



Psalm 43

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¹Vindicate me, O God,
And plead my cause against an ungodly nation;
Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!

²For You are the God of my strength;
Why do You cast me off?
Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

³Oh, send out Your light and Your truth!
Let them lead me;
Let them bring me to Your holy hill
And to Your tabernacle.

⁴Then I will go to the altar of God,
To God my exceeding joy;
And on the harp I will praise You,
O God, my God.

⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my God.

Main idea: Because of all the blessed ways in which our God relates to us, we are able to come to Him in the midst of great trouble and grief and find safety and joy that shall last forever.

Introduction: When God withdraws the sense of His presence from us, it ought to be to us a signal to remember all that He has made Himself unto us, all that we need Him to be... and to seek from Him to be Himself to us.

1. God Is My Judge

- a. It is necessary to remember that you are before the face of God, and to be right with Him. The greater reason is that it will not matter that everyone else vindicates you if God does not (v1a).
- b. But another reason is that you may be opposed and denounced either by an entire ungodly nation (v1b) or by someone whose deceit and wickedness makes his opposition just as trying as that of an entire nation (v1c)

2. God Is My Strength

- a. The loss of the sense of God's presence is not just itself a trial, but removes our great resource for navigating and enduring any trial (v2b)
- b. The presence of the enemy's oppression would not cause mourning, except for the absence of the God of my strength (v2c)

3. God Is My Guide

- a. The primary request of this entire Psalm is that God would send His light and His truth (v3a)
- b. The wording of vv3b–d works just as well metaphorically as physically. The idea may be that the light of God's countenance and the felt-reality of God's faithfulness are themselves as the "tabernacle" of v3d and the "altar" of v4a. The Psalmist does not indicate why he is unable to go to the tabernacle just now. But the mourning of v2c would be answered by the sending of v3a.
 - i. It is God Himself Whom we must seek in His worship. And if we have Him, we have the greatness of that worship already.
 - ii. But notice that those who truly know God identify Him with His ordinances. They rejoice over the particular ways in which He has given to us to draw near. Such will not willingly absent themselves from the church of the Lord Jesus or its gatherings.
- c. The Psalmist knows that these things are true already, but he needs God Himself to communicate the brightness and reliability of this reality to his soul.

4. God Is My Joy

- a. To know the favor of God is to know that God has atoned for us and received us to Himself. If the Psalm is describing a literal return, that's where the Psalmist goes first in v4a. But even if this is a spiritual experience of the Lord, the Psalmist's heart still makes a bee-line for the altar. We will never outgrow the centrality of God's redemption of us by the cross of Christ or the reconciliation that we have with Him in the cross of Christ.
- b. When we come through Christ, we find that God is our exceeding joy. And there is no grief that can take away this joy!

5. God Is My Purpose and therefore My Hope (We were made for His praise and redeemed for His praise)

- a. When we find Him to be our exceeding joy, we respond with praise (v4c) both of His perfection ("O God," v4d) and His personal/covenantal relation ("my God," v4d)
- b. The conclusion (v5) is the same as that in 42:11, but it reads much more triumphantly following v4 than it did in the previous Psalm. There is a "wrestling" that has taken place, coming to God three times, and though the circumstances have not necessarily changed, the Psalmist has obtained through prayer the sense of the Lord's presence and found "exceeding joy" in the midst of extremely grievous circumstances.

Conclusion: This is a dreadful world for those who live primarily before the faces of men. They will judge us wickedly. We will have no strength in the face of their oppression. We will despair of any clarity or direction. We will be unable to maintain any joy in the face of our troubles. And our purpose will be something that we are sure will ultimately fail. But let us live before the face of God, and we will find that He has vindicated us in Christ; He is our strength in which we can rejoice in the midst of our weakness; His Spirit makes His Word a gladdening light and reliable guide to us; He Himself is our exceeding joy; and, praising Him is a purpose that can never fail but must at last be perfectly and eternally fulfilled!

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Psalm 43. These are the words of God. Vindicate me O God and plead my cause against an ungodly nation. Oh deliver me from the deceitful and unjust, man, for you are the God of my strength. Why do you cast me off? Why do I go morning? Because of the oppression of the enemy.

Oh, send out your light and your truth. Let them lead me. Let them bring me to your holy Hill and to your tabernacle. Then I will go to the altar of God to God, my exceeding joy. And on the harp. I will praise you, O God. My God. Why are you cast down?

Oh my soul. And why are you just quieted within me? Hope in God for I shall yet, praise him the help of my countenance, and my God, So far, the reading of God's inspired and inerrant work.

When God withdraws his sense of presence from us, what it ought to do, the responses ought to provoke. And a believer is not to be okay with that and to seek comfort and maybe distraction in worldly amusements and so forth. But the are being troubled by his withdrawing. From us, the sense of his presence, the sense of his favor delight in him and fellowship with him, should be to seek from him, that he would be unto us.

All that his word says that he is, There's a danger in having accurate theology about who God is, It's not in the accuracy of the theology, but the danger is that our flesh will tell us that it's enough to get those things. Correct. And to not have God Himself Those who sometimes have fair amount of what we would call good doctrine.

But we should say accurate doctrine, because good doctrine isn't just accurate, It's enacted. It's lived by sometimes we will allow ourselves to think little or lightly of those. Whose Christianity is much more on the feeling side and the experience side as if feelings, and experience aren't a necessary component of knowing God.

Now they're not something to be rested in, But neither is the accuracy of your doctrine, something to be rested in If your doctrine is accurate, it tells you that God himself is to be rested in, and it tells you that you need him to be in your life and to you all those things that, you know, from that accurate doctrine, that he is.

And that's what David is doing here. It doesn't identify him as day. The psalmist is David. The psalmist does have to come from near the end of David's reign or near the beginning of Solomon's reign. Why do we know that? Because in the Psalm we have the holy Hill.

And so David's already taken Jerusalem by the time this song comes, but it refers to seeking the altar at the tabernacle. So, it has to be before the temple is built, And so those and we discussed altarship a little bit last week with Psalm 42 and this seems to be the same psalmist in fact to concludes with the exact same verse.

Verse 11 in Psalm 42 as identical to verse 5 in Psalm 43. But it's almost certainly David. Either way, what the psalmist is doing is taking all of these things that God has said that he would be to us and asking God to be those things to him in his experience.

It's not like he doesn't believe that God will vindicate all who are his owner that God is His strength or that God guides him by his truth or that God is His joy or that praising. God is His purpose and those things are sure. He knows all those things, that's why he's bleeding.

Those things in prayer, what he's asking for is to experience those things. And so he's asking and we should ask God when when we have lost that sense of his fellowship that relational knowing of him, not just knowing about him, but knowing Him to be those things to us, We should be asking him things.

Like, vindicate me be my judge and asking him to be our strength and to send out his light and his truth to be our guide. And so that we would experience and know him as not just our joy but our rejoicing joy or the doubling of the word used translated in verse 4 to God, my exceeding joy to know His praise as our purpose.

We can hope in him because we will, yet praise Him. That's why we were created. That's why we were redeemed. That's how we are going to spend eternity. So, in the first place, God is my judge, vindicate, me, O God and plead my cause against an ungodly nation. Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust, man, It is necessary for you to remember that.

You are always before the face of God, It is necessary for you, to be right with Him. The greater reason is that. It doesn't matter if everyone else vindicates you, If God doesn't vindicate, you what vindicate means to declare you righteous. You know, the whole nation might be saying long live Absalom and that unjust and deceitful mana hathofel and you may guess what, I think might be the background for for the writing of this.

Psalm from that, that unjust and deceitful, man athapel might be for you, but if God is against you, then you are undone. There are many men who are praised by by the wicked in this life, And they will not find any comfort from the fact that they were beloved by a nation or beloved by those who are in power when they have to stand before the face of the Lord, Jesus Christ For us.

The most important thing is that we would be right with God. And that means you have to be a believer in Jesus. You can't do well enough. You can't be sorry enough. There's nothing that you could ever do to make up for your sinfulness before God for your guilt before.

God In fact we're so sinful that everything that we did would just increase the guilt but Christ has in himself all of the righteousness of God Himself. And his atonement, his washing away sin, taking away the guilt of sin at the cross is greater than all of the sins of all of the people for whom he died.

And so the one who believes in, Jesus can know that he is right with God and say, vindicate me. Oh God. And if you live before the face of God, if you're mindful of the fact that you are always in front of God and that what matters is what He says about you.

Then even if a whole nation is opposed to you and denounces you And even if someone some particular person and this is often our experience, There's someone in our life and they're being against us that individual is being against us is as bad as the whole world being against us.

So plead my cause against an ungodly nation. Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust, man. Remember that God is your judge. Not anybody else. There are things that you want to do and ways that you want to live in order to commend the gospel. Well, in order to commend your Savior will, but you are not to live for the opinions of men.

The godly throughout Scripture all had their opponents, their enemies, their denouncers and Christ himself had his murderers. So live before the face of God, God is my judge first. And God is my strength says, for. You are the god of my strength. Why do you cast me off? Why do I go morning?

Because of the oppression of the enemy. There seems to be an implication and the end of verse 2 there that if the enemy had oppressed him ever so greatly and yet the Lord had maintained unto unto, the psalmist, that sense of God being his and him belonging to God and the nearness of God, then, even all of that oppression could not have taken away his joy, but it's the fact that it seems that God has cast him off that has taken away his joy.

There's a big difference between David as he runs from Absalom. And Yeah, she may hurls insults and and David is saying, you know, God has sent him to do that, leave him alone. If go, you know, if God shows me his favor, then I'll come back, there's a big difference.

David on the run there and David on the run, hiding in the cave, trusting in the Lord, knowing that his day will come that he that things are right between him and God. And so, the, the oppression of the enemy is not so much. The, the great problem that David has the great problem that David has as he feels the displeasure of God, and that has taken away.

All of his strength, The loss of the sense of God's presence or God's favor is a trial. But it also is the removal from us of the great resource that we have for navigating and enduring any other trial. We can get through anything. If we know that God is for us, we may be led to the slaughter and we'll say for his sake.

I'm led to the slaughter, even in this, I am more than a conqueror. Even this doesn't separate me from the love of God. And so, we need to be accustomed to seeking God as our strength And God is our strength and old things. Never thinking, that there are the things that we can take care of on our own.

And then the other things that are too big. And for those, we need God, We need to know our weakness, We need to learn the same lesson that the apostle Paul needed to learn in second Corinthians chapter 12 that it is good to be put through situations, good for us to be, put through situations, where we discover, just how weak we are.

So that we can rejoice that His grace is sufficient for us because his strength is made perfect in our weakness with the psalmist comes. And he cries out. Vindicate me. Oh God, he needs to remember that. God is his judge and embrace that fact, he cries out that God is the God of his strength and that it's because he's not currently knowing and experiencing God as his strength.

That the oppression of the enemy has led to or is causing such intense grief for him and the third place he embraces God as his guide. Oh send out your light and your truth. Let them lead me. Let them bring me to your Holy Hill and to your tabernacle.

Now, there's a couple possibilities here, and the way that the original reads, either one can be the case. One possibility is that he's asking for wisdom to know the right way of, actually, physically being able to return to where the tabernacle is in order to worship. God, The the other possibility and and all other things being equal that I think this actually may be, what he's saying is that the light of God's favor and the truth or the word can also easily be translated faithfulness that the light of God's favor and the reliability of God's faithfulness and God's truth.

That, if God would just make him to know and experience those things, He knows that God is light. He knows that God is faithful that God's Word is true, but he asks the Lord to send those out to him. And that if he would know in his experience, the the light of God's face the favor of God towards him and the faithfulness, and truth of God, that the Spirit would communicate to him the reality of God's favor, and God's faithfulness, that that would be for him.

Like, being back in Jerusalem, like, being back at the tabernacle. That the reason why he wants to be able to return to the public worship is because God himself makes himself known in the public worship But if God

would make him to know the presence of God where he is, then that would be to him as if being at the Holy Hill as if being at the tabernacle.

Now, This helps us in two different ways. First it reminds us that it must be God. Himself. Whom we seek in His worship, It's been probably several generations before prayer meeting attendance, at any faithful church was an encouragement, But there had been seasons in, which God was bringing the reviving, powerful work of His Spirit and you'd have things, like people spreading their coats on the lawn in front of the meeting house and crying out to God on their knees with their families.

You could imagine the the effect that that would have even if the Holy Spirit wasn't generally working and specifically working on the minister But what an encouragement and what a solemn charge and responsibility how he would start preparing and thinking, not just like the sermon, but his own soul as he was supposed to lead these to walk past.

These people to enter to enter the meeting house, as they cried out, Not just for the preaching to be accurate in the worship, to be, according to God's Word, but for God himself to come meet His people through the means that he's appointed for that. This is what we should desire.

As we prepare, you know, we prepare in the passages and we prepare for the songs and we think about the supper, and we want to make sure that that we examine ourselves, as we're getting ready for them and we do all these things, but in all of that preparation are great, desire needs to be that, God himself, would make himself known to us and come meet with his people By the same token.

There are those who say, well, I don't need the gathering. I don't need the formal church. I don't know what they call. They usually don't use theological words so they're not using visible church, you know, but I don't need the organization or the structure or whatever I can have God anywhere.

And that's the essence of worship. Well, the Psalmist isn't thinking like that The reason the psalmist talks about the Holy Hill and the tabernacle and the altar is because these are the particular places and ways that God had ordained to make himself known to his people. And if he had access to those things, he would be there because that is where God makes Himself known to his people.

So on the one hand, he's saying, let your lightened your truth lead me. Give me the the heavenliness of heaven or give me that which makes worship glorious, which is yourself. And yet there can be no doubt that if he had access to these places and these occasions, he would be attending.

Those who truly know God identify him with his ordinances, They know that he is the one who's appointed them. And so they love what he is appointed because they trust and they seek from God, that He is going to use what He is appointed. And so, we will rejoice over the particular ways in which He has given us to draw near will not forsake, the assembling of ourselves together.

You know, the Hebrews 10 guy does not say well, you know, I've had my conscience cleansed and Jesus has opened the way through the curtain in the true. Holy of Holies and glory. I don't need to assemble with the church. I have that. No, he says do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together because that's what that Jesus uses to stir us up to love and good works.

And so God is, my guide has light His truth and he sending those forth sending those out. The Spirit, making us to know Him in the means that he has given. That is something that we seek, or we ought to be prompted to seek, when it seems that we have lost that fellowship that sense of his favor.

And then God is my joy, He's already anticipating and you can actually see almost the Holy Spirit using prayer itself as a means of grace. As you see this transition from verse 3 into verse 4, that I will go to, the altar of God to God, my exceeding joy To know the favor of God is to know that God has atoned for us and received us to Himself.

The psalmist here, is whether it's physical or whether he's talking about in his heart. In his mind as he thinks about the way God makes Himself known at the tabernacle and on the Holy Hill, in either case, he makes a beeline for the altar. We never outgrow the centrality of God's redeeming us by the sacrifice of Christ.

The one who loves God in his worship loves, especially to consider how God has consecrated that worship How God has atoned for us. So that we may draw near in expectation of blessing rather than curse and says, then I will go to the altar of God to God, my exceeding joy in this.

We know His love that he gave Christ for us. He demonstrates His love for us in this while we were still sinners Christ died for us That it, that should be at the heart of every private worship every family worship, every public worship that, the sacrifice of Christ that has brought us near.

So that God instead of being our punisher and our curse, and our dread is instead our exceeding joy and you can see the the psalmist playing old of exceeding joy. Even as he asks for this evens, he thinks about this. This is encouraging to us because especially if Psalm 42 and 43 are taken together, which even if they weren't originally one psalm, even if Psalm 43, is like an extra, an extra stanza as it were of added on to Psalm 42 later, and in a greater trouble, perhaps during the Absalom and a hypothal incident with Psalm 42 and Psalm 43 together.

You, you get this, this example, this instruction to keep wrestling with God, keep seeking seeking Him in prayer and that in the praying itself, he gives you increasing confidence increasing increasing joy and as he anticipates that joy he starts to do what he has told himself twice invert in Psalm 42.

He will do Remember Psalm 42 verse 5 hope in God for I shall yet praise him and then Psalm 42 verse 11 with which he's going to end again in 43 verse 5 Hope and God for I shall yet praise him. But now in Psalm 43 verse 4, when he when he anticipates the experience of God and dwelling upon how God brings him near by sacrifice to the He may have blessing instead of curse.

And God is his ex enjoy or the gladness of his joy or the rejoicing of his joy. He says and on the harp I will praise you O God praising God for who he is in himself, my God praising God for whom he has made himself to be to the psalmist.

There's that covenant relation. That there's that personal relation. It's one thing to see of you like the Grand Canyon and to just have your breath taken away. It's a wow. Look how great the Grand Canyon is. Could you imagine if you were like and you'd have to be like then ultra trillionaire to own the Grand Canyon to know that that is yours.

And when we behold God having been brought near by the sacrifice of Christ, we don't just behold the greatness and the beauty of His glory. We behold the one who is ours and who has made himself made us to be his That that's the essence of covenant that God claims particular people, or in Israel.

A particular nation or in the church. He claims the church are particular household and he says this one is set apart to me and most of all in the Covenant of redemption. That eternal covenant that we participate in. In the covenant of grace in Jesus praising him. Not just saying, oh God, not just how glorious you are and how great you are.

But also my God, at the end of verse 4, how glorious and marvelous that you have made yourself mine and then he takes all of that and he's already started to experience some of the reality of it. Verse 5, same words, but it reads, much more triumphantly flowing out of verse 4 in Psalm 43.

Why are you cast down? Oh, my soul. Why are you disquieted? Within me? Hope in God for I saw yet, praise him the help or the salvation. It's the word Yeshua of you know they say if you sing the Psalms you never sing Jesus's name, not sure that's entirely true.

The salvation of my countenance of my face, this up, the help of my countenance. And my God, The fact that we live before God as a dreadful, as a dreadful thing, for those who don't know that And if we try to live in this sinful and fallen world apart from, knowing God as our judge, and our strength, and our guide, and our joy and our purpose, we all find this world miserable.

If we live primarily before the faces of men will find that they judge us. Wickedly that their hateful and we will have no strength in the face of their oppression. We will despair of what to do or what to say. We'll be unable to maintain a joy. That is great enough to overcome the troubles of our circumstances and our purpose.

If we are not mindful of God, if we don't know him and his praises, our purpose, then whatever else our purpose is will fail. Before the things that we encounter in this world. The trials that we go through the opposition and the hatred, your idols cannot be for you.

What? God must be for you in the Psalm 43 situation. He presses us by our circumstances, to have him alone as our God and to know Him alone as our God. And if we do live before the face of God we'll find He has vindicated and cross us in Christ as our judge.

He is our strength in which we can rejoice even in the midst of our weakness that his spirit makes unto us his word. It makes His Word for us, a gladdening light and a reliable guide that he himself, is our exceeding joy that no circumstance can diminish, and that praising him as a purpose that can never fail.

We are created to phrase Him. We were redeemed, to praise him and we will forever. And so when we tell ourselves, hope in God, it's not just hoping against hope or wishful thinking that's laying hold of something that's guaranteed. So may the Lord make us not just to know about what we need him to be to us in the midst of our troubles.

May he make us to know Him as all of these things in the face of our troubles.