

# SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Psalms

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2

TITLE

Soured By Disappointment

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 44



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Well good morning Providence and if it's your first week with us, welcome. I'm thankful to have you here or maybe tuning in online for the first time, grateful to have you guys here and it's crazy to think but the summer is slowly winding down. It's unbelievable how quick it's gone by. But as we think back over the summer or if you just missed some time and you haven't able to catch what's been going on in our sermon series, just I wanted to trace you back a little bit and then we're going to look forward a little bit before we dive into the Psalms today.

So we started back in May, and we really looked at what God desires for Providence over the next three years. So we talked about this living on mission for God, that we wanted to plant our lives well in the church, we wanted to plant the gospel well in our city, and then we want to help plant churches in the nations and that's what God is really laying on our hearts, our elders and our pastors, to be pursuing these things as a church body together. And so we talked about that, we talked about ... Right after that sermon series we talked about Jonah, we walked through that, which is a great one to follow-up with because if you're struggling to follow Christ's mission and there is some struggle within your own heart, Jonah is your guy because that was him. And so we walked through Jonah and then out of that we looked at how to share your faith faithfully. There's some really tangible practical ways to step out and to talk about Jesus with others. In all honesty, we need this living life on mission in our world, just look how broken it is, even what happened in Charlottesville. We as a people who love and follow Christ need to speak into hate. We need to speak into that. And so living on mission is really important.

But we're gonna look at the Psalms, we started last week, we're gonna look the next couple weeks. And what I love about the Psalms is you read it and Psalms speak to the heart, because reality is that sometimes we're called to live on mission and to tell others about Jesus, but we're just wounded in our hearts and we have struggle and pain and so it's hard to live on mission when your heart is broken. And what I love about Psalms is it's almost like a splint for our broken hearts. We read the Psalms sometimes and we're like, "What? You can't say that! You can't say that!" But it's just raw emotion that we feel at times, but it's all filtered underneath the sovereign God and that's what we need. So this week as well as the next couple weeks, we're going to be in the Psalms, just looking at them and allowing them speak to the brokenness in our hearts and hopefully encourage us.

So today we're going to be in Psalm 44. If you have a Bible, go ahead and turn there, and if you don't, there should be one in the chairs ... Underneath one of the chairs in front of you, and if you grab one of those Bibles, we'll be on page 470. So Psalm chapter 44 is where we're going to be and this a longer Psalm, 26 verses, but we're going to read all of them to get kicked off here.

So Psalm 44, starting in verse one. And this is the word of the Lord, “Oh God, we have heard with our ears, our fathers have told us what deeds you performed in their days, in the days of old. You with your own hand drove out the nations, but then you planted. You afflicted the people’s, but them you set free. For not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arms save them. But your right hand and your arm and the light of your face, for you delighted in them. You are my king, Oh God. Ordained salvation for Jacob. Through you we pushed down our foes and through your name we tread down those who rise up against us. For not in my bow do I trust, nor in my sword, to save me. But you have saved us from our foes and you have put to shame those who hate us. And God, we have boasted continually and we have given thanks to your name forever.”

Now we can stop right here and we can teach this as just a praise Psalm, we could even write a little song out of this and that would be great, but then there’s a sharp shift in verse nine. Look at it.

He says, “But you have rejected us and disgraced us and have not gone out with our armies. You have made us turn back from our foe and those who have hated have gotten spoiled. You have made us like sheep for the slaughter. You have scattered us among the nations. You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them. You have made us the taunt of our neighbors and the desertion and scorn of those around us. You have made us a byword among the nations, a laughingstock among the peoples. All day long my disgrace is before me and my shame has covered my face. The sound of the taunter and the reviler in the side of the enemy and the avenger. All this has come upon us, though we have not forgotten you and we have not been false to your covenant. Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way, yet you have broken us in the place of jackals and you have covered us with the shadow of death. If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign God, would not God discover this. For he knows the secrets of the heart. Yet for your sake, we are killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to the slaughter. Awake! Why are you sleeping, Oh Lord! Rouse yourself and do not reject us forever. Why do you hide your face and why do you forget our affliction and oppression. For our soul is bowed down to the dust and our belly clings to the ground. Rise up! Come to our help. Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love.”

Let’s pray. Take a moment just right now and silence, no matter where you are in your relationship with God, just take a moment right now to pray that God would speak to you this morning.

Take a moment to pray for me also, that I would communicate God’s beautiful truth clearly this morning.

God, we thank you for the Psalms, how they’re that splint for our broken hearts and how they help us when our emotions and feelings wonder. God, I pray today for those that feel that God is distant or they’ve been disappointed. Lord, I pray you would lift them up or that you would encourage them today. God, for those of us that would rather run from God’s instead of running to God and our disappointments, I pray that today your word would challenge us to do the opposite. God, that we would be running to you, because Lord, you promise to be a refuge.

You say you are close to the downhearted. So Lord, be near to us now and speak to us. To Christ's name we ask, amen.

Well my wife and I just celebrated our 10 year wedding anniversary and so we wanted to do something nice for that day, we went out and had dinner at this nice steak restaurant and while we were there we were just kind of reminiscing of the past. Over the last 10 years, what are some of the greatest joys that we had, what were some of the things that just made us laugh the most, and then we talked about some of the things that have been the most difficult or maybe some of the most disappointing times in our life. And as we looked back over the 10 years, we both pointed back to the very first year as one of the most difficult times in our lives. Now it wasn't because we argued over which way the toilet paper runs or we weren't arguing about which way you squeeze the toothpaste to get it out, there was none of that that it made it difficult. It was just health issues.

The first year of our marriage I was a health and PE teacher, from kindergarten through seventh grade. So I had the whole gamut and what that means is, those of you that are teachers or that have kids, what that means is you're going to be sick a lot. It's just gonna happen, right? So the first year, I was just sick all the time. One time I got sick and I thought, "I'm just going to tough this out." Right? Every man is like, "We have got to tough it out till we reach that breaking point and then we will do something about it. But I'm just going soldier on." So that's what I kept doing and my wife in her wisdom is like, "You need to go to the doctor. You need to go the doctor." I'm like, "No, I'm going to tough it out." So I realize I reached my breaking point when I woke up in the middle the night one night and the top of the comforter is drenched. I had a fever so high that I had sweat through not just sheets, but the comforter above that. And this is a thick comforter. It was like I went and ran a marathon and then just jumped in the bed and cuddled up with the sheets, that's what it was like. It was so nasty. I was like, "Okay, this is my breaking point. I've gotta do something about this."

And so I go to the doctor the next day and they feel my stomach and they're like, "Well, we don't see anything that's wrong there." And so they took my blood and they came back in and this is the technical term they used, they said, "Your white blood cell count is through the roof." That was their medical term, through the roof. And I don't know what that means at the time, I'm just like, "That doesn't sound good." And they're like, "It's not, you got to go to the ER and we're going to go ahead and call the ER so when you get there they will check you out, because you have some kind of infection in your body." And so I go to the ER, they scan and they find out that my appendix has ruptured and talking to the doctor, he said, by judging, that my appendix had been ruptured for about a week before I went to the doctor. He said, this doctor is in his mid-50's, and he says, "I've done 50 to 70 appendectomies every year since I been a doctor and yours is one of the worst I've ever seen." And I'm like, "Encouragement, thanks doctor."

But so they had to do the surgery and I was in the hospital for almost a week and coming out of this surgery, I mean I could do nothing. I couldn't even sneeze without pain, like it hurt that bad. And I just remember as my wife cared for me so faithfully during this time, my wife loved me and served me when I couldn't take care of myself. She jokingly said at one point, she said, "When I said for better or for worse just a few months ago, I didn't know that worse was coming so soon." And I shared that with you this morning because if you look at this Psalm in Psalm 44, that's what you see. The very first part of Psalm 44, there's a sense of hope and excitement and high expectations, but then the last half of it is this, "I didn't realize that worse was going to come so soon. I didn't realize it was going to be this difficult."

But he starts on these high notes and he starts and he's saying, "God hasn't disappointed me in the past." Look at the first eight verses again, "God hasn't disappointed me in the past." And he starts and he looks at the distant past and he says, "Hey, our fathers, you provided for them. Our grandfathers, you did amazing things for them." And he starts to say, "You brought them out of this slavery." And what he's doing is he's pointing back to Exodus, and he's saying all these things that they enjoyed wasn't by their hand. Look at verse three, "By their own sword they did not win this land or their own arm didn't save them, but your right hand and your arm." He's looking back into the Exodus and he's just remembering. He's saying, "God, you worked at that point. You took people who were enslaved and through your miracles and your signs, you literally freed them from slavery. They didn't do anything, you did it all."

And then when they wandered to the Red Sea and they got trapped and the Egyptians were coming to destroy them and to bring them back to captivity, God save them again. It wasn't their strength that saved them. God literally parts sea and they walk through it. And then another time as he's taking them into the promised land, he parts the Jordan River and they walk through it and they pick up these stones and set them on the other side so they could remember that God had parted the waters for them.

And then it cracks me up because their very first battle, even their very first battle, they don't win in their might, because it's God's sovereignty, because is you remember it, it's Jericho, right? And all the warriors are ready, they're suited up, they're ready to go, got my sword sharpened and we're ready to go take this. And God is like, "Nope, I don't want your warriors, I want your worship leaders. I want the guys with the skinny jeans and the plaid shirts, I want those guys. And they're going to go in and they're going to walk around Jericho and just sing songs and that's how you're going to win this battle." And they're like, "What? That's how we're going to win it?" And God, time and time again, as he looks back and remembers the distance past, he sees God's grace working, he sees God's mighty hand working. And then he even looks closer to the near future in verse 4, and he starts talking about himself, how God has worked in his life. He says, "You are my king." And in verse six he says, "I don't trust in my bow, nor do I trust in my sword, but Lord, you have saved us from our foes." He is saying, "God, I look way back and I see you working, I look in my recent past and I see you working. So God, you are always working and I am remembering what you've done."

Now all throughout scripture, God calls us to remember. This a good thing for us to do, to remember. I mean when they took those stones from the river of Jordan and they set it on the outside, it was to remind them when they would walk by they'd say, "What is that rock there for? Why do you have all of these boulders just stacked up?" It's to remember that that was God's power working. And Jesus does the same thing for us when he said ... With the Lord's supper, "Hey, take this bread and drink this cup in remembrance of me." He's like, "We want you to remember that Christ died on the cross and he rose from the grave for us. So do this constantly, remembering me." So remembering is a great thing for us to do, but we have to be careful because sometimes our wise remembrance can come and turn into deceitful envy. Our wise remembrance can turn into deceitful envy. And what I mean by that is we look we say, "God, you have worked in all of these ways in the past, in my life and in other people's lives. But as I look now, I'm envying my past because you're not working the same ways you worked in the past." And it's leading him to disappointments. It's leading him to disappointments.

We can look around at other people and we can see God working in their life, but instead of thanking God for what he's done, we're looking and we start to envy them. We say, "God, I'm single and I wanted to be married and my best friend got engaged. I wanted that promotion at work, God, and you gave it to somebody else. God, you're working in these people's lives, why aren't you working in my life? I want to be healed for my sickness and here I stand with other people being healed and I'm stuck in this chronic illness." And what you find if you slip down that slope is it's a spiral that spins down to more and to more disappointments. To more and to more dark places. And then you turn around and you look at it seems like God is distant in these times. That's the second thing, God seems distant in our disappointments. When we look around and see God's work and we're saying, "You worked then, but you're not working now."

And so God seems distant from us, he seems so far from us. And in verse nine, this is where that shift happens. He says, "But you rejected us." And then he just starts to vomit out all of these emotions and these feelings that the nation of Israel is having right now as they feel rejected by God. That's often times what it feels like for us, right? When it doesn't seem like God is working, it feels like God has rejected us and pushed us away. And we start to think false thoughts, we start to think things like, "Well, I'm a failure anyway so it's good that God has rejected me. I'm an idiot so that's why God has rejected me." Or, "I messed up again so that's why God has rejected me." And these feelings rise up, though they're not true, they still come to our mind and he's still venting that to God. And what we see with this is that this broken and fallen world, not the only thing that's messed up is my heart and not the only thing that gets messed up is relationships with each other, but our relationship with God is broken. We feel like we have been rejected when God has always been faithful. This broken world deceives us too often and we let our emotions rule instead of God's truth and his reality.

But he doesn't just feel rejected, that could have been enough, but he feels betrayed. Look back at these verses, it's in each one of them, but 9,10,11,12,13, and 14. He feels betrayed, by who? Not by others, but by God. Look at this, he says, "But you, God, have rejected me." In verse 10, "You have made us turn back from the foe." Verse 11, "You have made us like sheep for the slaughter. You have sold out your people. You ...". In verse 13,14, "You have made us a laughingstock among all peoples." He sits in the midst of his disappointment in this time and he realizes that God is in control of all of this.

Now this is deep waters and this is deep words, but I believe that these words and this prayer is not made from a lack of hope, but in hope. This cries not from a lack of hope, but it's a cry from hope and what I mean by that is he doesn't say, "Forget you, God. I'm done. Things aren't going the way I thought they would go. I'm out." But rather he looks to God knowing that he's the only one that can pull him out of this depression. God is the only one that can pull him out of this disappointment. And so he just vents to God and says, "God, this is how I feel, this is the emotion that I have. I feel rejected. I feel betrayed by you, God." He also says, "I feel abandoned by you." It's another feeling that he has, an emotion.

Look at verse 24. He says, "Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?" He feels abandoned in this moment. He can't see God moving anymore and he's wondering, "God where are you? You moved in the past, why can't I see you now?" And he's just crying out, "God, you seem so distant, you seem so hidden." And what is so sad is when it seems like God is silent, nobody else is silent. Everybody else is crying out. Look at verses 15 and 16. He said, "Our disgrace is before me and the shame has covered my face." His heart is saying, "I am a disgrace." His heart is crying out in the silence. Verse 14, other nations, other people are making fun of them and are crying out. They are mocking them. So in the midst of God's silence, everybody else is talking and they say, "God, you feel so distant. You feel so far from me in the midst of this disappointment."

My two-year-old son and I went to the grocery store just the other day and we're standing in line and he's right in front of me in line and there's more things I have to pick up, like batteries or something. And so I grabbed them off the shelf and in that time of me walking over to grab it, I'm not far, I can see my son, I'm not distant from him, and I'm grabbing the batteries, he decides he wants to turn around and hug his dad. So he turns around in line and he hugs a random stranger. And I look at my son in this moment because I'm watching it happen and he grabs that leg and then he looks up and his face is first the face of disappointment of like, "This is not dad." And then it's a face of fear and terror, because it's like, "Where is dad? Dad was here and now he's gone." And he feels like I'm 1000 miles away, when I'm literally an arms length away from him. Like I can see him. But we do the same thing, right? We turn around and we think God is going to be in the same place doing the same thing as he always has and we reach to grab him and we find nothing in that moment. We're like, "Wait, God. You're supposed to be here."

The reality of is we feel like he's distant, but he's still there. He's still there. He hasn't left us or forsaken us, he's been faithful to us. God's word even says that he is faithful when we are faithless. So when we're in the midst of the silence, we feel like God has forsaken us. Be careful with what you that silence with because so often what we find is that silence gets filled with disappointment and depression and anxiety and worry and we beat ourselves up because we think we're not adequate and we're failures. God does not work in that way. God does not speak in these generalities of, "You're a failure. You're inadequate. I'm really distant and I wanted you to feel abandoned." That's not what our God does. God speaks specifically on things, because even if he pricks our heart and convicts us of sin, which can be painful, it's to bring about refreshment and joy in our lives. God doesn't beat us down, but he lifts us up, that we would have refreshment in him. So when you hear those generalities in these deep dark disappointing times, we need to remember that God speaks truth and speaks specifically in those times to us because he doesn't want us to sink deeper, but rather to rise up with hope and with joy.

So what is God speaking specifically in this passage? What is God saying to the disappointed heart in this passage? What is the remedy when our hearts are disappointed? That's where I want us to spend the rest of our time. What's the remedy when our hearts are disappointed? What's the solution? Because if you look at Psalm 44, you don't find a whole lot of solution in here, right? I'm thankful that there's more than just one Psalm in the Psalter because it ends with Psalm 44, he's pouring out all of this anguish in his heart and then he says, "Rise up and come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!" The end. Wait a second, where is the solution in this, right? Where is the, "Okay, God came back and he did these things and everything was better in the end." Where is that in this Psalm? If you were God, would you allow this Psalm to be in your word? God did. He did. And the reason why is because context is key to God's word. He didn't just give us one chapter, he didn't just give us one book. He gave us 66 books that make one big story about who God is and his mission to save the world.

So when we look at this Psalm, we might finish and say, "I'm just scratching my head, I don't know what to do from here, God, because you didn't really give me any to do lists, it just ends with a lot of raw emotion. Alright, God. What am I supposed to do with that?" So there's three things I think we need to grasp from Psalm 44 as well as Psalm 42 and 43. All of these are threaded together to make one big point. Psalm 42, 43, and 44 are all about our souls being downcast before the Lord and he speaks truth in each of them.

Look back at Psalm 42. Look at verse four. He's doing some of the things that Psalm 44 is. He says in verse four, "These things I remember as I pour out my soul." And this is one of the remedies that we have to do when our hearts are disappointed. We have to pour out our soul to God. I believe that's what Psalm 44 is doing, I think that's what he saying when he gets to versus 23 through 26 where he's like, "Wake up! Why are you sleeping? Don't reject us forever, don't hide your face from us." I think he's just pouring out his soul before the Lord, he's being real he's being blunt before him and I think we should do the same thing.



If you come to church and you're like, "We worshiped today but I felt nothing. I read the bible this week, I got nothing out of it. I pray and I feel like my prayers aren't going past the ceiling." Then talk to God about that. Tell him that. God's word says, "Cast all of your cares upon him, for he cares for you." God is not afraid of our questions. God is not afraid of our emotions, he's given us emotions. But at the same time we need to know that sometimes our three pound brain is not going to understand the depths of an eternal God. But what we can know is that the love of God will never leave us, nor forsake us, in the depths of these disappointing times. So pour out your soul. Even if it's hot passionate prayers to God almost in anger, I'd rather you pray that then have a cold apathetic heart to God. Because a hot heart can be molded and bent, a cold heart shatters. and God wants us to open our hearts and to be faithful to pour out all of our cares upon him for he can handle it.

The second remedy is that we should analyze our hopes. We should analyze our hopes in the midst of disappointing times. I think that's what the Psalmist is doing in verses 17 and 18, even trickled a little bit into 19, but it's interesting, if you look at those verses, he's almost making a defense case. He's saying, "All of this has come upon us though we have not forgotten you and we have not been false to your covenant. Our heart hasn't turned back, nor our steps departed from your way." Now he's not saying he's sinless here. If you read the rest of the Psalms it's clear that we understand that we are sinners and we're fallen, but I believe what he's doing here is he's searching his heart and he's like, "I'm not seeing any idols right now. I don't see any big blocks where I'm holding on to this and that's the reason why we've got this discipline." Instead he is looking into his heart and he's like, "God, I am not finding any of these issues." Which once again just points to the brokenness of our world.

The reality is, you don't have to have sin in your life to be disappointed, you don't have to. We just live in a broken world that disappoints us. But our hope is that Christ is going to come and fix all of these broken things, which is where Psalm 45 takes us. Remember, context is key. If you read Psalm 45, it's all about the king who is coming to reign and how he is going to fix all these things. Psalm 45 is quoted multiple times in the New Testament speaking of Christ. So we look at the context and we find the answers. We analyze our hopes and we know, "Okay. Our hope needs to be rested in the Messiah, in Christ, because the others will disappoint me." The ultimate reality is that Christ will not disappoint us. It might feel like that at times, our emotions might say that, but Christ will always be faithful to what he has promised.

Look at how he talks about it too in Psalm 42 and 43 as he talks about his hope. Look at the end of Psalm 42, verse 11. He says, "Why are you downcast, oh my soul?" He's analyzing his hopes here, "And why are you in turmoil within me?" He says, "Hope in God, for I shall again praise him. My salvation and my God." Look at Psalm 43, verse five, the end again. He says, "Why are you downcast, oh my soul? And why are you in turmoil within me?" He's analyzing his hopes and he, "Hope in God, for I shall again praise his name." Now notice what he says here, notice that verse 11 and in verse five. He doesn't say that, "Hope in God, I do now praise him." Because that would be denial. Nor does he say, "Hope in God, for I will never praise him." Because that would be despondency.

But he says, “Hope in God, I shall again praise him. I shall again praise him.”

As believers in Jesus Christ, we know that even in the darkest of moments, this is as bad as it’s ever going to get for us. This is as bad as it’s ever going to get for us, because we know that we have a hope and a future in Christ where he is going to fix all of these broken things, he’s going to fix our broken bodies, and he’s going to make all things new. And so we look forward to the future and know that there’s weight and there’s pain in this life, but we have hope through this life because of Christ and what he has done. But the opposite is true for those that don’t know Christ or have hardened their hearts towards Christ. This life is as good as it’s ever going to get because all you have in the future is separation from God and hell.

Paul quotes Psalm 44 and he has this understanding that this life is as bad as it’s ever going to get and there’s hope that we will never be taken away from Christ. So in Romans chapter eight, Paul quotes Psalm 44, and this is the framework, this is the context for which Paul quotes Psalm 44, he says, “I consider our present sufferings not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor demons, nor present, nor future, nor powers, nor heights, nor depths, nor anything else in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.” Paul looks back at Psalm 44 with all of this raw emotion and he quotes it and he says, “And now we have hope in Christ that we will never be forsaken, even in our darkest disappointments.”

Another remedy that we need to grasp is that we need to solidify our faith. Solidify our faith. Now this is key, you have to know the object of your faith, because it’s not faith that saves us but it’s the object of our faith that saves us, right? I mean I could have faith in a chair but it’s not going to save me, but it could be a genuine faith, right? But we have faith in God, in the eternal almighty God and who he is. That’s where our faith rests. And that’s why he cries out to God, because he knows that God is the only hope in the midst of this darkest moment. So in Psalm 44 verse 23, he says, “Awake! Why are you sleeping, Oh Lord?” He’s crying out to God for help and he’s wondering, “God, do you care? Can you even fix this problem?” He’s praying that, he’s crying out to God and this isn’t the only place that this happens.

If you remember in the New Testament, that’s what happens with the disciples. In Mark chapter four, the disciples are on the boat, they have had a long day of working and Jesus is tired and so he takes a nap there and this big storm comes in, right? And what is Jesus doing? He’s sleeping. So what does Mark chapter four say, “But when he was asleep in the stern, asleep on the cushion, the disciples woke Jesus and said, ‘Teacher, do you not care that we’re perishing?’” Same question Psalm 44 is asking, do not care that we are perishing? “And Jesus awoke and rebuked the wind and the sea and said, ‘Peace, be still.’ And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.” Then look what Jesus said, “Then he said to them, ‘Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?’” Jesus, in this moment, is speaking to their faith. He is saying, “In this moment of despair, what you really are despairing is your faith.” And he says, “Have you still no faith? Solidify your faith.” But in what? “The disciples are in awe and have great fear with one another and they say this, ‘Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey him? Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey him.’”

Who is this? The answer to that question is God, who humbled himself and took on flesh to come to earth to save us, to save you and I. So that question the disciples cry out, that Psalm 44 cries out, that we cry out of, “God, do you care? Do you care anything about me? In this moment, why are you so silent?” We solidify our faith in Christ because we know that Christ cares for us, we know that God cares, because if he didn’t he never would’ve come to earth to save us. And all of these emotions that well up in our hearts, that’s just the bottom of the mountain of that emotion. Christ ascended to the peak of that mountain of that emotion. Every one of them that Psalm 44 talks about, every one of them, Christ knows the peak of it.

Think about it. He’s pouring out this feeling of being rejected, Christ was rejected. They laid down palm branches as Christ rode in and they sang, “Hosanna.” And then the next day they’re saying, “Crucify him. Crucify him.” He felt betrayed. Psalm 44 talks about in verse 12, “You have sold us for such a small trifle.” Jesus was sold for 30 pieces of silver. The Psalmist says, “We feel like we’re sheep led to the slaughter.” Christ was the perfect spotless sheep that was led to the slaughter for us. He cries out, “God, we feel like we are abandoned by you! Why are you hiding your face?” Jesus hung on the cross and he says, “My God, my God. Why have you forsaken me?” Jesus has the pinnacle of all these emotions, so it’s not that God just cares for you and pats you on the head and says, “Well, I do love you but you’re just going to have to deal with that.” Christ came down and he empathizes with our deepest emotions and our deepest disappointments and he promises to be the rock and the fortress that we can run to for help, which is exactly what we see in Psalm 46. “He is our refuge our rock. Be still and know that he is God.” All of these threaded together to that one big point that we would look to God instead of running from God and our deepest disappointments.

There’s this author who has written for a lot of different papers, he has written for the Washington Post, LA Times, New York Times, and he just wanted to write a book because he enjoyed the whole survivalistic idea. So he wrote this book called “The Survivors Club”. He did all of this research, it is a fascinating book if you want to read it, all of this research on how people survive some of the darkest and most disappointing moments. And some of it is just practical knowledge, like one of them I took to heart. On there it says those that survive a plane crash are those that are 12 rows from the exit, so I always sign my seat 12 rows from the exit. It talks about other practical things of how to survive.

But Sherwood, who writes this book, is not a Christian, he’s not a believer. But he gets to one part in his book and this is what he says, which is interesting, as he’s looking at different people who are in the darkest of moments in the most disappointing of moments, this is what he says in his book, he said, “When I started writing this book I was somewhat skeptical about someone’s faith and survival. But as I began to interview survivors all around the world, I noticed a remarkable pattern. Overwhelmingly, they shared that a belief in God and faith sustained them through their trials.” He said, “As high as 75 to 80 percent stated that a higher power was the reason for their survival.” And he quotes and he says this, “Over time my doubts proved to be no match for their convictions. Indeed I began to feel admiration for their faith and I envy their servitude.

Many survivors are true believers, either they faced their crisis with a strong faith or they discovered in their crucible, but they all share a common perspective that God has a plan and he gives them strength to overcome.”

So he says that and then just a few pages later he talks about meeting this man, Ray Smith, and he wanted to learn from Ray Smith because Ray Smith is the man’s man, he literally wrote the book on how to survive on land and sea. Like literally wrote the book on it. For almost 30 years he taught the Navy, this how you survive the most difficult disappointing moments. And so Sherwood goes to Ray and he says, Hey, I’m looking for inside scoop. What can you tell me that can help me write this book better about how people survive the darkest of times?” He says, he asks him the question, “What is the secret of survival?” Without hesitation, Ray answered, “Faith in God. Faith in God.” And Sherwood said, “Really?” And he said, “Absolutely.” Ray Smith said, “I believe it should be the first chapter on any book on survival.”

Church, if lost men who don’t know God can say that there’s an importance of faith, how much deeper should our conviction and hope and faith and joy be when we look to Jesus Christ, the one that descended from heaven and came to earth, not just so we can survive, but Lord, that we would thrive in him. That we can look at these disappointing times and know that God has a plan and God is in control. And so we look to him knowing that him and him alone can pull us out of that pit. So church, let us not run from God in our disappointments, but rather let us run to him, the only one who can save. Let’s pray.

God, thank you for these Psalms that just speak this raw emotion. Lord, we need it. But more than just having these Psalms, Lord, we thank you for what these Psalms point to. That it points to you, Christ. It points to you, the one who would show us that we can know that you care for us and that we can know that you’re gonna never leave us or forsake us because of what you did on the cross and how you conquered death through your resurrection. We can have hope in the darkest of times, though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death we can fear no evil because Lord you are with us. And so Lord, I pray right now for those that are in this room that might feel like, “I want to run from God.” Lord help them to instead run to you. And for those of us that know you and love you but are struggling with doubts, depression, I want to pray in this moment that you would just make yourself so close to us, that you would remove the emotion of rejection and the feeling that your distant. God, be near because Lord, your nearness is our good. It’s in Christ’s name we pray, amen.



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