

Two Cries for Those in Turmoil

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[0 : 00] You know, someone once said that you're either coming out of a storm, you're in a storm, or there's a storm on the horizon. You know, there's a given in life, there's a given in the Christian life that there's going to be difficult times, right, when it just all falls apart.

How many have experienced that? Yeah, I think this is a pretty common occurrence, and there's small ways and there's big ways that that happens. And no matter where you find yourself tonight, you might say, hey, things are good.

Things are just kind of going along. Be ready, because there's going to come a day when you're going to need what is in Psalm 142. And I'm excited to share this with you. Psalm 142 is one of those psalms that, I got to be honest, there was a time when I got really tired of psalms like this.

Even here, we've been in a couple psalms, and even some of the five-minute messages, you know, have been kind of focused around suffering and the reality of suffering and the response to suffering and all those things.

And there was this one time I told my father-in-law, I was like, man, can we have some happy scripture? Right? Can we have some scripture that is not all in a minor key, and it's like it's sad, and everything's falling apart, and everything's dark, and everything's difficult.

[1 : 14] But that's just a reality of life, and so we have to accept it, learn from it. And, you know, at that time when I made that statement, I had never really been through something that was deeply, you know, that shook me to my core.

But, you know, in the years since then, I've been through some times when it's like, I have needed this scripture. And it's so good to come back and to remember, you know, what should we do?

We prepare ourselves because we need to know how to respond right when we go through those times that just shake us to our core. That's what this passage does. So if you've never, if you're not in a bad season, praise God, but prepare because there's going to be one that comes sooner or later.

And tonight, really, it all comes down to this. The only shelter, the only refuge for hurting hearts is in the care of Jesus. That's what it comes down to. That's the only place you can run.

That's the only place you can turn. And that's what David is going to show us through Psalm 142. Would you read the scripture with me? It says this, I cried unto the Lord with my voice, with my voice unto the Lord, I did make my supplication.

[2 : 22] I poured out my complaint before him. I showed before him my trouble. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me.

I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me. Refuge failed me. No man cared for my soul. I cried unto thee, O Lord.

I said, thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living. Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low. Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise thy name. The righteous shall compass me about, for thou shalt deal bountifully with me. Let's open up in a word of prayer.

Father, we come to you. Lord, I pray that you would use this psalm to encourage us and strengthen us tonight. Prepare us for those seasons when we face things that are just simply too hard for us, too much for us.

[3 : 24] God, I pray that your word would minister deeply to each heart tonight. Because there are things that are going on in our lives. Some that are known, some that are unknown.

And Lord, we know that all is revealed before you. And that you have the ability and a way of ministering specifically and personally in the way that we need it.

And Lord, so we come to you and we ask you to speak to us through your word. We pray things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. First thing to take note of, and here's the first blank that is on your handout. Intense turmoil is common for the people of God.

Intense turmoil is common to the people of God. We find David in this psalm. This psalm is known as a mascal of David or a prayer. And it says in the heading there, a prayer when he was in the cave.

Now, there was more than one cave scenario that David dealt with. And we'll talk about those a little bit in a second. But the idea here is that suffering is just kind of universal. It's going to happen.

[4 : 29] It's going to come. And so think with me about the two stories where David found himself in caves crying out to God. Because it's not super clear which cave he's talking about or which scenario.

But there's a couple that I think we can glean from. The first one is in Psalm 22, 1 through 5. And I call that the lonely cave. The lonely cave because he had just been on the run. You can read this sometime.

But he had just been on the run. He's running for his life. It has become abundantly clear that Saul the king is out to kill him. And David probably would have been dead if Saul was better with a spear.

But Saul has come at him. He's thrown spears at him. And he just can't get David. And so David is on the run. And he's had a couple of close brushes with danger.

In the first one, he comes to a city called Nob. It was like one of his first pit stops when he's on the run. And he's trying to get some resources, some food, some weapons. And he comes to a priest and he says, hey, what do you have?

[5 : 28] And he's like, I got some showbread and I've got Goliath's sword. And he says, give me those. And he goes on his way. But there was a guy there named Doeg. And Doeg was like part of Saul's cabinet.

He was a chief herdsman. And he was opportunistic. He's like, I can grow in my, what do you call that? What's that? Yeah, my rank.

Right? I'm going to get on Saul's good side. Because I'm going to tell him that David came through. And David went through the city. And it ends up not too long after that that this guy named Doeg, he was also a very evil man.

He killed, slaughtered 85 priests because they helped David. Because they simply showed some kindness to David.

That was the lonely cave. He also had a close brush with the Philistines. The Philistines were like the sworn enemy of Israel. And he goes and he's trying to find some place to hide, some refuge.

[6 : 26] He goes to the city of the Philistines and he's standing before the gates. And some of the Philistines start saying, hold up a second. Are we really going to let this guy into our city? Isn't this the guy that killed Goliath, which was one of ours?

Isn't this the guy that they said, he's slain. He killed thousands and thousands of Israel's enemies. Are we really going to let him into our gates? And so David's hearing this and he's like, oh no.

And so he ends up acting like a madman, a crazy man, foaming at the mouth, spitting on his beard. And they finally let him go. And so he comes to a cave and there he is. He's holed up in this cave.

Who knows what's going to happen on the run for his life. There's another cave that happens two chapters later. That's a cave of decision, which is a totally different scenario because in between those two chapters, there has assembled to David just a huge crew of people.

Now it wasn't as big as the rest of the army in Israel, but it was a pretty strong group of men who had come around him, who had traveled with him and they were all on the run together. And this cave was wild because you may remember what happens there.

[7 : 33] David and his men are in the cave hiding and Saul's right out the door. Made me think of like, you ever played hide and seek and you're like hiding in a closet and the door's cracked. Then you see the person coming and they're like looking at the closet, coming towards the closet.

Like this is what's going on. David is in the cave, Saul's outside the cave, and then Saul starts coming into the cave and everyone is freaking out. It turns out that Saul was going into the cave to use the bathroom.

In the Bible, it says he's covering his feet. And so what happens is David's men are like, this is a great opportunity. Let's take him out. And David is sitting there for a second like, okay, what are we going to do?

And he goes over there and it seems like he's in this moment of decision. Do I kill Saul? Do I spare his life? And he ends up just cutting off part of his royal robe and he spares the king's life.

But it would have been very, very tempting, I imagine, to put an end to Saul, to get off the run, to get rid of your enemy. He was in the cave of decision.

[8 : 38] There's some truths about suffering, about turmoil that we need to remember. And I wrote these on your outline so you can keep them and think about them and look at them. I'll read these real quick. Pain, it's guaranteed in a fallen world.

It comes because of our own sin. It comes because of the sin of others. It comes because of the evil that is in this world. You know, pain is sometimes providential, right? It's not necessarily always our fault.

It often is, but it's not always our fault. You think about people like Job or Jesus said there was a blind man, that he was blind not because of anything he did or anything his parents did, but that God's glory would be shown in him.

The third thing, time and again, this is a constant thing. This is a repeated thing that we're going to face difficulty. And the way we do it is by taking refuge in the Lord.

And this is what David does. He's in the cave. He's in intense turmoil. And this wasn't the only time that it happened. There's other times when David is suffering greatly and he wasn't in a cave, but he was in just as bad of a situation.

[9 : 42] So here's the second thing. What do we do? What do we do? How do we maintain the Lord as our refuge, as the center of our security? We do this. First off, we cry out with our turmoil to God.

We cry out with our turmoil to God. Look with me at what David does. He starts off, and I really want, as I was studying this passage, I noticed a phrase that was repeated two times.

In verse one, it says, I cried unto the Lord. And in verse five, it says, I cried unto thee, O Lord. And in the first few verses, he's crying out and he's not so much asking something as he is simply expressing what he's dealing with.

Let's read those words quickly. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, with my voice unto the Lord, did I make my supplication? He's bringing his request. He's crying out to God.

He's speaking and saying, God, I need some help here. I'm in this cave. What am I going to do? Verse number two, I poured out my complaint before him. Isn't that a vivid picture of like taking this bucket of complaints and pouring out before God and saying, this is my problem.

[10 : 49] It's right there, God. God, it's all over the ground and it's spilled and it's a mess. I'm pouring out my complaints to the Lord. Look at the next portion of that verse. I showed before him my trouble.

Think about that. It's almost like he's sitting down with God and just laying out all the problems. He's like, here it is, God. Here's all the problems. Here's what I've got going on.

Look with me in verse number three. When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then thou knewest my path. In the way wherein I have walked, they have privily laid a snare for me.

His spirit's overwhelmed. And there's a phrase in there that's interesting. We're going to come back to this in a second. But you notice what he said? When my spirit was overwhelmed, you knew my path. That was like the first glimmer of hope that we're going to come to.

We'll come back to that. But let's keep looking at the pouring out of complaints. He says, the way wherein I have walked, where I, oh my goodness.

[11 : 44] In the way wherein I walked, have they privily laid a snare for me. People are laying traps in my path. Verse number four. I looked on my right hand and beheld, but there was no man that would know me.

Refuge failed me. No man cared for my soul. Do you feel the place that David's in? He's looking around like, does anybody, you know, want to come help me? Does anybody want to know me?

Does anybody want to take care of me? Is anybody going to seek me out and come to my aid? And he's just looking around and it's like, I am all alone. There is no help.

Now, this point seems pretty obvious, doesn't it, right? If you're in trouble, you should go to God and tell God you're trouble. But have you ever noticed that we don't always do that?

That's one of the things that really struck me as I was studying down through this. This is obvious, but we don't always do it. And why don't we do it? And I think it basically comes down to this. We have adopted weak techniques for handling the turmoil of life that are based on faulty beliefs.

[12 : 50] Okay? So there's things we try to do in our own strength to handle all the stuff that is coming upon us because our beliefs at our core are faulty.

So let me name some techniques that are faulty. We take this turmoil and here's how we try to handle it. Sometimes we might put it out.

We would try to external it, push it away from us. What does that look like? We become angry. We become aggressive, maybe even passive aggressive.

We blame it upon others. We blame it on circumstances. We blame it and we're just like pushing it out like, hey, this isn't my fault. I don't, this is not where I should be. I'm denying it.

I'm just like pushing it away. Sometimes we take it upon ourselves and we allow it to crush us. We like live under this turmoil and, you know, we say things like, I must be awful.

[13 : 45] I'm worthless. I mean, if I was really spiritual, this wouldn't be happening to me. And we just like let it pour into our soul. There's another way that we handle that where we like push it down, right?

You ever done that? It's like, I don't want to deal with this. This doesn't bother me. We push it down and act like it doesn't exist. That's not good. Here's the other one we do.

We shoulder it. We shoulder it. So we externalize it, pushing out. We internalize it, taking upon ourselves. Instead of taking it to the Lord, or we shoulder it and say, you know what? I've got this.

I can handle this. I can deal with this. And how do we do that? Well, you know, we try to tough it out. Like, I'm no wimp. I can handle this. Bring it on. I'll take care of the problem.

We might try to figure it out, like outsmart it. You know, I'm going to find a way around this. I'm going to figure out a strategy to deal with this. Or sometimes, and this is probably one of the worst things you can do, is you can drown it out, right?

[14 : 46] There's all kinds of ways that you can just drown out the turmoil, drown out the pain. That might be workaholism, substances, amusement, fantasy, just retreating from life.

None of those things are going to work. But those are all things that we do. Are they not? Right? So there's this turmoil that's just pouring in, pouring in, weighing us down.

It is crushing. It's too much. I can't handle it. So what am I going to do? If my beliefs are wrong, I'm going to try to shoulder it myself. I'm going to try to deal with it myself. But see, the problem is, when we try to deal with it ourselves, we're completely neglecting the God who is ready and able to meet us where we're at and to give us the strength to walk through whatever difficult season we face.

He will give us the strength. Here's some of the beliefs that I think get disordered, some things that are wrong. When we say, hey, I can work it out. I can figure out my path. I can figure out a way through this. We are forgetting that God is the one, and he's really the only one who knows our path.

Can we back up for a second? Do you remember that portion? He said, my spirit is overwhelmed within me. When my spirit is overwhelmed? He said, you knew my path. You know my path.

[16 : 05] You know the way through this. You know the way. It's amazing. He was in a cave. And it almost is like he's saying, God, I'm in this cave.

I'm closed in. I'm trapped. I don't know what to do. But you know my path. You know the way through here. And for whatever reason, God, this cave is on my path.

And so I'm just going to come to you, lay it all out before you and say, God, hey, I'm yours. All this trouble. I cast my cares upon you, right? That's a New Testament passage. I cast my cares upon you because you know my path.

It's much like that verse that we often learn as kids, Proverbs 3, 5. I'm sure some of you can quote it. What's that verse? I need it on the screen because my mind is just fried right now.

Oh, maybe we'll get it on the screen. Maybe we won't. What does it say? Lean not to your own understanding, right? Oh, someone say it. There it is. Trust in the Lord with all thine heart and lean not unto thine own understanding.

[17 : 05] You see, when we say, I can figure this out, we're leaning on our own understanding. Now, this doesn't mean we shut off our brains and we don't use the faculties that God's given us.

But when we're shouldering this thing ourselves instead of bringing it to the Lord and coming to Him and seeking His wisdom, our beliefs are wrong. Because God knows every danger.

He knows the direction of our path. He knows the beginning of our path. He knows the end of our path. He knows our path. And so we need to believe Him. When we say, I can fight through anything, we are missing the fact that there are times in life, and it's probably a lot more than we'd like to admit, that the turmoil, the weight that's upon us, it's simply too much for you.

It's too much for you. And this is one of the lies that our world just pushes and promotes. What do you need to do? You need to get tougher. You need to have more grit. You need to have better strategies.

You need to learn something. You need to get more education. You need to do all kinds of things to make it so that you can fight through anything. You ever notice that there's even people out there that they are planning on and fully believing that they're going to beat death through some sort of technology or medicine.

[18 : 23] They're into this longevity of life. And I'm going to find strategies that I can cheat death. Friends, there's only one person cheated death, and that's Jesus. And there are going to be things that will be stronger than you.

You are finite. I am finite. I have limits. There are some things that are impossible for me. Because if nothing was impossible for you, then that would mean that you're God.

But you're not. He's God. And there's nothing that's too hard for him. There's nothing that's too hard for him. We find that in Genesis 18. That's one of my favorite verses. Genesis 18, 14.

Is anything too hard for the Lord? One more belief that we might have. I can't dump my mess on God. You notice the things that David is doing?

He's just like laying it all out in all of the mess and the confusion, the frustration. He's not getting spiritual and then coming to God. He's just like, God, here it is.

[19 : 23] It's all a mess. I don't know what to do with it. But you might believe that you can't come to God with your mess. Maybe you have something that you see as small.

And it's almost like, I can't come and bother God with my small stuff. Well, then I think that means that we might have a wrong view of God.

Because he welcomes you and he welcomes your mess. And there's some things about God that are so important to remember. Let me read this. God is both infinitely big and infinitely personal.

God's attention is infinite. He sees and knows the most minute details of all creation simultaneously. That's our God. There is nothing in your life that is too big or too small for you to bring it to him right where you are, right as you are.

You don't need to spiritual up. You don't need to figure things out. You just need to come to God and say, God, here it is. Help me. What is all of this? All of this is saying, God, you are my refuge.

[20 : 28] And that's where David goes next. And this is your third and final blank here. It is cry out with trust in God. Cry out with trust in God.

So we cry out just laying out all of our turmoil before the Lord. He welcomes that. Go to him. But we also cry out with trust in God. And this is where it turns to maybe that more happy note, that more exciting thing.

Would you go with me to verse number five? This is that second cry. I cried unto thee, O Lord. I said, thou art my refuge in my portion in the land of the living.

Do you notice what he's been doing? He's been saying, God, here's my problem. God, here's my trouble. God, here's what's going on. Now, God, you're my refuge. There's a different tone there, isn't there?

God, you're my portion. You're the one that I'm going to find security in. You're the one I'm going to find safety in. You're the one that is going to sustain me.

[21 : 30] That's the idea of portion is you could look at a couple ways where it's a piece of land that is given to you for you to live on and to raise your family and to raise your crops.

That's what Joshua did. He divided the land out into lots or portions. It's also when an army would come back from the battle, all of those spoils from war, they would be divided up into portions.

And that was like the reward given to the soldiers. And he says, listen, God, you're my refuge. You're my safety. And you are what is going to sustain me. And he cries out with trust in the Lord.

It's like he plants his flag and says, I'm going to stand right here. My God, he is my refuge. He is my portion. There's a couple of things that stuck out to me. You can almost like read this in certain ways.

You know how people emphasize different words? Here's a couple of things to think about. We say it directly to God. You, God, are my refuge and portion. We say it personally.

[22 : 31] You are my refuge and portion. We say it confidently. God, you are my refuge and portion. That's who God is to us. So would you come to him in confidence?

Would you come to him believing? Oh, man, there's so much more that I want to share with you about this. Let me give you these last couple thoughts as we close out. If God is your refuge, you can pray believing and expecting that God will work.

The last three prayers that David gives in that passage, they're all imperative words. Those are the command words. It's like when I say to Thaddeus, go get ready. Go get dressed for the day.

I'm telling him what to do. This kind of blows my mind a little bit. When David prays in verse number six, attend unto my cry. In the next part, deliver me from my persecutors.

And in verse number seven, bring my soul out of prison. He is calling upon God, expecting that God is going to do those things. Saying, God, pay attention to what I've got going on.

[23 : 34] I am brought very low. God, what is the second one? He says, deliver me, rescue me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I. He's saying, God, do this for me. Bring me out of prison.

And look at the last bit. He says, that I may praise thy name. You see, what has happened is he's gone from a place of just coming with honest prayer before the Lord.

God, here's what I've got going on. I need you. He's gained confidence, crying out with faith, saying, God, you are my portion. You are my refuge.

And that's given him the confidence to say, God, I need you to do this, this, and this. Now, you know, I think our problem is that sometimes our theology stops us from praying that way.

And here's what I mean. We've heard things like name it and claim it. Or, you know, people pray like they're twisting God's arm. They had to twist God's arm to get him to do something.

[24 : 29] Or there's lots of things that we've heard that are like, man, does that really line up with Scripture? I think there's a tension there, right? Because I can't make God do anything. He's God. I'm not. Amen?

Yeah. However, what did James say? We'll just take James for just a second. What did James say about asking for wisdom? I want to close with this and really encourage you with this. What did James say about asking for wisdom?

This is James 1, 6, and 7. Listen to these words. But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. Did you catch what James is saying? He says, when you come to God and ask for wisdom, you need to ask in faith, nothing wavering.

Not back and forth, not unsure, just coming, saying, God, I believe that you can give me wisdom if I ask. He says, because listen, if you waver, don't expect that you're going to receive any wisdom from God.

[25 : 32] That's a little wild, isn't it? You know, Jesus said some things about prayer. He said that we are to pray and not faint. He says that if we come and ask in his name, we will receive. Believe, there's something that we need to keep in mind where it's like, hey, no, I can't tell God what to do.

But prayer does make a difference. Fasting does make a difference. Asking in faith, that makes a difference. How do those work together? I don't know. But I think we need to believe that they do.

And that we would come to God and say, God, you're my refuge. I'm not going to lean on anything else. I'm not going to rely on anything else. I'm not going to try to shoulder it myself. But I'm just going to trust you and I'm going to ask you to work because you're God and I'm not.

Would you bow with me? Father, we come to you this evening. And Lord, we ask you to work in each of our hearts and lives. Lord, reveal to us the areas where we have decided that we're going to take on a weight that you did not intend for us to bear.

God, I pray that you give people courage. Give all of us courage this evening to come before you humbly, sincerely, and to simply lay out our need.

[26 : 45] Lord, we have them. We have needs. There are things that are too big for us. God, but there is nothing that is too hard for you.

And Father, I want to ask for those who are struggling right now. Lord, I put myself in that category. Lord, I need you. I need you constantly.

I need to make sure that I don't ever stray away from your refuge. God, I pray that each believer in here tonight would plant their flag and say, Lord, you are my refuge.

You are my portion. And that we would not rely on anything else to be our safety or to be our strength. God, we believe that you are God.

You are almighty. You are powerful. You answer prayer. You work in miraculous ways. Ways that we don't understand and that we don't see and that we might even ever know about. Lord, we believe that you're God.

[27 : 45] And so we come asking that you'd intervene, that you would work in each of our lives. Lord, thank you for your word. Pray that you'd bless your people. Praise things in Jesus' name. Amen.