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Scripture

Psalm 43

- 1 Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly people;
from those who are deceitful and unjust
deliver me!
- 2 For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
why have you cast me off?
Why must I walk about mournfully
because of the oppression of the enemy?
- 3 O send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling.
- 4 Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy;
and I will praise you with the harp,
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 again praise him,
my help and my God.

Devotional

The Psalmist uses graphic language to describe what we call depression. It is the feeling of being “cast down” from within, as though the soul itself is being pushed down. It is the sense of being “disquieted,” agitated for no good reason. For millions of people, this describes reality.

When night closes in, what should we do? Turn to God, the Psalmist seems to suggest. Does that help? Not exactly. Notice how verse 4 (I “go . . . to God my exceeding joy”) comes before verse 5 (but I am still “cast down”).

Our text offers no quick fix. Hope in God and there’s no more depression? Wouldn’t that be nice? The truth is that God is no magic pill. The dark night of the soul can be long and frightening, empty except for bitter tears.

Hope in God, not because it lifts the despair, but because sometimes it is the only thing we can do. Hope and hang on.

Prayer

Even in my sorrow, O God, speak to me. Use my darkness to help to reveal your light. Use the empty silence within me to help me hear you. Do not let me despair without your blessing me through it all, in Christ, I pray. Amen.