

Beyond Discouragement

Psalm 43

Psalm 42

When Faith is No Longer Exciting

- 1. Spiritual Drought
- 2. In the Depths
- 3. Refrain: Why, O My Soul, are you downcast...
 - 42:5, 11; 43:5



Summary: The Daily Reality

- **He is taunted by his critics** ‘Where is this God of yours?’ (v 3)
- **He is losing any vital relationship with God** (v 2)
‘My soul thirst for God, **for the living God**’; ‘**When can I go** and meet with God?’
- **His worship life is flat.** (v 4) ‘I used to go to the house of God...with shouts of joy and praise...among the festive throng’

Deep Calling to Deep Facing the Depths



Depths in the Psalmist's Experience

Psalm 42:9-10

- **The Absence of God**

- ⁹ I say to God my Rock, "**Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?**"

- **Evil treatment by 'enemies'**

- ⁹ I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? **Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?**"

- **A loss of confidence in God as Defender**

- ¹⁰ My bones suffer mortal agony as **my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"**(NIV)

Depths in our Experience

- Physical Suffering, chronic illness
- Loss of a loved one
- Family Breakdown
- Financial, job loss
- Destruction of a reputation or relationship
- Slander
- Loss of meaning, purpose in life
- The absence of God, inability to pray
- Church, worship losing their appeal

The Refrain: a Dialogue with Myself (My Soul)

Psalm 42:5 (42:11; 43:5)

- ⁵ **Why, my soul, are you downcast?** Why so disturbed within me? **Put your hope in God**, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (NIV)
- **Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul?** Why are you crying the blues? **Fix my eyes on God—soon I'll be praising again.** He puts a smile on my face. He's my God. (The Message)

Beyond Discouragement

Psalm 43 (A Prayer)

- Defeating the **Sources of Discouragement** (Ps 43:1-2)
- Recovering the **Resources for a Revived Spirit** (Ps 43:3-4)
- The **Refrain** (Ps 43:5); an old song with new confidence. (Ps 43:5)

Defeating the Sources of Discouragement

Ps 43:1-2

- Vindicate me, my God, and plead my cause against an unfaithful nation. Rescue me from those who are deceitful and wicked. ² You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy? (NIV)

Sources of Discouragement

Internal Struggle

- **A Sense of Guilt/Personal Failure:** I must be doing something wrong (because my enemies seem to be winning the argument ‘Where is this God of yours?’).
- **Needed: a Champion**
 - ‘**Vindicate me, my God, and plead my cause...**’ (NIV)
 - ‘**Declare me innocent, O God! Defend me...**’ (NLT)
 - ‘**Clear my name, God; stick up for me...**’ (The Message)

Our Champion

Romans 8:31-33

- ³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? **If God is for us, who can be against us?** ³² He who **did not spare his own Son**, but gave him up for us all--how will he not also, along with him, graciously **give us all things?**
- ³³ **Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen?** It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. **Christ Jesus who died--more than that, who was raised to life--is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.**

Sources of Discouragement

External Forces

- **A World of deceit (unfaithful people), wickedness, enemies**
 - “...plead my cause against **an unfaithful nation**. Rescue me from those who are **deceitful and wicked**. You are God, **my Stronghold**. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?” (Psa 43:1-2 NIV)
- **Needed: a ‘stronghold’ (NLT ‘safe haven’, a ‘refuge’ (Hebrew *ma’oz*))**
 - “**LORD, my strength and my fortress (*ma’oz*), my refuge in time of distress,** (Jer 16:19 NIV)

Our 'Safe Haven' (Stronghold)

Romans 8:37-38

- ³⁵ **Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?** Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered."¹ ³⁷ **No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.**
- ³⁸ **For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,¹ neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.**

Recovering Resources for a Revived Spirit

Ps 43:3-4

- **Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.** ⁴
Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. (NIV)
- **Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me. Let them lead me to your holy mountain, to the place where you live. There I will go to the altar of God, to God -- the source of all my joy. I will praise you with my harp, O God, my God! (NLT)**

Our Resources

Psalm 43:3-4

- God's **light**: illumination in the darkness of discouragement
- God's **faithfulness** (NLT: '**truth**'). Hebrew *'emeth*,
 - Often grouped with 'cheseed' (covenant faithfulness)
- The **LORD is my light and my salvation--** whom shall I fear? The LORD is **the stronghold (*ma'oz*) of my life--** of whom shall I be afraid? (Psa 27:1 NIV)

Reaching the Goal: God's Holy Mountain

Ps 43:3-4

- Send me your light and your faithful care, **let them lead me**; let them **bring me to your holy mountain**, to the place **where you dwell**.⁴ **Then** I will go to the **altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight**. I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. (NIV)
- Send out your light and your truth; **let them guide me**. Let them **lead me to your holy mountain**, to the place **where you live**. There I will go to the **altar of God, to God -- the source of all my joy**. I will praise you with my harp, O God, my God! (NLT)

Reaching the **Goal**

- **God's Holy Mountain: Zion, 'The place where you dwell'**
 - A place to meet God
 - A place of Worship
- **The Altar of God**
 - A place of prayer.
 - A place of reconciliation
 - A place for praise, thanksgiving, sharing a fellowship meal, a commitment to service.

The Final Stage: Joy and Delight

Psa 43:4

- ⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God, to **God, my joy and my delight**. I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. (Psa 43:4 NIV)

The Joy of the LORD

- The LORD is my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in him, and he helps me. **My heart leaps for joy**, and with my song I praise him. Ps 28:7
- You make known to me the path of life; **you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.** (Psa 16:11 NIV)
- But let all who take refuge in **you be glad**; let them ever **sing for joy**. Spread your protection over them, **that those who love your name may rejoice in you.** (Psa 5:11 NIV)

The Refrain: a Dialogue with Myself (My Soul)

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My Closing Instructions for My Soul

The Refrain (vv 5, 11)

- **Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul? Why are you crying the blues?**
- **Fix my eyes on God—soon I'll be praising again. He puts a smile on my face. He's my God. (The Message)**
- **² fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. (Heb 12:2 NIV)**

Prayer for the Discouraged

- Create in me a pure heart, O God, and **renew a steadfast spirit within me.** ¹¹ Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me. ¹² **Restore to me the joy of your salvation** and grant me a **willing spirit, to sustain me.** ¹³ Then I will teach transgressors your ways, so that sinners will turn back to you. (Psa 51:1 NIV)