



INTRO

Personally, I find it quite easy to identify with the language and imagery in these psalms. I have experienced similar seasons of depression and spiritual struggle. And the psalms display so much humanity, so much raw emotion. Some of the statements made in the Psalms might, to some ears, sound inappropriate or disrespectful towards God, but they are not.

What we see in the Psalms is real struggle, real humanity, and real, gritty faith. What we see is far from the health, wealth, and prosperity "gospel" that is preached so widely today. Faith in our God—the living God, the God of the New and Old Testaments—is not a faith that results in around-the-clock happiness, with never a dark day. We can see that so clearly in these two psalms.

Psalms 42 and 43, like many Psalms, are a song. You know, of course, that chapter and verse numbers are not part of the inspired writings. These were added much later as a way to index the writings. And this is one of the debated divisions—whether this should have been divided into two Psalms or whether together they

should have formed one Psalm. It seems obvious that they should have been one.

What Is The Soul?

We need to answer a small question here before we proceed: What is the soul? Humans are physical and spiritual; body and soul; one part material, one part immaterial. The soul is the immaterial component of a human being.

The soul consists of two parts: the intellect (or mind) and the will. The intellect receives information, then discerns and decides what should be accepted and what should be condemned. The will then accepts and implements what the intellect has discerned to be good, and rejects and avoids what the intellect has discerned to be bad. The intellect, Calvin says in his Institutes, "is like the helmsman and captain of the soul... and the will depends on its good pleasure, desiring nothing else once judgement has been made."¹

Like every other component of a human being, the intellect was corrupted by the fall. Without the help of the Holy Spirit, the intellect is not able to choose what pleases God. We do not, with our minds, one day decide that God is good, choose to accept him, and become one of his people. Before we can even decide that God is good, God must first act on our minds, enabling us to see him as good.

The mind of God is flawless and perfect. He determines what is good, right, and holy. Our minds are imperfect, corrupted, naturally bent toward sin. If our intellect or mind is to discern what is truly good, it must first be redeemed and then calibrated to the standards, directives, and the truth of God's Word.

God's Spirit must constantly renew our minds—make them new again, return them to a state of communion with God—so that our

¹ Institutes, p41

wills act on what is truly good and not on the misdirected whims of our darkened minds. Exercises in positive thinking or cognitive therapy are without power to change the condition of the soul without the active work of the Holy Spirit.

This understanding brings new light and greater weight to the instruction we find in Romans 12:2: *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect."*

So when we hear the psalmist talking in these psalms to and about his soul, he's talking about his intellect and will.

That's what the soul is. It's not comprehensive, but it's a sufficient overview. What is the soul capable of? In this psalm, it is capable of panting, thirsting, and being poured out. These are metaphorical representations of a desperately dry soul, one in distress, and in need of relief. In other psalms, the soul is described as melting away in sorrow, refusing to be comforted, languishing for salvation, and clinging to the dust.

When we are feeling our worst, our soul is where we feel it. But our souls are also where we feel and express joyful praise and the heights of worship. In other psalms, the soul is instructed to bless the Lord, wait in silence, keep God's testimonies, and rejoice in the Lord.

Narrowing down now to the psalms in view, 42 and 43, we can see a peculiar additional feature of the soul. The soul has a capacity for internal dialogue, and we can and should speak to our souls. We will see this three times in these psalms. As we observe this unique internal dialogue, we will be encouraged to hope in God at all times.

1. Hope in God When You Are Depleted

*1 As a deer pants for flowing streams,
so pants my soul for you, O God.*

As a depleted deer desperately seeks water. That is a description of physical dehydration, of physical thirst.

Dehydration is a terrible state to be in. It can lead to, according to one medical website, “potential multiple organ dysfunction... and manifest with a wide range of symptoms—from mild thirst and weakness to severe issues, such as... neurological impairment... Dehydration is associated with longer hospital stays, higher healthcare costs, and increased morbidity and mortality rates. Severe dehydration can lead to life-threatening complications, including acute kidney injury, electrolyte imbalances, and cognitive impairment...”²

The psalmist, of course, was unaware of these technical medical observations at the time of this writing. But he uses dehydration as a metaphor for spiritual distress because everyone has some sense of how unpleasant it is.

The psalmist is describing something beyond being a little thirsty for God's presence; the thirst has progressed to a pant; this is desperate thirst. And the psalmist uses this physical condition as a metaphor for a spiritual condition. This is how his soul feels: it is dry and desperate

“As the deer desperately longs for the source of life, my soul longs for God.” God is the source of all life, of course, but here the psalmist is in desperate need of spiritual hydration. How has he arrived at this state? The events of his life have precipitated a thirst for God, for his rescue, for his deliverance. This is what the psalmist is expressing.

² <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK555956/>

He's dry, he's depleted, and he can't solve this problem. He needs supernatural deliverance. He goes on...

*2 My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.
When shall I come and appear before God?*

He wants the living God, the very source and fountain of life. He is the God who reveals himself as creator and lifegiver—the one who provides the words of life for his people. He wants communion with God. He asks: “When shall I come and appear before God?” He's longing to be in the presence of God.

He then elaborates on his despondency...

*3 My tears have been my food
day and night,
while they say to me all the day long,
“Where is your God?”*

“My tears have been my food.” That's pretty dramatic. We might accuse such a person of whining or exaggerating, but this is real despondency. This is the type of stress and anxiety that causes you to neglect your own wellbeing. Another psalmist writes in Psalm 102:3–4:

*For my days pass away like smoke,
and my bones burn like a furnace.
My heart is struck down like grass and has withered;
I forget to eat my bread.*

This is utter emotional devastation, and part of the reason for it is that people are mocking him for his faith. He has proclaimed that there is a God in whom he trusts, but things are going badly for him. Cruel people see this as an opportunity to mock God, to call his

existence into question; or at least to call his goodness into question. "If you serve such a great God, why isn't he blessing you?"

Sometimes it's the psalmists themselves who are asking these questions:

- Where are you, God?
- Why are you distant?
- Why have you forsaken me?
- Why aren't you saving me?

But, as we all know, it's one thing to ask these questions of God, to express how we are feeling in the moment. But it's another thing to have people mock us and ask us these questions. "Look at your life. Are you sure there's a God?" But this is happening in the life of this writer "all the day long". So the mocking is relentless.

*4 These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:*

He's pouring out his soul. The word he uses here is used metaphorically, of course, but it is a dramatic word, an intense word. In other contexts, it is used for the blood of ritual sacrifices or carnage on a battlefield. That's the kind of pouring out he's doing here; it's more like gushing, like a fluid being released with pressure. We might today call this "venting"—that has the same sense. "The pressure is too much; I have to let it out!"

Accompanying this is reminiscing, he remembers a very different time:

*how I would go with the throng
and lead them in procession to the house of God
with glad shouts and songs of praise,
a multitude keeping festival.*

He's describing the polar opposite of isolation, which is what he's been describing to this point. He remembers: A large group of people. He's leading them in a procession to the temple. They are shouting gladly and singing songs of praise. What was the state of his soul then? It was not depleted, not dry; it was full and well-watered. He longs for that to be the case again, but right now, it's not. He desires to experience this grace again.

But here is where he, for the first of three times, addresses his own soul. He speaks to himself, to his soul. Remember, the mind, or the intellect, receives information, then discerns and decides what should be accepted and what should be condemned. And then the will chooses to accept and implement what the intellect has discerned to be good, and reject and avoid what the intellect has discerned to be bad.

And what he's getting at here is this: he has come to believe a lie. His circumstances are dark; he is demoralized; things are not looking up.

*5 Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?*

Charles Spurgeon once wisely said that, "To search out the cause of our sorrow is often the best surgery for grief." This is what the Psalmist is doing here. He's searching himself; he's analyzing his circumstances. What is causing his soul to grieve?

He asks his soul: "Why are you despairing, despondent, weighed down with grief? Why, oh soul, are you murmuring, growling? Why are you so stirred up?" What he writes next reveals his self-diagnosis.

*Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation 6 and my God.*

What's the reason for the condition of his soul?

- He has stopped hoping in God.
- He has stopped waiting on God.
- He has stopped expecting God to intervene, to rescue.

What's the remedy for his despondency?

- Hope in God.
- Wait on him.
- Expect him to rescue.
- It's a renewal of faith that's needed.

The psalmist describes his condition. He is in a state of extreme depletion. He encourages his own soul to hope in God. He commends us to hope in God when we are depleted.

Now, everything up to this point could be one tidy sermon, and we could apply it to our tidy lives. But our lives are not tidy, are they? We have problems, and we repeatedly run up against the same challenges, don't we? I know I do.

So the psalmist adds to his catalogue of conditions in which he must hope in God. You must hope in God when you are depleted, but you must also...

2. Hope in God When You Are Forgotten

I find it encouraging that the second cycle of this psalm starts with this line.

My soul is cast down within me;

I mean, didn't he JUST deal with this? Didn't he just diagnose and prescribe? Well, then, why is this a problem again? Notice the oscillation here. He just addressed his soul, saying, "There's no need to be cast down; hope in God!" And then in the very next sentence: "My soul is cast down within me..."

He had a problem; he told himself the solution to the problem. The problem is either still there or has surfaced again in his life. Does that sound familiar to you? It does to me. We do this, too.

And what is God's response when we do? Not condemnation. It's not "Hope in God, or you're a bad Christian!" It's "At times, you're going to struggle to hope. When that happens, remember this..." It's the same with anxiety. We are commanded: "Do not be anxious," but the biblical writers understand that anxiety will come. No one gets through life without experiencing some measure of it. And again, the message is not "I told you not to do that! Why are you so bad?!" It's "I know this will be a struggle from time to time. When you're struggling, remember this..."

So, what should we take from this, if we experience these cycles? Not condemnation. We should take comfort in the fact that the Lord understands our humanity and all the frailties that go along with it. Remember Hebrews 4:15–16:

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Soul struggles are normal struggles. They are not one-time events or experiences that only some people endure. Soul struggles, this heaviness, even this despondency, are a reality for every Christian. We should never pretend that they're not. The psalmist is not pretending that he's all good...

*My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I remember you
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.*

Perhaps he's demonstrating that he's learned something from his previous struggles, and we should learn the same. "My soul is cast down; therefore I remember, I remind myself again of God's goodness, faithfulness, and presence." I remember his faithfulness in biblical history. I remember his faithfulness in history since then. I remember his faithfulness in my own life and family. As we have seen before, remembering and reminding play an important part in spiritual health.

Nonetheless, the psalmist continues to describe the extremity of his turmoil.

*7 Deep calls to deep
at the roar of your waterfalls;
all your breakers and your waves
have gone over me.*

Have you ever felt, metaphorically, like you're drowning? It's a common way to express a time of struggle. Well, the descriptions in verse 7 are water-related terms.

Deep calls to deep. This hints at something unfathomable, impossible to understand. An abyss, a surging mass of water, calls to another surging mass of water. It's almost as if they are playing tag, taking turns bashing their victim.

The roar of waterfalls. Living where we do, Niagara Falls comes to mind. Have you noticed how loud water is when it falls in great volume? It's a spectacle to behold from above, but here the sense is of someone standing near the base. The water is roaring; it is threatening; it induces fear and awe.

Breakers and waves. Breakers are the waves that bash a shoreline. Again, these are pleasant to view from a distance but can be dangerous if you are in the water.

All of these descriptions paint a striking picture: Deep, unfathomable sorrows often come in waves. It's one storm after another that seems to threaten our safety. It's one wave after another in the same storm; the storm seems unending. It's going up and down on waves of sorrow, feeling storm-tossed, sometimes for months or even years.

If the psalmist felt he was out of the storm at the end of the first stanza, he's back into it now. He's going through another time of exceptional upheaval.

It's not a pleasant experience, and he might be tempted to think that God has abandoned him. And we might be tempted to think the same when we are drowning in sorrow. But notice to whom these things are attributed. It's not a random storm he's battling against while God's not looking or taking a break from caring for him. He says to God, "These are your waterfalls, your breakers, your waves."

As in all things, God is sovereign over these trials. He is present in them; they are, in the end, *his*. They belong to him. This means that these waterfalls, these waves, these breakers are sent for a sovereign purpose. And the psalmist next acknowledges this:

*8 By day the Lord commands his steadfast love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.*

The God who loves you still loves you even in the storm. He commands his steadfast love for you all day. His love is steadfast. It stands fast, it stands strong, like a lighthouse in a storm. He hasn't gone anywhere; he's not going anywhere. The psalmist recognizes this truth, but still he has more questions:

9 I say to God, my rock:

He acknowledges God as his rock, his place of stability. God is his rock, but as he stands on that rock, he asks:

*"Why have you forgotten me?
Why do I go mourning
because of the oppression of the enemy?"*

This is another oscillation. In verse 8 he said: "I know of your steadfast love, Lord. I sing songs of praise to you in the night! I pray to you as my father and protector." In verse 9 he says: "But I feel forgotten! I'm being oppressed, and there seems to be no relief."

And what's worse, he continues to receive the bitter taunts of those who see his condition and wonder why God doesn't seem to be rescuing him. He affirms that God is with him, and yet he still questions him... "Why does it seem like you've forgotten me? It's like I don't even exist in your sight."

*10 As with a deadly wound in my bones,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me all the day long,
"Where is your God?"*

First in 42:3 and now again his enemies are asking the same question in 42:10. "It doesn't look like you follow a good God... You'd think you'd be happier if you were. Where is he?"

"Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me." That's another common phrase that needs to be added to the burn pile of history. Listen, cruel words, taunts and jabs hurt like crazy! Admit it; acknowledge it. Say with the psalmist: "These words are like a deadly wound in my bones!" They really are!

Some here have been the victims of physical violence. That experience marks you; it is not easy to overcome. But it is also true

that many struggle deeply because of hurtful, malicious, piercing words spoken to us by people whose purpose was to wound us.

The taunting of adversaries is effective. A skilled maligner can often discern your insecurities and prey upon them. Look at what's happening here. The psalmist, who is in the midst of a trial, feels forgotten by God. His adversary is tapping into this insecurity: "You know, you're probably right; where is your God? Maybe he really has forgotten you."

You may have felt this. You may have experienced this. If you have, here is what the psalmist counsels himself to do. Again, he questions his own soul. He speaks evidence-based reason to his soul. He speaks the truth of God's Word to his soul.

*11 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 and my God.*

Here is the second time through the chorus. He's just named some of his sources of anxiety, but he's quick to follow that up by talking reason to his soul. He lays out his complaints and then reminds himself that he needs to put his hope in God, who is greater than any trial. But notice what he is doing... he is talking to him-self. He is addressing his own soul: "There's no reason to be cast down, no reason for turmoil. Place your hope again in God."

Hope in God when you are depleted. Hope in God when you are forgotten. Lastly, as we turn to Psalm 43...

3. Hope in God When You Are Rejected

1 Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause

*against an ungodly people,
from the deceitful and unjust man
deliver me!*

The psalmist makes two requests of God in Psalm 43. The first is this: "Vindicate me! Lord, declare the truth about me!"

The psalmist cries out for vindication! He's been falsely accused, slandered; perhaps he's been the victim of rumour campaigns—intentionally deceitful stories spread from one adversary to another. So he cries out to God: "Clear me of blame. Remove this suspicion. Please defend me!"

I have felt the sting of this. In my early years of ministry, some people decided to make me their target. They made up an outrageous story about me and spread it throughout the church and community. It was very painful, and because I was new and they were people of influence, I really couldn't do much about it. A few years later, there was more of this; waves of it.

We've probably all experienced some measure of this. People can be cruel. People spread lies about you—and it hurts!

And this can lead us into a flurry of activity. Contacting, correcting, straightening out the story. Worrying about our reputation, imagining what people might be thinking about you. And you wonder where God is and why he's letting this happen to you!

In my desperation, I learned to find comfort in God's word, especially these psalms where vindication is mentioned. When wicked and deceitful people use their advantage and influence to target you, these coordinated campaigns can be very effective. They leave you feeling vulnerable and powerless, but this is the time to cry out to God for deliverance. When you are unable to defend yourself, you cry out desperately for this protection and deliverance.

"A thousand human accusers are no match for one affirming God. So search me, correct me, and affirm that I am your child."

2 For you [he says] are the God in whom I take refuge;

God is the refuge of every believer.

- He's a fortress, a stronghold.
- He is our defence.
- He is our place of ultimate safety.
- And although the psalmist proclaims this to be true, he again oscillates. "I know the truth, but this is what I feel!"

why have you rejected me?

Why do I go about mourning

because of the oppression of the enemy?

"I know that I am loved and that God is my refuge, but I *feel*/rejected. Forsaken, cast off, intentionally pushed aside. I know it's not true, but this is how I feel." Next, he makes his second request:

3 Send out your light and your truth;

"Take action, Lord! Send out your light! Send out your truth!" His light will expose the works of darkness. His truth will annihilate the adversary's lies. All slander will dissolve. Every hurtful word will be reversed. The wicked and deceitful slanderers will be brought to nothing in the light of God's truth.

let them [your light and your truth] lead me;

let them bring me to your holy hill

and to your dwelling!

He's been under the pressures of deep mysteries, wandering in a darkness of despair. The pathway through these seasons is never a straight line, as you have probably experienced. You wander, you stumble, you oscillate, trying to find your way back to the light. So he

pleads for this light and this truth. These will illuminate the right path. These will lead him. And where does he desire them to lead him? To the place where God dwells, where he is worshipped.

Notice how significantly his focus has changed. He is no longer looking inward at his own troubles. He longs for the things of God: YOUR light, YOUR truth, YOUR holy hill, YOUR dwelling. The best thing we can do when our sorrows overwhelm us is not to meditate on them. There is no need to make an effort to do that; they are already imposing themselves on us. The best thing we can do is follow the example of this psalmist: turn our attention to God and worship him.

"Let the light of my Defender lead me, not the darkness of my accusers..." "Let the truth of my Defender lead me, not the lies of my accusers..." This light and this truth will lead you to worship!

*4 Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy,
and I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God.*

*5 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 and my God*

The psalmist instructs here that when you are feeling despondent, you should talk to yourself—and maybe even out loud. Isn't that exactly what the psalmist is doing?

Martyn Lloyd-Jones was both a pastor and a medical doctor. Writing to Christians on these psalms in his book *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure*, he says this: [I'll paraphrase here a bit because some of the language is a little archaic:]

"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... This is the very essence of wisdom in this matter.

Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You didn't make them up, 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 [the psalmist] was this; instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself, 'Why are you 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'm going to speak to you'.

The main skill 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 are you cast down'—what business have you to be worried?

You must urge yourself, and say to yourself: 'HOPE IN GOD'—instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way. And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do.

Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with the psalmist:"

I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God

This wonderful advice is not a mere trick or secular psychological technique. It's not about willpower or the power of positive thinking. This is written to Christians, imploring us to model the example of the psalmist. It is written to people who have the Holy Spirit dwelling in their lives. That's you this morning, dear brother or sister in Christ!

CONCLUSION

One thing we might find difficult about the psalms is that they bluntly challenge modern evangelical notions of what the Christian life should look like. Christianity is about being happy! It's about always praising the Lord! It's about explaining your constant hope and optimism to everyone!

The Christian life is about all of those things, of course, but there is a lot more to it than that. It is also about struggling and wrestling with the darkness, oppression, and affliction that we all experience. It's about coming honestly before God to express our doubts and fears and insecurities. It's about doing this in an environment, the people of God gathered, where we will be both comforted in our afflictions and reminded that God is good and he will rescue us.

God is sending difficult circumstances into the psalmist's life: breakers, waves. Something is happening to him—something deeply unpleasant. Have you experienced this?

My experience may not be identical to yours, but if you've experienced or are experiencing a time like this in your life, I do know what it's like. And I believe that many more people have experienced this than have admitted it. Why? Because for some reason we have this idea that when we feel this way, it is something to be ashamed of. And because of this idea, many people hide their true condition,

and all this does is make it worse. And many people won't admit it because they've been told that feeling this way is automatically a sin or the result of some unconfessed sin. Sin *can* be the cause, but it doesn't seem to be in the psalm, and it is not necessarily the cause in your life either.

If you often struggle through the state of despondency that is described in these psalms, there are a few facts you should know:

1. Know that you are a lot less alone than you think. Many people struggle in these ways and deal with it by denial, distractions, or substances.
2. Know that you are loved by a God who intimately understands the human experience and has grace, mercy, and compassion for you.
3. Know that if you struggle through periods like this, this does not make you a "bad Christian".
4. Know that you are in the good company of some of God's most faithful servants. One of whom said this:
 - a. "We should all fortify ourselves against the dark hours of depression by cultivating a deep distrust of the certainties of despair."³

In other words: despair and depression will try to tell you how things are going to be

- "This is all your fault..."
- "It's a sin to feel this way..."
- "You'll never be happy again..."
- "You deserve this..."
- "You will never be strong again..."

³ John Piper, *When the Darkness Will Not Lift: Doing What We Can While We Wait for God--And Joy*

- "This is not a tunnel you'll get through; this is a cave that never ends."

What the psalmists know and what we should know is that we can fight these lies with the promises of God. We must learn to cultivate a deep distrust for the lies of despair.

Matthew Henry put it like this: "The way to forget our miseries, is to remember the God of our mercies." The message of the passage is clear: Place your hope again... and again... and again in God. Hope at all times in the God who rescues.

Let us acknowledge these truths together.

1. I have often been depleted. I will experience depletion again.

Unless the Lord returns or takes us home, you and I will come to another season of dryness, of depletion. Let's not fool ourselves by saying we will never again be depleted. In this world, you *will* have trouble. It is a promise and a guarantee.

Jesus was in such a state of agony and depletion in the garden of Gethsemane. He knew what was coming next, and he wrestled with that reality. He knew his troubles would be great, but he knew his reward, his glory, would be greater. Because of his obedience, the same is true for us.

2. I have felt forgotten; I will feel forgotten again.

I will again come to a place where I feel that so much is wrong that God must have forgotten about me. Ironically, the cause of this will be that I have forgotten his goodness, his promises, his faithfulness. I will need to remember. I will need reminders; we will need to remind each other.

Jesus felt the sting of being forgotten, even forsaken, but much worse than we ever will. In a moment of supreme agony, the Father

turned his face away, and Jesus felt an aloneness more profound than we will ever feel.

3. I have been oppressed, slandered, attacked; this will happen again.

I'm sorry; it's inevitable. No one escapes some measure of this type of attack. When you experience this, remember that Jesus, of course, went through all of this and more. But God vindicated him, and he will vindicate you.

These experiences of Jesus's life are far more than just parallels to our own. Despite his state of depletion and the severe struggles of his soul, he trusted God and chose obedience, going to the cross to secure our salvation.

When we are in deep distress, he is there with us. He has gone before us in sorrow, and he has gone to prepare a place for us. We will someday dwell in this prepared place for eternity in the presence of God.

Because Jesus bore the wrath of God on the cross, you can be assured that when these waterfalls, breakers, and waves are sent by God *not* to condemn, punish, or pour out his wrath on you. His wrath was fully poured out on Jesus. Jesus fully bore our punishment. There is no longer any condemnation for us. Therefore, all of these are God's loving discipline sent to shape us into the image of his Son. If we will accept them as such, his Spirit will do a great work in our souls.

As we struggle through seasons of trial, of struggle, and of pain, we wait with anticipation for the ultimate rescue. This is what he has promised! If he doesn't seem to be rescuing you right now, know that he is, in fact, in the process of rescuing you.

Know for certain that his breakers and his waves are sent for a sovereign purpose, and that his good purpose will be fulfilled in your life. You can trust him to do that work because that's the work he promises to do and that is the work he has always faithfully done. And he will do it again!

Let's pray.

Questions For Personal Reflection

In 42:5, the psalmist asks himself, "Why are you cast down, O my soul?" What is the practical difference between listening to your downcast emotions and actively preaching the objective promises of God to your soul?

In 42:7, the psalmist declares that the breakers and waves crashing over him are God's breakers and waves. How does the active, sovereign providence of God—knowing that your trials are appointed by a wise and loving Father, not by random chance—provide comfort to your soul?

In what ways do the intense physical and emotional descriptions in this stanza guard us against a stoic, emotionless faith that refuses to lament honestly before God?

Psalm 43:1 opens with a plea for vindication. When you face injustice or deceit, how does resting in God as your ultimate vindicator keep you from taking vengeance or bitterness into your own hands?

Looking forward to the final, consummate deliverance when Christ returns, how does the hope of the resurrection reshape your daily battle with sorrow and spiritual weariness?

The content of this booklet was written by Michael Krahn, lead pastor of Community Bible Church in Ilderton, Ontario. We are a gospel-centered church devoted to the faithful teaching of Scripture, the building up of believers, and bearing witness to Christ in our community and beyond. To learn more, join us for a Sunday service, or connect with us directly, scan the QR code or visit: cbcilderton.ca/contact-us

