

## Hope in the Lord

### **Psalm 42:1-11**

<sup>1</sup> *As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.*

<sup>2</sup> *My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.*

*When can I go and meet with God?*

<sup>3</sup> *My tears have been my food day and night,  
while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"*

<sup>4</sup> *These things I remember as I pour out my soul:*

*how I used to go to the house of God  
under the protection of the Mighty One  
with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.*

<sup>5</sup> *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.*

<sup>6</sup> *My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you  
from the land of the Jordan,  
the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.*

<sup>7</sup> *Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls;  
all your waves and breakers have swept over me.*

<sup>8</sup> *By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me—  
a prayer to the God of my life.*

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

<sup>10</sup> *My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me,  
saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"*

<sup>11</sup> *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.*

### **Psalm 43:1-5**

<sup>1</sup> *Vindicate me, my God,*

*and plead my cause*

*against an unfaithful nation.*

*Rescue me from those who are  
deceitful and wicked.*

<sup>2</sup> *You are God my stronghold.*

*Why have you rejected me?*

*Why must I go about mourning,*

*oppressed by the enemy?*

<sup>3</sup> *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.*

<sup>4</sup> *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.*

<sup>5</sup> *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.*

## A Thirst For God

1. Psalm 42 and 43 is connected by the continuity of language and theme. They both share a common refrain that occurs twice in psalm 42 and once in 43:

**Psalm 42:5, 11; 43:5**

*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him,  
my Saviour and my God.*

2. Thirst for the living God

**Psalms 42:1-2**

<sup>1</sup> *As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, my God.  
<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.  
When can I go and meet with God?*

The Psalmist is facing a crisis and he is not able to experience the presence of God in a way he usually does. This situation has left him spiritually parched. His life was sustained by the life that comes from God. Now he is in a dry place without life and hope.

3. The Psalmist recalls the times he was filled with the presence and goodness of God

**Psalms 42:4**

<sup>4</sup> *These things I remember as I pour out my soul:  
how I used to go to the house of God  
under the protection of the Mighty One  
with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.*

**Psalms 42:6-7**

*therefore I will remember you  
from the land of the Jordan,  
the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.  
<sup>7</sup> Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls;  
all your waves and breakers have swept over me.*

He remembers the times of public worship with the people of God under the grace and favour of the Lord. He remembers these events in spite of his felt experience. However, remembering the past does not make things better. As much as remembering informs the psalmist of who God is, it also gives context to his present hardship. He is struggling with God as why it is not the same now as it was before.

**Psalms 42:3**

<sup>3</sup> *My tears have been my food day and night,  
while people say to me all day long,  
“Where is your God?”*

**Psalms 42:8**

<sup>8</sup> *By day the Lord directs his love,  
at night his song is with me—  
a prayer to the God of my life.*

The contrast between the past and the present raises more questions as to God's response. The enemy's victory and taunts drive him into deeper despair.

**Psalms 42:3**

<sup>3</sup> *My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long,  
“Where is your God?”*

**Psalms 42:9-10**

<sup>9</sup> *I say to God my Rock, “Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?”*  
<sup>10</sup> *My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me,  
saying to me all day long, “Where is your God?”*

4. The Psalmist raises his questions to God, believing that only the Lord can deliver him.
  - The psalmist is led by the Spirit to speak from his heart.
  - In the presence of God, nothing is hidden; the psalmist raises his questions openly before God.
  - The psalm now gives us words to express our doubts, fears and despair before God. We are invited to share with God our struggles. Even Jesus quoted the Psalms in his moment of despair on the cross: “My God, My God why have you forsaken me?” (Psalm 22:1)

*“Much of the Bible speaks to us but the Psalms speaks for us.” -Athanasius-*

- The psalmist raises questions to God:

**Psalms 42:9**

*“Why have you forgotten me?  
Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?”*

**Psalms 43:2**

*Why have you rejected me?  
Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?*

- The questions reveal to us the depth of the struggle. He feels rejected and forsaken by the Lord. He is struggling with God as to why this should happen to him.
5. Though struggling as to what is happening, the psalmist calls on the Lord to intervene.
    - As much as remembering the past has highlighted his present predicament, remembering also leads him to bring his petition before the Lord.
    - The psalmist also speaks to himself. He will not let his crisis engulf him in despair. He is speaking above the noise of his present felt experience, calling out to himself to put his hope on the Lord and to give him praise.

**Psalms 42:5, 11; 43:5**

*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him,  
my Saviour and my God.*

- As the psalmist alternates between his despair, remembering, and speaking to himself, he moves from the dark place of thirst and rejection to a place of hope and confidence. The psalmist finds strength to believe that the Lord is the One who will hear his prayer and rescue him. He prays to the Lord to vindicate and deliver him.

**Psalms 43:1-2**

*<sup>1</sup> Vindicate me, my God,  
and plead my cause  
against an unfaithful nation.  
Rescue me from those who are  
deceitful and wicked.  
<sup>2</sup> You are God my stronghold.  
Why have you rejected me?  
Why must I go about mourning,  
oppressed by the enemy?*

- The psalmist believes that even in the crisis, the Lord will guide and lead him as He has always done. He looks to the Lord to guide him and bring him back to the place of worship, the place of joy, of delight.

**Psalms 42:8**

*<sup>8</sup> By day the Lord directs his love,  
at night his song is with me—  
a prayer to the God of my life.*

**Psalms 43:3-4**

*<sup>3</sup> 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.  
<sup>4</sup> 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.*

We all have experienced times like this, where we are in a midst of a crisis and God seems distant. You long for some comfort and assurance from God but He remains silent. The only voice you hear is the taunt of your enemies. Perhaps prolonged challenges have left you depressed, and you are not able to climb out of it. Like the psalmist, we must refuse to accept the conclusion that the Lord has forgotten or abandoned us. We must bring our complain before the Lord while holding on to His word and work in our lives. We must speak above all other voices that tell us otherwise. Today we hold on to the work of Jesus at the cross. In Christ we have been delivered and the Lord is with us. Jesus will not leave us nor forsake us.

## Prayer

*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?  
Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him,  
my Saviour and my God.*

1. We learn to bring our fears and burdens before the Lord.
2. We learn to persist in prayer.
3. We learn to find rest in the work of Jesus Christ.

### **The Malaysian Church**

1. Pray that the Malaysian church will seek the face of God together earnestly and with perseverance, so that He will open the heavens, reveal His glory and pour His power upon our nation. Let us claim His promise that *“if my people ... humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14)*
2. Pray that church leaders, both pastoral and lay leaders, will grow in depth and maturity as true shepherds of Christ. Pray that they will have a real hunger for God’s Word, a firm commitment to God’s truth and to live by it, and the courage to teach the same to their flocks.
3. Pray that the present generation of leaders will strive to lay strong foundations for churches and Christian organizations in our country, to model godly and humble servanthood, and to raise young leaders.
4. Pray that the church will understand what true discipleship means, and be willing to take up their cross daily and suffer for Christ.
5. Pray that the church will take the lead in reaching out with concrete acts of love and compassion to the poor, including refugees and migrant workers, regardless of race or religion.
6. Pray that the smaller and economically weaker communities will not be marginalised. Pray that the rights and means of livelihood of the native people of Sabah and Sarawak, and the Orang Asli in West Malaysia will be legally recognised and safe-guarded, especially their land rights.
7. Pray for the increasing emergence of strong churches among Bumiputra communities in our land, and the rising up of bold and God-fearing leaders among them.

**Healing:** Sis Rachel