

INTRO: We are going to pull truths from both Psalm 42 and 43

Because of repeated phrases they seem to originally be written as one Psalm

## 1. This is a Psalm dealing with inner turmoil

**Ps 42:5 (ESV)** Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in *turmoil* within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation

- A. We all know about inner turmoil don't we – that churning in our stomach – that knotted back
  - 1). It can be triggered by bad news – financial difficulties – personal conflict
    - Maybe you have an expensive repair that is necessary – a difficult decision you have to make
    - It could be a deadline you don't think you're going to be able to meet
- B. I would be willing to wager some of you are feeling this right now
  - 1). You came in with your stomach churning – something is weighing on you stealing your peace
- C. This is a Psalm written to provide wisdom to be able to handle this
  - 1). A road map to work our way through it

## 2. What was causing David's turmoil

- A. It is written during the time of Absalom's uprising against his father David
  - 1). When David was forced to flee from Jerusalem to the wilderness – Mount Hermon
- B. So in these two Psalms you have repeated three times (Ps 42:5, 11; Ps 43:5)
 

**Ps 42:5 (ESV)** Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in *turmoil* within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation

  - 1). David is experiencing that inner distress -
  - 2). This phrase is repeated in Ps 42-43 – why some believe originally one Psalm

## 3. The Psalms teach us over and over that this is not an unusual situation

- A. We can have such a Pollyannaish view of Christianity at times
  - 1). Nothing is supposed to get to us – we're never sad – never bothered – never disappointed
  - 2). But the Psalms deal with a lot of sadness – despair – problem with a distant God

**Point:** The Psalms teach us that going through these times is normal

- A. They also teach us that we are not to stay down – they give us the way to fight
 

The roadmap that leads us out of the pit so turmoil is defeated
- B. So we will get knocked down – we all do – I do – you do - we need to be honest about that
  - 1). I love the honest words of Dr. John Henry Jowett – an outstanding preacher of yesteryear

**Writing to a friend:** I wish you wouldn't think I'm such a saint. You seem to imagine that I have no ups and downs, but just a level and lofty stretch of spiritual attainment with unbroken joy and equanimity. By no means! I am often perfectly wretched and everything appears most murky. I often feel as though my religious life had only just begun, and that I am in the kindergarten stage. But I can usually trace these miserable seasons to some personal cause, and the first thing to do is to attend to that cause, *and get into the sunshine again.*

- a). Don't think I never have problems – never get down
 

My life does get dark - Life has so much it throws at us

**Question:** This is normal isn't it – for all of us

- A. If it is so normal – then how necessary to learn how to work ourselves out of it

**Transition:** We've seen all this before – because the Psalms repeat this so much

- A. Why? Because we don't get it quickly – We're a bit slow at learning
  - 1). So God graciously repeats it again and again until it starts to click
- B. If you're like me – been walking since 1977 – still learn from every trial how to have victory
  - 1). These Psalms have been so helpful

**Transition:** We're going to get knocked down – fortunately David teaches us how to get back up again

A. Again we learn from David by watching him work through it

### 3. Outline: How to handle inner turmoil

A. A longing for God

B. Remembering God's faithfulness

C. Praying to God

D. Seeking truth through His Word

**Transition:** I'm amazed how often this pattern repeats in the Bible – let's get serious about learning it

## I. A LONGING FOR GOD

**Ps 42:1–2 (ESV)** As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. <sup>(2)</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

### 1. I'm amazed at how many times trials turn us away from God

A. I know for me – those seasons of extreme busy-ness can throw me off – break my rhythm

1). You feel the stress from having so much to do – God kind of gets pushed out of the picture  
We feel we don't have enough time for Him

B. So the one who is the cure for stress – is pushed aside

And what causes stress replaces Him!

1). We justify making no time for Him!

We end up losing our joy – losing our peace – we get so stressed out

**Thought:** Read the great saints of the past – see how they handled their busy schedules

A. They discovered the busier they were the more time they needed to spend with God to keep up

1). Exactly the opposite of us

**Luther:** "I have so much to do today that I'm going to need to spend three hours in prayer in order to be able to get it all done."

a). He discovered that his time he had to work was so much more effective after spending time with God

2). For the Puritans – this was the solution for a busy day – make sure it starts with God

a). So God's blessings will be on it

**Thought:** It isn't just busy-ness – seems all types of trials have this strange power to pull us away from God

B. Family problems – finances – whatever it is

1). It seems at those times we need Him the most can be the times we seek Him the least

a). Our trials are just prolonged – we go deeper and deeper

### 2. David is in turmoil – great trials – but notice what he does

A. The first thing I see here – he sets his heart – his desires on God

1). Nothing is going to keep him from Him

B. He knows the trials will consume him – he will not be able to stand under the weight

If he isn't close to His Lord – intimacy will drive away the fear – give the strength, he needs

C. Listen to his words in an earlier Psalm – how he maintained stability in times of trial

**Listen to Ps 16:8 (ESV)** I have set the LORD *always* before me; because he is at my right hand, I shall not be shaken.

**Thought:** You in a trial today? Have you allowed it to move you away from God – correct that!

A. Your shaking – your turmoil will only increase as you stay away from God – make no time for Him

1). The first step in having peace – is to move back towards God – to desire Him

- B. What if I don't desire God? Then start right there – Pray

“Lord give me the desire of David. To thirst for you.”

- 1). Then as you're asking for that – as you're setting your gaze upon Him
  - a). You must move on to the next steps whether you feel like it or not

**Transition:** David longs for God – but that longing works into action – next step

- A. He doesn't stop at desire alone – that is one of the greatest deceptions of the devil

- 1). He wants to make us feel like we're doing good just because we desire to do something  
Even if we never actually do it

- B. C.S. Lewis - Screwtape letters – Uncle Screwtape to his nephew Wormwood

- 1). Make your client be satisfied with a desire to reach the world for God  
Without ever feeling his need to reach his next door neighbor
- 2). That is so clever – I'm doing great because my desires are godly
  - a). But if you don't act upon them what good are they?

**Proverbs 13:4 (NKJV)** The soul of a lazy *man* desires, and *has* nothing; But the soul of the diligent shall be made rich.

- C. So David sets his heart on God – I long for Him in this trial – so important

- 1). Nothing is going to move my heart away from that
- 2). *Then he does what he must do to draw near to God – regardless of how he feels*

## II. DAVID REMEMBERS GOD

**Ps 42:5–6 (ESV)** Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation <sup>(6)</sup> and my God. *My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you* from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

### 1. My soul is cast down – therefore

- A. I don't run off and drink – run off and do drugs – run off into some sinful situation – I don't pull away
- 1). If I'm going to recover from this *“I need to remember you”*
  - 2). David is now preaching to himself! Rousing himself!
    - a). My soul IS cast down – therefore David – REMEMBER God!
- B. This is *intentional thinking* – I do what I MUST do to get out of this pit
- 1). I can't let my mind wander anywhere it wants to – I must take control  
“Thoughts like water tend to run downhill” – into turmoil not away

### 2. Remember His past faithfulness – His goodness

- A. I can relate in our house hunt – I have preached this sermon many times to myself
- “Bill rest! You've been here before. You've received that letter from the landlord saying he was selling the house and you had to move. You've watched the time slip away to where you've needed what seemed like a miracle and you watched God move in a way that amazed you. Rest Bill. God is in control. Honor Him by trusting Him. Honor Him by believing that when He said He was my shepherd and took on all the responsibilities of providing for you He wasn't lying.”
- 1). Remember how God works in your life – always the last minute it seems  
Why? To maximize the situation! To strengthen your faith

**Thought:** Let's think about how faith grows – why God's timing is like it is

- A. Weight lifting – 3 sets – the last to fail – only do 6 reps

Eventually that weight isn't enough – you can do 3 sets easy

- 1). For your muscles to grow you MUST increase the weight

- B. Same thing in trials – God knows when you need more weight to increase your faith

- 1). That trial you sailed through two years ago must be increased so it stretches your faith  
Where God had to move 2 months before a deadline – that was your breaking point  
Now maybe it's a couple of weeks – a couple of days
- C. But remembering is always necessary – God you've always been good
  - 1). Therefore "Soul why are you cast down. Hope in God! He will come through"  
"And rest in God. It will be in His timing not yours"
  - 2). If He's been good in the past won't He be good now?  
**Mal 3:6 (ESV)** "For I the LORD do not change; therefore you..."  
**For NT saints: Heb 13:8 (ESV)** <sup>(8)</sup> Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.

### 3. Don't forget the past mercies – they supply present strength

This is why God has implemented so many memorials in the Scriptures – to help us

- A. The Lord's supper – to help us remember Christ's sacrifice and suffering for our sin
  - 1). A reminder that all of our sin has been forgiven – past – present and future
- B. The rainbow – help us to remember God will never destroy the world by flood again
- C. The Passover – to help us remember only through the blood of Christ can an individual be protected from the wrath of God
  - 1). But when we are covered by the blood we are completely protected
- D. 12 Stones from the Jordan River: Reminding the Jew how God brought them into the land
  - 1). In the same way they exited Egypt they entered the Promised land – parting of the water
  - 2). A reminder that He brought them in with power – He will sustain and keep them in
    - a). I think of how we came to this school – God gave us a memorial!
    - b). We just thought it was time to move – so started to look – so hard to find a place
      - 1a). Saw this before it ever went on the map
      - 2a). Right after we had this secured – call from school district  
Lost their lease over it – we would have been homeless
  - 3). God graciously gave us a memorial – why? So we know in the hard times
    - a). Us moving to England – a list of things God did that were amazing  
That left no doubt He was in it – was so important when the trials hit
- E. The Sabbath day: Remind us of the rest we have in Christ
  - 1). As God rested from His work so do we when it comes to salvation  
We rest in the finished work of Christ – His performance and not ours

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David remembers God's faithfulness

## III. DAVID SEEKS GOD IN PRAYER

**Ps 42:6-7 (ESV)** and my God. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. <sup>(7)</sup> Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me.

### 1. David has fled from Absalom into the wilderness – into the mountains

- A. As he hears the roar of the waterfalls – looks upon the waters thundering into the Jordan river below
  - 1). He thinks – that's how I feel right now – like the waves of trouble are washing over me
  - 2). Wave after wave – ever been there – feel like a boxer against the rings – what next!

**Thought:** But then he says something beautiful – anybody who has had a devastating trial can relate to

### 2. Deep calls to deep

- A. The trial is so overwhelming – the pain so great – it reduces us down to God alone

- 1). He's allowed us to wear ourselves out – has brought plan B-C-D to nothing
- 2). Finally we collapse into His care and deep cries out to deep  
From the depths of our soul we communicate with the depths of God
  - a). AND it is a beautiful moment! An intimate moment
  - b). The child with their Father – being honest and finding compassion
- B. Have you learned to pour your heart out before God? To be brutally honest with Him?
  - 1). This is one of the great benefits of trials
    - a). Eventually they will drive us to Him
  - 2). They may pull us away for awhile – which prolongs our trial – deepens it
    - a). But they are meant to reduce our independence – scheming – manipulating  
Reduce us to Him alone! You're all I have! I trust in you
      - 1a). God says "Finally. Now watch what I can do!"

### 3. Problem – we don't mind depth

#### We just don't like the process that chases away shallowness

- A. We can be quite content splashing around in the wading pool of life
  - 1). Where it takes no faith – where our feet are always firmly touching the bottom
  - 2). But to get in over our heads – to have to really trust God
    - a). To have our meticulously planned security plans threatened – and NEED God  
That's good for Pastors and missionaries I suppose – but no thank you!

**Thought:** Unfortunately I think to many of us are willing to settle for the spiritual wading pool

- A. We are willing to splash around with spiritual trivialities but never make an impact for God
- B. The fruit is a boring Christianity – no risk – no impact – dull and lifeless
  - 1). But God wants more for us than this – to know Him and be bored!!!  
So God lovingly takes us beyond ourselves so we learn how to trust Him – how to take risks
  - 2). So we can walk on the water like Peter – what an adventure!
    - a). We poke fun at Peter – He sank – but he was the only one that got out of the boat
      - 1a). Why? God had stretched him – worked with him – to increase his faith  
He did things the normal believer couldn't dream of!!!

**Transition:** So in a trial – inner turmoil chewing you up

- A. You MUST desire God – you must fix your gaze upon Him
  - 1). You cannot let the trial pry your eyes off – you'll never have victory that way  
You'll just spin down – down - down
- B. You MUST Remember God – how faithful He's been
- C. You MUST Pray – Let the pain of the trial drive you deep into the arms of God
  - 1). Where you pour your heart out honestly to Him  
Where a great transfer takes place – His strength flows in to replace your weakness

## IV. SEEK GOD'S TRUTH

**Ps 43:1-3 (ESV)** Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me! <sup>(2)</sup> For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? <sup>(3)</sup> Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!

### 1. David's been chased away by his son Absalom

- A. It seems a whole group of men are risen against him – lying about him

- B. David is complaining about the silence of God – been there?

**Ps 43:2 (ESV)** For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

**Thought:** Here is the problem when God seems silent even when we are praying

- A. If we don't force ourselves to go to the Word  
Our thinking will be guided by our imaginations
- B. This is so dangerous – especially if you have a tendency towards pessimism
- 2). If you're like one pessimist who said  
*“If we see light at the end of the tunnel, it's the light of the oncoming train.”*
- 3). My favorite quote about pessimism  
*“Borrow money from a pessimist – they don't expect it back.”*
- C. For the pessimist – when there is a lack of light – a lack of truth – a lack of clarity
- 1). Their imagination fills in the gaps
- 1). The pessimist is well skilled at turning every problem into something cataclysmic  
Every problem ends up in the worst case scenario

**Transition:** Perhaps David saw this propensity in Himself

## 2. The solution is light

**Ps 43:3 (ESV)** Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!

- A. Who should be more optimistic than the believer – with a book filled with truth and promises  
“all things work for our good” = that sounds about as optimistic as it gets

**Thought:** We're not idiots who bury our head in the sand – we see the situations - circumstances

- A. But we are able to look beyond those circumstances and rest in God's control of those circumstances
- 1). The pessimist sees the circumstance and their imagination turns it into a crisis  
The Christian optimist sees the same circumstance and uses truth to turn it into a benefit
- a). God is using this in my life  
Every impossibility is just an opportunity for God to fulfill a promise
- B. Our optimism is truth fueled – fact fed
- 1). Not some psychological mumbo-jumbo – psyching ourselves out
- a). We have a book – truth – that tells us how it ends  
Promises from God – guaranteed by His faithfulness

**Balance:** When we say God is going to work everything for our good

- A. That doesn't mean He's going to make everything easy
- 1). That's not for my good – I'll never grow – I'll stay shallow
- a). Splashing around in the spiritual wading pool with my “God hearts you” floaties on
- B. It may not be easy – but it will be for my good! I can take that to the bank
- 1). Everything – what an optimistic view of life! - Joy producing – life stabilizing truth

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## CONCLUSION

### 1. Are you an expert in the art of inner turmoil

- A. You've trained your stomach to start churning at the slightest bit of negative news
- B. Are you an expert at pessimism
- 1). You're skilled at turning molehills into mountains  
Every situation is quickly run through the worst case scenario

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## 2. Did you come in here today with a weight hanging over you

- A. You need to preach to yourself like David did

**Ps 42:5 (ESV)** Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation

**Question:** What are you going to do? Hopefully what David did – become intentional  
Here is the road map I will follow

- A. I choose to desire God – I will not allow this trial to create distance
- 1). He is what I need right now – so I choose to desire Him
- B. Then act on that! I choose to remember His goodness even though things look bad
- 1). The Lord of my past is the Lord of my present – He hasn't changed
- C. I MUST pray – draw near to Him
- 1). Honest – heart felt pouring myself out to Him – that wonderful counselor
    - a). Deep calling out to deep
    - b). How awesome to know we gain the divine ear  
A willing listener who loves us and only wants our best
  - 2). This is such a beautiful moment when trials drive us to Him like this
- D. I need to control my imagination with truth
- 1). What does God say about this – what are the facts that will give me solid footing
    - a). I CANNOT let my imagination control my thinking right now!  
I don't like where it takes me

## 3. The result. You will find God

- A. That misery will turn into song

**Psalm 42:8 (ESV)** By day the LORD commands his steadfast love, and at night *his song is with me*, a prayer to the God of my life.

- 1). You may still have your problems – but your outlook will begin to change  
God will be in it – to comfort you – strengthen you! He will give you His peace and His joy