

Psalm 42 | "Battling for Hope When Hope Appears Dead"

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"Unlike a bullet wound, when the amputation heals, the arm is still gone. So the hurt of grief is different from the hurt of other wounds. There is the pain of the severing, and then the relentless pain of the gone-ness. The countless might-have-beens. Those too hurt. Each new remembered one is a new blow on the tender place where the arm was. So grieving is like and unlike other pain."
John Piper

"Tonight all the hells of young grief have opened again; the mad words, the bitter resentment, the fluttering in the stomach, the nightmare unreality, the wallowed-in tears. For in grief nothing 'stays put.' One keeps on emerging from a phase, but it always recurs. Round and round. Everything repeats. Am I going in circles, or dare I hope I am on a spiral? But if I am on a spiral am I going up or down?" C.S. Lewis

Two questions always arise in a time of deep loss and grief.

- 1) Where is God?
- 2) Why? The real question is "What is the Purpose?"

I. Four Strategic Methods to Employ in Battling for Hope

a. Remember God's Faithfulness and Value (v. 6)

"God is the highest good of the reasonable creature. The enjoyment of him is our proper; and is the only happiness with which our souls can be satisfied. To go to heaven, fully to enjoy God, is infinitely better than the most pleasant accommodations here. Better than fathers and mothers, husbands, wives, or children, or the company of any, or all earthly friends. These are but shadows; but the enjoyment of God is the substance. These are but scattered beams; but God is the sun. These are but streams; but God is the fountain. These are but drops, but God is the ocean." Jonathan Edwards

Warning: Ecclesiastes 7:10 "Say not, "Why were the former days better than these?" For it is not from wisdom that you ask this."

- i. If we do not value God more highly than any person, time, experience or event we are worshipping idols.

Romans 1:25 "...they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen."

b. Recognize the Sovereign Hand of God (v. 7)

Ecclesiastes 7:14 “In the day of prosperity be joyful, and in the day of adversity consider: God has made the one as well as the other...”

Lamentations 3:37-38 “Who has spoken and it came to pass, unless the Lord has commanded it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come?”

- i. Jesus too suffered at the Sovereign Hand of His Father.

Isaiah 53:10 “Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him; he has put him to grief.”

Romans 8:32, Acts 2:23

“It would be a very sharp and trying experience to me to think that I have an affliction which God never sent me, that the bitter cup was never filled by his hand, that my trials were never measured out by him, nor sent to me by his arrangement of their weight and quantity.” Spurgeon

c. Sing and Pray Honestly (v. 8-10)

- i. Sing to the Lord.
- ii. Like Jesus, honestly pour out your soul to Him.

Matthew 26:39 “My father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”

- iii. Small group and church family remember to speak compassionately but honestly with the grieving.

d. Preach the Truth to yourself (v. 5, 11)

- i. We need to hear truth based upon scripture and not lies.

“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. Now [the psalmist] stands up and says: “Self, listen for a moment, I will speak to you.” Martin Lloyd-Jones

Warning: Satan knows the Bible too.
Example: John 10:10, Isaiah 53:5

- ii. Learn it now before disaster strikes.
- iii. Small groups and church family remind the grieved of the truth of Scripture.

II. Our trust and obedience in our grief will bind us to our Savior.

a. It proves our Ultimate Eternal Hope in our Savior.

James 1:3-4 for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.⁴ And let steadfastness have its full effect, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking in nothing.

1 Peter 1:6-7 though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

b. With Joy we are privileged to participate with our Savior.

Philippians 1:29 For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,

1 Peter 4:13 But rejoice insofar as you share Christ's sufferings, that you may also rejoice and be glad when his glory is revealed.

c. The Son was forsaken so we never will be.

Matthew 27:46 And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"