

Psalm 41 – 45 Chapter Study

PSALM 41

To the Chief Musician. A Psalm of David.

As we've seen in several of David's songs so far, he asks God to defend him against the attacks of his enemies.

They often came against him while he was laid low by illness.

Their trying to take advantage of him while he was already suffering moved David to consider the treatment of the poor & distressed.

¹ Blessed *is* he who considers the poor; The Lord will deliver him in time of trouble.

This word '**consider**' means to give careful attention to.

It's more than just a passing recognition of something; "Yep, some people are poor. Oh well, too bad."

It means to recognize a need & evaluate how to meet it.

David says those who help the poor in practical ways will themselves be helped by God when **their** time of need comes.

² The Lord will preserve him and keep him alive, *And* he will be blessed on the earth; You will not deliver him to the will of his enemies.

³ The Lord will strengthen him on his bed of illness; You will sustain him on his sickbed.

Helping the poor is something so dear to the heart of God He will show **special favor** to those who are tender toward the needy.

⁴ I said, "Lord, be merciful to me; Heal my soul, for I have sinned against You."

This is such a crucial insight on David's part! We can learn **much** from it.

David recognized that when he sinned, it was **more** than just something that needed to be forgiven.

Sin was a symptom of a sickness of the soul that needed to be healed.

It revealed a brokenness that needed to be mended.

This is something parents need to do with their children – to help them see that when they disobey, when they rebel, it's more than just an error, an offence for which they need to be forgiven & corrected.

It reveals something about the way they think, their motives, how they see themselves & the parent.

When David sinned, he understood that it revealed a flaw in his faith; a hole in his soul that need to be filled by the Spirit of God.

⁵ My enemies speak evil of me: "When will he die, and his name perish?"

⁶ And if he comes to see *me*, he speaks lies; His heart gathers iniquity to itself; *When* he goes out, he tells *it*.

⁷ All who hate me whisper together against me; Against me they devise my hurt.

⁸ "An evil disease," *they say*, "clings to him. And *now* that he lies down, he will rise up no more."

David's enemies used the occasion of his great distress to pile on & he knew it was something God opposed.

If those enemies had a good or just cause to oppose David – then it ought to have been good enough to come against him when he was healthy & strong.

But their cause wasn't just or valid; so they had to wait until he was weakened by trial to rise up.

⁹ Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up *his* heel against me.

More than likely, David refers to his good friend & confidant Ahithophel who'd joined Absalom in his rebellion against David.

Even more than the betrayal of his own son Absalom, it was this betrayal by Ahithophel that hurt David. There's little that hurts more than the betrayal of a close friend.

This is why adultery is so incredibly cruel.

Jesus counted Judas as a friend – one who betrayed him with the action only a close friend would give – a kiss.

¹⁰ But You, O Lord, be merciful to me, and raise me up, That I may repay them.

David doesn't mean revenge. The repayment he means comes from his being raised up, healed.

His restoration will silence them. That's the **repayment** he's looking for.

¹¹ By this I know that You are well pleased with me, Because my enemy does not triumph over me.

12 As for me, You uphold me in my integrity, And set me before Your face forever.
He knows the importance of not **judging** something while in the midst of it.

We need to keep our eyes on the outcome, the end.

We're not promised a carefree, trouble-free life.

On the contrary; God says that living in this fallen world means trials & trouble.

What we are promised is the ultimate victory of glory in heaven & eternal life in the presence of God.

13 Blessed *be* the Lord God of Israel From everlasting to everlasting! Amen and Amen.

Psalm 42

To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of the Sons of Korah.

Psalm 42 brings us to the 2nd of the 5 scrolls of Psalms.

Psalms 42 & 43 go together. Several ancient Hebrew Bibles make them one.

The same refrain is found in both Psalms – 42:5 & 11, 43:5 = “Why are you cast down oh my soul?”

It's called a **Contemplation of the sons of Korah**; who were worship leaders.

‘Contemplation’ means it was a **special kind of sung-prayer**.

David was more than likely the author of this.

It's something he wrote when he was a fugitive, probably on the run from Absalom.

Because he had to flee from Jerusalem where the tabernacle had been set up, he feels **far** from God.

1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.

This is a great image someone who'd spent a lot of time observing nature would relate to.

During drought, when the streams & springs dry up, wild-life is forced to find fewer & fewer watering holes.

This brings them all to diminishing supplies where predators also have to come to drink.

The deer end up panting in thirst for water.

The author feels just like that it in his desire for God.

A time of spiritual drought has come and he's desperately thirsty for the Spirit.

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

Just as the deer begins to wonder when it's going to be able to come to the water, the author wonders when he'll be able to slake his spiritual longing for the Lord.

3 My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me, “Where *is* your God?”

What adds to his thirst is the trial he's in. It's a trial **caused** by his opponents.

4 When I remember these *things*, I pour out my soul within me.

Then he recounts his memories . . .

For I used to go with the multitude; I went with them to the house of God, With the voice of joy and praise,
With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.

What makes being spiritually dry hard is remembering the times of closeness to the Lord, the anointing, the times when the Spirit was like a river, a waterfall of glory!

The psalmist remembered times of standing in the presence of God with other's whose hearts were caught up in worship. But now he's **alone & far away**.

Then the refrain -

5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And *why* are you disquieted within me?

The psalmist faces himself with an honest & probing question.

WHY am I feeling this way? What's the root cause?

God is no less here than in Jerusalem.

Nothing has changed except my circumstance, which life has taught me changes all the time!

What **doesn't change** is God! So -

Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him *For* the help of His countenance.

God will come thru, & I will look back on this time with eyes that see how He was **faithful thru it all**.

Renewed in faith in the ultimate victory of God, the Psalmist is honest in expressing himself to the Lord -

6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me;

Listen, when you're struggling, when you're depressed & discouraged, be honest with God.

Tell him how you're feeling.

What?!?! You think He doesn't know?

God *always* tells us the truth – we need to do the same with Him.

But having told the truth about where he's at, the psalmist goes on to express his hope . . .

Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, And from the heights of Hermon, From the Hill Mizar.

This is in the northernmost part of Israel, at the headwaters of the Jordan.

What he says next gives us a clue to precisely where he was -

⁷ Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls; All Your waves and billows have gone over me.

There's a place we go when we visit this area where there's a gorgeous waterfall.

It's the only one in the entire region.

It's a place David had visited in his years as a fugitive on the run from Saul.

He likely returned there when he was running from Absalom.

We're used to loud noises because of the machines of the modern world.

Jet engines, cars, trucks, amplified sound systems, earbuds.

The ancient world was far more quiet.

One of the loudest sounds they had was the roaring of a waterfall.

If you've ever been to the bottom of a large falls you now that the air *throbs* with the pulsing sound of the water.

What the Psalmist describes here is how altered his view of things became when he visited this waterfall and heard its roar.

The power & glory of the Lord's creation broke thru his depression & reminded him of the glory of God.

The voice of God spoke to the very deepest part of him, revealing something about the deeper love & purposes of God.

Nature does that! When we look up into that night sky & see those dazzling stars it reminds us of the vastness of God.

You feel the warmth of the sun & remember God's presence.

You go to the beach & watch the waves roll in one after another, grinding rocks into stones, into pebbles, into grains of sand, which decay into dirt, which feed plants, which produces beautiful flowers, which produce oxygen, that we breath, as we sit there watching the waves.

Nature is a vast canvas on which God paints His power & glory.

One of the reasons the evil tries to destroy it by pollution, misuse & mismanagement.

Why he tried to keep us indoors, parked in front of the TV, game console, computer.

We ought to all make it a habit to get outdoors every so often and take the time to just observe creation; to enjoy God's handiwork.

⁸ The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime, And in the night His song *shall be* with me — A prayer to the God of my life.

⁹ I will say to God my Rock, "Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"

¹⁰ As with a breaking of my bones, My enemies reproach me, While they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

¹¹ Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

Because life does so often see us coming back to the same trials, we need to come back to the same truths.

Friends, take careful note of where the psalmist goes when he's depressed.

He doesn't run to a bottle or a pill. He goes to the Lord.

Be careful - I'm not saying that something like clinical depression shouldn't be treated with medication.

Where there's some real physiological cause for depression, medication can help.

But the fact is, far too many prescriptions for anti-depressants are given out for *spiritual* depression.

And even with medication, people still need to overcome their habit of thought that's kept them depressed.

That's done by take our thoughts captive to Christ and renewing our hope in God – just as the psalmist says here.

1 Vindicate me, O God, And plead my cause against an ungodly nation; Oh, deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!

2 For You *are* the God of my strength; Why do You cast me off? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

The psalmist is **not** asking God these things; he's pondering them himself.

See – first he makes a statement of fact – “**You are the God of my strength.**”

When he next says, “**Why do You cast me off?**” what he *means* is; “Do You cast me off?”

Since God is his strength, would God cast him off? No!

It's the same idea when he adds, “**Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?**”

In other words – **because** God is his strength, it's *silly* to moan about his problems.

That's why he pleads -

3 Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me; Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your tabernacle.

This is a good indication David was the author because he refers to the tabernacle rather than the temple.

4 Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy; And on the harp I will praise You, O God, my God.

5 Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

Psalm 44

To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of the Sons of Korah.

While the **theme** of Psalm 44 is similar to 42 & 43, those were the meditation of an **individual**. **This** is a **national** prayer.

1 We have heard with our ears, O God, Our fathers have told us, The deeds You did in their days, In days of old:

2 You drove out the nations [goyim: Gentiles] with Your hand, But them [Israel] You planted; You afflicted the peoples, and cast them out.

3 For they did not gain possession of the land by their own sword, Nor did their own arm save them; But it was Your right hand, Your arm, and the light of Your countenance, Because You favored them.

The tribes of Israel, under the leadership of Joshua, conquered the Canaanites to take possession of the land.

But it wasn't Israel's military skill that enable them to prevail; it was God's divine help.

The victory over mighty Jericho proved that, as did Israel's defeat a short time later at the tiny village of Ai.

4 You are my King, O God; Command victories for Jacob. [Israel]

5 Through You we will push down our enemies; Through Your name we will trample those who rise up against us.

6 For I will not trust in my bow, Nor shall my sword save me.

7 But You have saved us from our enemies, And have put to shame those who hated us.

So, did this mean that they wouldn't fire arrows or swing their swords?

Of course not – they fought!

It's just that they understood it was their **active dependence** on God that would make the arrows & swords effective.

What's true of battle is true for the rest of life as well.

Work – parenting – marriage

8 In God we boast all day long, And praise Your name forever. Selah

So much of society, regardless of what culture you're talking about, is puny little man making himself out to be something special. Silly boasting!

As the people of God, we ought to boast in something worthy of it = GOD!

With v. 9, the song turns dark -

9 But You have cast *us* off and put us to shame, And You do not go out with our armies.

10 You make us turn back from the enemy, And those who hate us have taken spoil for themselves.
11 You have given us up like sheep *intended* for food, And have scattered us among the nations.
12 You sell Your people for *next to* nothing, And are not enriched by selling them.
13 You make us a reproach to our neighbors, A scorn and a derision to those all around us.
14 You make us a byword among the nations, A shaking of the head among the peoples.
15 My dishonor *is* continually before me, And the shame of my face has covered me,
16 Because of the voice of him who reproaches and reviles, Because of the enemy and the avenger.
17 All this has come upon us; But we have not forgotten You, Nor have we dealt falsely with Your covenant.

Israel has suffered a tremendous loss in battle, though they haven't done anything to deserve God's discipline. The people cry out with the same kind of lament Job had, "Why are we suffering so? We haven't done anything to deserve this!" Look -

18 Our heart has not turned back, Nor have our steps departed from Your way;
19 But You have severely broken us in the place of jackals, And covered us with the shadow of death.
20 If we had forgotten the name of our God, Or stretched out our hands to a foreign god,
21 Would not God search this out? For He knows the secrets of the heart.
22 Yet for Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.
23 Awake! Why do You sleep, O Lord? Arise! Do not cast *us* off forever.
24 Why do You hide Your face, *And* forget our affliction and our oppression?
25 For our soul is bowed down to the dust; Our body clings to the ground.
26 Arise for our help, And redeem us for Your mercies' sake.

The psalm never comes thru into the place of explaining **WHY** they'd suffered so great a loss. It doesn't answer or resolve the question for us because it's true to life. It's an accurate picture of the way things sometimes are. Notice how it DOES end – with a request for God's help. It **ends** in the place of **trust in God**.

That's exactly where we need to be when bad things happen to us for no apparent reason.

You can be doing great in your walk with God when all of a sudden all hell breaks loose – as in Job's life. You ask God if it's some sin He's dealing with. It isn't. So – what do you do? You pray & ask for deliverance.

Psalm 45

To the Chief Musician. Set to "The Lilies." A Contemplation of the Sons of Korah. A Song of Love.

This is a royal song celebrating the wedding of the king.

It begins with **praise to the groom** for his splendor.

Then follows the counsel given the bride before she arrives at the palace.

As we read this, see if it doesn't work for Christ in the Second Coming who returns as a Conquering King who comes to get His Bride, the Church.

John surely had this Psalm in mind as he wrote the 19th chapter of Revelation.

1 My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

The author is **inspired** by the majesty of the groom.

2 You are fairer than the sons of men;

He's ultra-handsome.

Grace is poured upon Your lips;

Listening to him speak brings delight.

Therefore God has blessed You forever.

This king is blessed not only in **body & soul** but **spiritually** as well.

3 Gird Your sword upon *Your* thigh, O Mighty One, With Your glory and Your majesty.

4 And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, *and* righteousness; And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things.

In other words – His is not the teaching of mere words – it’s the instruction of ***righteous action!***

5 Your arrows *are* sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies; The peoples fall under You.

6 Your throne, O God, *is* forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness *is* the scepter of Your kingdom.

That makes it pretty clear this is prophetic of the Messiah!

7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

Here’s another obvious reference to the Messiah, which means – The Anointed One!

8 All Your garments are scented with myrrh and aloes *and* cassia, Out of the ivory palaces, by which they have made You glad.

The Messiah even ***smells*** good!

Ivory was like gold. It was so rare it was highly treasured.

This king’s palace is made of it.

9 Kings’ daughters *are* among Your honorable women; At Your right hand stands the queen in gold from Ophir.

That’s the ***purest*** gold.

10 Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father’s house; The bride is told to forget her past for 2 reasons –

1) ***Regret*** should not diminish her joy in the presence of her groom for one second.

2) Her past doesn’t diminish ***His delight*** in her one tiny bit!

11 So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He *is* your Lord, worship Him.

Come on! – You have to admit this is amazing.

It’s obvious that we ought to worship our divine groom –

But to hear that He GREATLY DESIRES our beauty is astounding!!!!

What beauty? The beauty the Spirit is even now accomplishing in us as we are conformed to His image.

12 And the daughter of Tyre *will come* with a gift; The rich among the people will seek your favor.

This is a poetic way of revealing how the Bride of Christ will be exalted.

13 The royal daughter *is* all glorious within *the palace*; Her clothing *is* woven with gold.

14 She shall be brought to the King in robes of many colors; The virgins, her companions who follow her, shall be brought to You.

The image here is of a large & glorious wedding party richly arrayed in the finest clothes.

15 With gladness and rejoicing they shall be brought; They shall enter the King’s palace.

16 Instead of Your fathers shall be Your sons, Whom You shall make princes in all the earth.

In v. 10 the bride was told to forget her father’s house, meaning her past.

That’s the idea here. Her union with her groom has started something new where instead of looking back, they together look forward.

Their union will see great prosperity & posterity.

That has been the case hasn’t it?

Whenever God’s people are moving & walking in the Spirit, the result is new spiritual life.

17 I will make Your name to be remembered in all generations; Therefore the people shall praise You forever and ever.

The king is so ***splendiferous***, He will be remembered far & wide forever.