometimes years, decades, a lifetime, right?

But even as we tarry on through the trials of life, when we persistently make the Lord our refuge, when we bring our questions, our petitions before him, we can be sure that God will meet us there.

And that brings me to the next thing. Go to the Lord expectantly. So even if a change in circumstance does not result in this life, you can be sure that as you go to the Lord honestly, persistently, some things are going to happen.

[28:12] You see, God has purposes for our suffering, things he intends to accomplish in us as we walk through seasons of despair. We will probably never understand all of his purposes.

His thoughts and our ways are higher than ours, but he has revealed to us some of those purposes. Many of you have seen these played out in your lives. The first thing, you will experience God's steadfast love.

Let's look again at 42, verse 8. The psalmist says, in the middle of his pain, by day, the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night, his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. The steadfast love of the Lord is one of his attributes mentioned all throughout the Old Testament, nearly 200 verses, and over half of those are in the Psalms. When God revealed himself to Moses in Exodus 34, what did he say?

He is a God abounding in steadfast love, keeping steadfast love for thousands. All throughout the Old Testament, and especially the Psalms, we find this exhortation, O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

[29:31] And even from the pit of despair of exile in Babylon, this verse in Lamentations was penned. Many of you know this, the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases.

His mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning. Great is your faithfulness. Now for us, for New Testament believers, we have seen the steadfast love of the Lord poured out in new and awesome way through the cross of Christ.

Paul captures this in Ephesians 2, 4, and 5 when he says, but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. And we know that because of what Christ has done for us, neither tribulation, where is that? There it is, nor distress, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Amen. The psalmist knows that despite the pain he is experiencing, God's steadfast love will not depart from him. God has proven it time and again and in the midst of his despair as the psalmist seeks God's face, he is able to experience and revel in the steadfast love of the Lord.

[30:55] Saints and sufferers, this too can be our experience as we walk through even profound tragedy and loss. Even as our tears have been our food day and night.

Even as the enemy of physical affliction or the death of a loved one or infertility or financial instability or unmet expectations, even as that enemy taunts us all the day long and says, where is your God?

Even so, God commands his steadfast love over us day and night. As our souls thirst after God, as we pursue God, we can experience and revel in that steadfast love.

So that's something that will happen when you go to the Lord persistently. That will happen. You will gain right perspective. Now this was a major point in Caleb Maloney's sermon from Psalm 73.

In that Psalm, Asaph was struggling to reconcile the truth of God's goodness with the circumstantial evidence of the prosperity of the wicked. Right? Now what did Asaph say?

[32:11] Asaph was on a downward slope, questions and doubts arising within his soul, but he made a choice that was a complete game changer, right?

He entered God's presence. And there in the presence of the living God, his perspective was restored. Here in Psalm 42 and 43, the psalmist is struggling to reconcile the truth of God's goodness with the circumstantial evidence of his suffering.

And when he goes into the presence of the Lord, his vision is made clear. His suffering is not brought to an end, but his perspective is restored. Brothers, sisters, even as your suffering persists, even as you feel like all God's breakers and waves are pounding over you, go to him honestly, persistently, expectantly.

He will do this for you. He will help you gain right perspective. And even through tears, you will surely find that God's steadfast love runs deeper even than your pain.

and ultimately know that suffering, though it may last, deliverance will come.

[33:48] In 2017, my energetic and seemingly healthy 59-year-old father who walked miles a day delivering mail, who ran regularly, he passed away suddenly and unexpectedly from a heart attack.

There was a lot of questioning and petitioning, as you can imagine, as many of you have walked through yourselves in that time. Why did God choose to end his life then, right?

You know, did he not have years of fruitful, Christ-exalting life ahead of him? God did give us some partial answers to those questions, you know, even in the days that followed.

Yet still, our questions have not been fully answered. Many of you have been wrestling with questions that are not answered. And you'll note that in this psalm, the psalmist never receives complete answers to his questions.

But even though the suffering rages on and our questions remain unanswered, we can take heart because deliverance will come.

[34:59] It will. The psalmist is sure of it. He says, for I shall again praise him. Verse 5, for I shall again praise him. Verse 11, 43, verse 4, then I will go to the altar of God.

I will praise you with the lyre, for I shall again praise him. The psalmist is convinced, friends, that deliverance will ultimately come. He knows that it's going to happen and he will return to his position in God's presence.

So let me ask you this, how much more of the fact that deliverance will come are we for whom Christ has shed his blood and risen from the grave?

How much more sure can we be this morning? You know, the psalmist could not say this. He could not say, for if while we were enemies of God, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by his life?

The psalmist had not heard these words. In him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it.

[36:11] He did not have this promise, so we do not lose heart, though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light, momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison.

Friends, these promises have been given to us. Jesus Christ laid down his life on our behalf so that we could lay hold of these promises, so that we could know that even though our suffering may last, ultimately, deliverance will come.

And this is yet one more purpose God has for our suffering, to instill in us a greater longing for heaven. That's one of the greatest things that happened in my life when my dad passed away, is a longing for heaven that I never knew before.

Some of you have that longing made more real for you because of your suffering, suffering more profound than I've experienced. You've walked through it.

And because we know that deliverance will surely come, we can groan in hope, friends. And this really gets at the core of what biblical lament is.

[37:41] Yes, yes, we groan in our suffering. The psalmist demonstrates that. The circumstances of life drive us to despair, right? They drive us to question why.

And some of you have endured tremendous loss or you're currently in the midst of great hardship and you have to know it is okay to groan. It is right. Back to Romans 8.

Paul says that we know the whole creation, all of creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now and not only creation but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit groan inwardly.

But we groan in hope because we know that deliverance will come. three times the psalmist urges himself hope in God.

Self, hope in God three times because he knows the future. He knows there is hope. And Paul says we groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies for in this

hope we were saved.

[38:56] And earlier in that passage in Romans 8.18 Paul says that I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

That's hope friends, that's hope. That's the hope that we have as believers in Christ. Even in the midst of profound tragedy we can exhort ourselves, let us exhort ourselves towards that unshakable confidence.

let us groan in hope, the hope of what's to come, the hope of what has been secured for us eternally in Christ. I experienced what I've been calling a local low a month ago when I had an encounter with poison ivy.

I have a pretty bad reaction to poison ivy apparently and it's gotten worse and worse and I know some of you out there also have no fun reactions to poison ivy and it was bad.

I have some remnants of stuff here and other places but I had to go to the I called my doctor, she gave me steroids because the last time and the steroids did not do anything and a few days later when I had blisters all over my arm and this is an exaggeration but I felt like Job, I'm sure his suffering was far worse, don't get me wrong, but we don't always think straight in the midst of suffering and I felt like Job and it started to get better after they gave me a heavier dose of steroid and it got worse again and at that point about a week and a half in trying to get better for the stiefel wedding, I was despairing legitimately and it seems silly to say it but I was despairing and the Lord used that, he used that a month before this sermon to get me to a low and to show me my neediness and to remind me of some things that I needed to remember to speak his steadfast love over me and to grow again in me a longing for heaven because I have forgotten five years after my father's death,

[41:07] I don't have the same feelings I did then and the Lord can use things, even poison ivy, even the tantrum of your kids, whatever it is, right? Suffering comes in all shapes and sizes and God will use it and we can groan in hope of what's to come.

Now in closing, I want to specifically address some of the questions raised in this psalm by both the psalmist and his enemies. You know, the psalmist asked of God, why have you forgotten me? Why have you rejected me? Right? Now God's answer, it's not explicitly stated in the psalm, but nevertheless, I think it's clear and the psalmist knows it.

The psalmist in his head, he knows the answer to these questions even though he's not feeling it right now and I think it's worth saying God's answer is I never did, right?

God had not forgotten the son of Korah. He had not forgotten him. He had not rejected him.

Brothers, sisters, he has not forgotten or rejected you.

[42:18] It might feel like he has, no doubt, it certainly does in our despair, but he has not. He is with you. Now it's likely this incessant question that his enemies raised, right?

Where is your God? They said to him. They see he's in a place of suffering. Doesn't seem to line up with his claims of his God of steadfast love. Where is your God? My guess is that that incessant question was a catalyst maybe for his own questioning of God.

You know, the world and the flesh and the devil, they love to ask that question. Where is your God? That question can damage your faith if you let it.

That question can drag you down if you don't confront it and have the answer back. And I guarantee you that if you spend time seeking God in prayer, if you spend time in God's word, you will find enemy crushing answers to that question.

Answers like this. Where is my God? Well, my God proved his boundless love for me by actually dying on the cross in my place to pay the penalty for my sin.

[43:41] Where is my God? Well, my God in his sovereignty and grace and power has been advancing the gospel and the church for 2,000 years throughout the whole world in spite of fierce opposition.

Where is my God? Well, my God is right here in my heart having given me his own presence in the person of the Holy Spirit. He is comforting me.

He's guiding me. He's empowering me, transforming me into the likeness of Christ. Where is my God? Well, my God continues day and night to pour his steadfast love upon me, love that will never

change.

Where is my God? Well, my God is in heaven. He's preparing a place for me eternally and this future in heaven will be so endlessly glorious and filled with joy that it's not even worth comparing to the suffering that I'm experiencing now.

That's where my God is. Christian, God has not forgotten you. He has not rejected you. God offers you himself as a rock and a refuge.

[44:46] He is the satisfying sustenance of your soul and even in the midst of your suffering, he commands his steadfast love over you night and day.

Ultimately, he will deliver you from your troubles. He will usher you into his glorious presence forevermore. And that means that right now, even, even if your grief and your despair abound, a heart full of hope, a heart full of joy, a heart full of praise can be yours in Christ Jesus.

So may we suffer well here between the break of dawn and the full light of day. please pray with me. Father, this psalm is such a treasure for our souls.

And the book of the psalms, Lord, is such a treasure for us. As we walk this broken road, as we experience pain and suffering and trials, Lord, these psalms are so sweet to us because they show us how to suffer well.

And we ask, Lord, that these things would go deep into our souls. God, we ask that you would implant in us a deeper and greater thirst for you.

[46:12] And as we pursue that longing, God, these things will happen for us. Lord, thank you that you are a God of steadfast love.

God, even if we can't see it, even if we can't feel it, Lord, we know that it is true and you have proven it time and again. And we thank you for that, Lord.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. And we're going to turn to a time of communion in which we remember that God forsook his very son, Jesus Christ, allowing him to be unjustly condemned and murdered on the cross for us.

You know, Peter says it very simply, he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed. He says then, for you were strained like sheep, but you have now returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

[47:24] So here as we partake of the Lord's Supper, we are celebrating the ongoing unity, and fellowship that we all have together with and in Jesus. We are celebrating that eternally God commands his steadfast love over us night and day.

We're celebrating that now and forevermore God is a rock and a refuge for us because of the cross of Christ. So this meal, it's for those who have put their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

However, if you're a believer but living in secret, unrepentant sin, scripture tells us that taking the elements is actually eating and drinking condemnation upon yourself.

So let us examine ourselves this morning. Let's ensure that we are right with the Lord to receive this meal. And if anyone here is this morning that does not believe in Christ as your Lord and Savior, please do not take the elements as they're not for you.

Instead, we would implore you this morning to receive Christ who offers you eternal life and fellowship with God. So before we take these elements, just spend a minute or two quiet.

[48:33] Ask the Lord to search your heart to reveal any sin and confess that to him. Meditate on what Christ is done for you and thank him for it and for all the blessings that are yours eternally through the gospel.

And after a couple minutes I'll lead us in taking these elements. piano plays Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

God, they are removed from us as far as the east is from the west, and because of that, Lord, we are made right with you. Thank you, Heavenly Father. Amen.

[50:44] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. In the same way also he took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Father, we proclaim the death of your son

until that great day when you return.

And Lord, for now, in the in-between, no matter what the circumstances of life are, Lord, we bring to you, God, even in despair, our praise and our worship.

So Lord, receive that worship now. Amen.