

Not only does faith coexist with doubts and struggles, and not only does faith challenge doubts and struggles, but faith conquers doubts and struggles. What I mean is looking in true faith to Christ Jesus once and again, you will not be put to shame! Notice how both psalms end in triumphant faith. Faith in God gets the last word, because God in Christ is so faithful, and all that He promises in His Word, He also freely grants and gives, grace for grace. As Paul says in Romans 8 even in the face of the greatest struggles and doubts and fears, yet, *“in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded, [says Paul along with David we can say] that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”*

In this same triumphant confidence, only still in the Old Testament sense, David ends both Psalm 42&43. The last word is a jubilant expression of faith, no matter the struggles. *“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”* You see, God leads His people clinging to Him in the way of victory and triumph, day by day, from strength to strength, always looking to Him and drawing from Him.

Will you live and die with faith in Christ as your first and last word of hope and comfort? What a prospect is coming when faith will be sight and there will be no more doubts and struggles ever again! Who knows how soon that day will come, for all God’s true people, even as many as repent and believe. The key is now to live in faith in Christ, even when in the darkest of times. Only then you shall not be put to shame. Even so, may God Triune prosper His Word, also this message about faith and doubts, that everyone listening have this testimony, ‘In doubt and temptation, I rest Lord in Thee’. Amen.

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Thou hast given a banner to them that fear thee that it may be displayed because of the truth. (Psalm 60:4)



FAITH AND DOUBTS

If you have true faith in Jesus Christ as the only Saviour of sinners and sovereign Lord of life, can you still sometimes have doubts too? When you have true faith does that mean you never will have doubts anymore? A veteran Christian asked me this question. What do you think is the answer, Biblically speaking? Please listen further as I expand on this now from the Scriptures, speaking on this subject of faith and doubts.

The main text for this message is from Psalm 42: 11 and then also Psalm 43:5 which is exactly the same. *“Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise Him, Who is the health of my countenance, and my God.”* This text is found also in Psalm 42:5 with only one slight change. So it is found three times, you could say, in the 16 verses of Psalms 42 & 43. From these two psalms, and especially this verse, notice with me the following three truths about faith and doubt.

For one, let us learn from these verses about faith and doubts that faith coexists with doubts and struggles. They coexist, meaning when you have true faith it doesn’t mean you never have doubts and struggles. Clearly the godly psalmist of Psalm 42 & 43, and most believe that David is the author here, knew of dark times; times of despair and doubting for real. Do not think that having times of doubts and darkness, and even depression, means you can’t be a true believer. A true believer is not one who never doubts anymore, but one who time and again in his doubts goes back to the Lord and brings all his questions and fears and struggles to Him. The psalmist was going through a time of difficult circumstances. He was distant from his country and not able to be in the place of worship. He was missing his sense of God’s nearness and presence with him. He was being oppressed by enemies who even were also mocking his trust in the Lord. They were continually saying to him, *“Where is thy God?”* [vs. 3&10] The psalmist was missing former times when he felt so close to the Lord and so blessed by Him. He also is surrounded by so many not fearing God and living in sin and rebellion against Him. David is just overwhelmed with all his struggles, and in these two psalms, he cries out to God for help in his struggles and with his doubts and darkness. David is speaking in these psalms as a child of God, a true believer, yet hear his crying and sighings.

My first point with this all is, in connection with faith and doubts, you need to know where there is true faith, it doesn't mean there won't be times of real doubts and even deep struggles and dark temptations. They often, indeed, coexist. Doubts and darkness in the faith can be related to our circumstances, our personalities, our surroundings, our activities, and habits of life, and it is surely related also to satanic attacks, and sometimes also to testings from the Lord. The matter to realize here is that you prove your faith in Christ not by never having doubts and struggles, and even not by never having real tough times against sin, and even failures in sin, but you prove your faith by again and again going back to the Lord in your struggles and with your doubts and sins and shortcomings. Is that what you do too?

Clearly it was what David does in both Psalm 42&43. He longs for God, He cries to God, He pours out his heart to God and even as he struggles so in darkness, notice he speaks of God as *"the living God"* [vs.2]; *"my God"*[vs.6]; *"the God of my life"* [vs.8]; *"my Rock"* [vs.9]; the *"God of my strength"* [43:2]; *"my exceeding joy"* [43:4]. Indeed, what godly faith David shows in the midst of so much doubt and darkness in his life.

The realities of life are such here on earth with the flesh, and the world, and the devil always fighting us, that times of doubt and darkness will hit us, but for the believer it doesn't uproot you but roots you more and more in the Lord; it doesn't dissuade you from following after Christ and His Word, but persuades you more and more to look to Him and depend on Him and follow after Him. God's people learn, and come to learn more and more, God's Word and way gives the fullest and richest solution in all our needs and with all our questions and concerning all our doubts and struggles! The most answers and the very best answers to all life's questions and struggles, you find in and with the Christian gospel. Questions about the origin of life, the meaning of life, the end of life, and what happens after this life are most reasonably and most satisfactorily answered in the Word of God with the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Yet knowing all these things, there can be doubts and struggles in the faith. My encouragement to you is not to let the struggles and doubts lead you to despair of God and keep you from the Saviour, but rather, to draw you closer to Him as we see also takes place in Psalm 42 & 43. Can we not say too that God Himself is very aware how much we can struggle still here on earth, and that He has given His Word, especially also the preaching of the Word along with the two sacraments, Holy Baptism and Lord's Supper, for this very reason, to help God's people in truly and always and again trusting Him! How important, therefore, also to be committed and faithful members of a Bible-believing Christian church where God's Word is faithfully proclaimed, and the two sacraments administered in a Biblical manner. It is not true that you can be a healthy growing true Christian and not be a faithful committed member of a Christian church.

So the first point about faith and doubts is that faith, true faith coexists with doubts and struggles. Next, consider true faith challenges doubts and struggles. Is this not what David does, indeed three times over? *"Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise Him, Who is the health of my countenance, and my God."* You see here David talks to himself, and confronts himself in the face of God and all His Word and gospel way. He challenges his doubts and darkness with gospel truth and with prayer to God to shed His light and truth upon his way [43:3]. Hear David talking to himself, *"Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? O send out Thy light and Thy truth: let them lead me!"* His questions, *"Why"*, which I count ten times in these two psalms, are questions he asks himself before the LORD God, and David knows in each case God has good remedy to his questions and struggles.

So he says to himself, *"Hope thou in God!"* You could also translate, 'wait on God, expect all from Him, trust in Him'! And notice David so exhorts himself, knowing and believing that God will answer him and come to his help and that He will prove to be his Saviour God, no matter the struggles and doubts and hardships he may encounter. When David says God is the health of his countenance, the word for "health" in the Hebrew is 'yeshuat' which is the word for "salvation" literally, and also deliverance and victory. It is a word directly related to the name Joshua and to Jesus Himself, reflecting He is the one and only Saviour God for sinners like us. With God the Lord what salvation is found, what fullness of salvation and deliverance and true hope and expectation even for the worst of sinners who trusts Christ and entrusts himself to God through Christ Jesus.

Dear friend, is your hope and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ? Are you a true Christian, living in true faith? That doesn't mean you are saying so much good about yourself, but it means you look to Christ alone for all your good and hope in this life and for the next life too. The Bible says to live and die apart from Christ is to perish in your sins. Are you maybe one who still has not taken seriously any questions at all about life and death and eternity? Are you maybe living and acting as a fool, unmindful of God and sin, death and judgment, and the fact of conscious everlasting existence in body and soul beyond this life here on earth? Will you not seek the Lord while He may be found, and call upon Him while it is yet the day of grace? Jesus Christ is God's gracious and glorious answer to all the sin and misery in this world, but if you reject Him, what then? The Bible teaches us in all earnestness and truthfulness, if you will live and die rejecting and despising Jesus Christ the only Saviour, you will be cast off forever in hell and then, no matter how much and hard and long you cry for relief and deliverance, it will never ever come to you. Now is the day of salvation, today is the time to repent and believe. Are you taking this gospel call seriously? What reasons to hear and believe the gospel for notice yet this third truth about faith and doubts.