

Psalm 42-43
Battling for Hope in God

Main Point: We must battle for hope in God when our circumstances overwhelm us and God feels distant.

I. Hope in God When Circumstances Make Him Feel Distant (42:1-5)

- a. Problem (v. 1-2)
 - i. Thirsting for God as a deer
 - ii. Longing to come to the temple in God's presence in despair (v. 2)
- b. Emotional Experience (v. 3)
 - i. Tears as food
- c. Remembering past joys of worship (v. 4)
- d. Calls himself to hope in God (v. 5)

II. Hope in God as We Wrestle with Him in Prayer (42:6-11)

- a. Remembering God with cast down soul (v. 6)
- b. Overwhelmed by circumstances like a flood (v. 7)
- c. Remembering God's character (v. 8)
- d. Praying to the Rock honestly (v. 9-10)
- e. Calls Himself to hope in God (v. 11)

III. Hope in God as We Call on Him to Fulfill His Promises (43:1-5)

- a. To Vindicate from enemies (43:1)
- b. Because God is his refuge, but still wrestling (43:2)
- c. To send out light and truth—Praying God's promises in light of God's character (43:3)
 - i. Let them lead
 - ii. Let them bring to holy hill (connection back to 42:2)
- d. Then I will go to the altar of God (43:4—Answering 42:2)
 - i. To God my exceeding joy
 - ii. Looking to renewed worship in hope!
- e. Calls Himself to Hope in God (43:5)

Conclusion: In Christ, God has sent out His light and truth, and brought us into the eternal chorus of heavenly worship through His life, death, and resurrection. We still struggle with our circumstances, with voices around us, and our own thoughts in this cursed world, but we must call ourselves to set our hope on God as circumstances make Him feel distant, as we wrestle with God in prayer, and as we call on Him to fulfill His promises. And in and through the sorrow, we will find hope rise and despair dissipate, as we walk through life with God, "our exceeding joy."

Reflection Questions after the Sermon

1) Have you ever found yourself longing for God because your circumstances make Him feel distant?

2) During this time, do you find yourself longing to worship with God's people again?

3) Consider the following quote from Martin Lloyd-Jones:

"The main trouble in this whole matter of spiritual depression in a sense is this, that we allow our self to talk to us instead of talking to our self. Am I just trying to be deliberately paradoxical? Far from it. This is the very essence of wisdom in this matter...Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them, but they start talking to you, they bring back the problem of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you. Now this man's treatment [in [Psalm 42](#)] was this; instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself, 'Why art thou cast down, O my soul?' he asks. His soul had been repressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says: 'Self, listen for a moment, I will speak to you'. Do you know what I mean? If you do not, you have but little experience.

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 art thou cast down'—what business have you to be disquieted? You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself: 'Hope thou in God' (*Spiritual Depression*, 20-21).

Do you ever find yourself listening to yourself rather than talking to yourself? How should you respond in light of Psalm 42-43?

4) Do you ever wrestle with God in prayer, pouring out your complaints and circumstances to Him? How does this Psalm show us the value of honestly wrestling with God while we still bank on His character?

5) How has the despair of Ps. 42:2 changed by the end of the prayer in Ps 43:3-4? What is banking on and hoping for in 43:3-4? How does he now talk about God even in the midst of sorrow?

Songs for Encouragement on Ps 42:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_nBYQ8SfAI

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KYGhnbXtqbU&fbclid=IwAR0epIqelw2Sdj5mMaTcCsVjIIP0AWO7sR6Jb7t0Rdtj2mlvCrSDCsaKZCc>