

Hope in God

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 23 November 2025

Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[0 : 00] Would you stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word, Psalm 42 and 43.

So pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, where is your God? These things I remember as I pour out my soul, 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.

Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you in turmoil within me, hoping God? For I shall again praise Him, my salvation and my God.

My soul is cast down within me, therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon and of Mount Miser. Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls, as your breakers and your waves have gone over me.

[1 : 26] By day the Lord commands His steadfast love, and at night His song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. I say to God, my rock, why have you forgotten me?

Why do I go mourning? Because of the oppression of the enemy. 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?

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.

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people from the deceitful and unjust man. Deliver me. For you are the God in whom I take refuge.

Why have you rejected me? Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Send out your light and your truth. Let them lead me. Let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling.

[2 : 25] 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. 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.

May God add a blessing to the reading of His Word. Would you please be seated? Our Bibles are full of examples of men and women who experienced prolonged bouts of depression.

Moses experienced feelings of self-doubt, inadequacy, and despair while leading the Israelites in the wilderness. In the book of Ruth, Naomi's grief over the loss of her husband and her sons was so immense that she felt like God had turned against her.

King David, a man who God said was a man after his own heart, expressed feelings of deep sorrow and despair in the Psalms. Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet.

[3 : 37] In Jeremiah 20, 14 through 18, he said, Cursed be the day on which I was born. The day when my mother bore me, let it not be blessed.

Cursed be the man who brought the news to my father. A son is born to you, making him very glad. Let that man be like the cities that the Lord overthrew without pity. Let him hear a cry in the morning, an alarm at noon, because he did not kill me in the womb.

So my mother would have been my grave and her womb forever great. Why did I come out of the womb to see toil and sorrow and spend my days in shame? Elijah experienced the awesome power of God on Mount Carmel when he stood as one man with God against 850 false prophets of Baal and Asherah.

In what is one of my favorite stories in the Bible, God proved himself to be the only true living God consuming Elijah's sacrifice, leading to the execution of the false prophets and God's people turning

to him, acknowledging that he is the Lord, that he is God.

But soon after that powerful moment where God showed up and showed and displayed his awesome power, the evil queen Jezebel vowed to commit herself and all of her resources to bring about Elijah's death.

[5 : 07] Elijah hears that and he runs away in fear for his life and he enters into a period of spiritual despair. In 1 Kings 19, it says, But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness and came and sat down under a broom tree, and he asked that he might die, saying, It is enough now, O Lord, take away my life, for I am no better than my father's.

Dark nights of the soul are common among God's people, including those who we would not expect to struggle with spiritual depression.

The superscription or heading of Psalm 42 says, A maskle means contemplation or lesson. These psalms tell the story of a man struggling with his emotions. His contemplation over his struggle is meant to teach us a lesson. They show us what to do when we're spiritually depressed. So the main idea for this morning's sermon is that the remedy for spiritual depression is to hope in God. The remedy for spiritual depression is to hope in God.

[6 : 38] God designed us with bodies and souls, with heads and with hearts, with minds and emotions, with thoughts and feelings. In times of despair, we are tempted to trust our feelings more than what God says to us in his word.

We are tempted to believe that our emotions are more trustworthy than the truths found in Scripture. And we begin to doubt God rather than having faith in him.

And we worry about the future rather than trusting him in the present and placing our hope in him for what lies ahead, for what will come tomorrow. Martin Lloyd-Jones wrote a book called Spiritual Depression, Its Causes and Cures.

And he said the ultimate cause of all spiritual depression is unbelief. He explains that spiritual depression results from listening to doubts and the devil instead of God and his word and failing to grasp the greatness of the gospel.

One of the texts he examines in that book is Psalm 42 and 43, reflecting on how the psalmist talks to himself instead of listening to himself.

[7 : 56] And he writes, Instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself.

Why are you cast down, O my soul, he asks. The whole heart and spiritual living is knowing how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself.

You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself, put your hope in God. And then you go on reminding yourself of God, who God is, what God is, and what God has done and what God has pledged to do himself.

In Psalm 42 and 43, the psalmist preaches to himself instead of listening to himself. Three times he repeats the statement, Why are you cast down, O my soul?

Why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. And between those three statements, the psalmist talks to himself.

[9 : 28] He reasons with himself. He preaches to himself. And in so doing, the Holy Spirit speaks through him to us, providing the remedy for spiritual depression, which is to hope in God.

Now, you might be asking, how do we hope in God? Well, the psalmist tells us how. God tells us how, through his word, how we apply this remedy.

He gives us three applications. The first is to remember God's past faithfulness. Remember God's past faithfulness. In verses 1 through 2, the psalmist uses a metaphor to depict his thirsty soul.

And again, he writes, As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God, my soul. Thirst for God, for the living God. Panting pictures the desperate, audible wheezing of a creature that must reach water or die.

I don't have a deer, but I have dogs. And one of them, Spurgeon, our black Aussie doodle, pants a lot.

[10 : 40] He pants when he needs to go outside. He pants when he needs attention or when he needs water. He pants to express his need.

Here, the psalmist, soul, pants for God. And the Hebrew word translated as soul is nephesh. That word describes the source of life within every living, breathing, physical being.

And the Bible tells us that the ultimate source of all life is God. And for those who know that truth and have tasted that the Lord is good and have come to Jesus for living water, they know that when their soul is dry, when they're in a season of spiritual drought, God is the source of life, so they don't turn away from God, but they turn to God for nourishment.

To thirst for God's presence in their life. Dead things don't thirst.

Thirst for thirst.

[12:17] The psalmist knows all of this. But like they used to say at the end of the G.I. Joe cartoons that I watched as a kid, knowing is half the battle.

Or in this case, it's only a part of the remedy. A few weeks ago, I went to the doctor for the first time in a long time, in years.

I'm not a patient patient. I don't like all the waiting. I don't like all the poking and the prodding. But when my efforts to self-diagnose and self-medicate fail, I have an option.

I could either seek help or I could continue to suffer. And so I decided to seek help.

And the first thing the doctor did for me and what most doctors do is they ask you questions. They ask about your symptoms. They ask when you started feeling the way that you do. Eventually, my doctor prescribed a remedy, which in this case was some medicine.

[13:24] Now, I still had a choice to make. I had the diagnosis. I had the remedy. But the doctor wasn't going to follow me home and force those pills down my throat every day until they were gone.

Sometimes, we take a strange delight in our suffering, don't we? While the Bible says that we should rejoice in persecution for our faith, it does not advise us to rejoice in self-pity.

1 Thessalonians 5:18 says, Give thanks in all circumstances, in all circumstances. For this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. Philippians 4:6-7 says, The psalmist doesn't express his spiritual drought to make others feel sorry for him.

He's not throwing a pity party for himself. He doesn't behave like Eeyore in Winnie the Pooh, thinking and living in this perpetual state of doom and gloom.

No, he seeks God, the great physician, for help. And he does so by communicating his symptoms in verses 3 and 4. My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, Where is your God?

[15:01] These things I remember as I pour out my soul, How I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with loud shouts and songs of praise, A multitude-keeping festival.

Why is the psalmist unable to eat and only weep? Well, he tells us he's in a place he doesn't want to be, Surrounded by people who see his circumstances as an opportunity to attack his faith.

The psalmist is of the sons of Korah. The sons of Korah were a group of men from the tribe of Levi. They served as singers and musicians in the temple in Jerusalem.

Korah was a Levite who led a rebellion against Moses and was punished by God when God opened up the earth to swallow him and all who stood with him against Moses, burying them alive.

But some of Korah's sons realized the sin of their father, and they obeyed God's warning, removing themselves from their father's location, thus saving their lives.

[16:16] So this son of Korah knew God's graciousness to not make him pay for the sins of his father. He knew God's graciousness to give him a place to praise him in the temple.

But Israel had faced a defeat that resulted in his removal from Jerusalem, hindering the fulfillment of his work there, and leaving him surrounded by enemies of God's people.

People who didn't share his view of the world, his approach to life, his values, and his belief in the God whom he worshipped. They saw his tears, they saw his grief, his downcast soul, and they taunted him, saying to him, where is your God?

The implication of that taunt being, your God isn't here. Your God doesn't care about you. Your God cannot save you.

Your God isn't really God. Their questions were intended to deceive him. 1 Peter 5, 8 through 9 encourages believers to be sober-minded, to be watchful.

[17:34] Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him. He's not going to be able to do it. Firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world.

Have you ever seen lions hunt? They don't go for the strongest in the herd, the fittest, the fastest.

They don't want to challenge. They want to eat. And so they target the most vulnerable. Jesus called Satan the father of lies.

He is the master deceiver. And he uses those who have rejected God, who have rejected Jesus Christ as his son, to spread his deception.

During spiritual low points, we are vulnerable to the enemy's lies. We're also vulnerable to the lies that we sometimes, in our flesh, whisper to ourselves.

[18 : 43] Whispering things to ourself like, this is never going to end. God doesn't care about me. There is no hope.

My life is not worth living anymore. Brother, sister, friend, don't listen to those lies.

The psalmist didn't. He continued to have this conversation with himself, but at this point, he applies one of the remedies for spiritual depression.

He helps in God by remembering God's faithfulness in the past. In verse four, he chooses to remember a spiritual high point in his life.

When he joined with God's people in a procession to God's temple, God's house, where he led them in shouts of praise as they kept festival together. In Leviticus 23, God commanded his people to observe seven festivals throughout the year.

[19 : 56] The purpose of those festivals or those feasts was to cause God's people to remember him, to remember his provision in the past, to remember how he delivered them from slavery and saved them through sacrifice.

Those festivals were also a time of restitution, where God's people would seek his forgiveness for their sins. They were also times for God's people to remember that the promises that he kept in the past are promises that he keeps in the present and promises he will fulfill in the future.

The point of the festivals was to remember who God is, what God has done, and what God will do for his people.

That's the first application of the remedy for spiritual depression. When like the psalmist, you're in a place where you don't want to be, surrounded by lies that cause you to doubt God, remember who God truly is, remember what God has done in your life and how he's shown his grace and his love to you, how God was gracious to save you and reveal himself in ways to you that inspired your worship of him.

I remember eight years ago coming here to Highland Park with my family, moving from the Kansas City area to Bartlesville. We moved away from family, from church family, from friends who loved us and whom we loved.

[21 : 37] We left a place that was comfortable to come to a place that wasn't familiar. Those of you who were here back then did a good job to make us feel at home, but there were tears that first year.

And during my low points, I would remember the ways God had just completely cleared the path for us to come here. It was clear that this is where God wanted us to be. And I trusted in that. I trusted and I reminded myself that God doesn't make mistakes and that he would do something here despite how unlikely it felt to me at times.

And he would be glorified here. Not that he wasn't before, but that he would continue to be. And he has. And I trust that he's not done here.

Friend, you may be in a place where you don't want to be that has caused you to feel spiritually depressed. And the remedy part of it is to continue to hope in God.

[23 : 03] Spend time with God alone. Get away. By yourself. And spend time remembering how God revealed himself to you as a good, gracious, and faithful father in your past.

Now, the second application for the remedy, we're to remember and now we're to remind ourselves, remind yourself of God's present presence.

The psalmist has remembered God's faithfulness in the past and now in Psalm 42, 6 through 11, he reminds himself of God's presence in his present circumstances.

In verse 6, he says, my soul is cast down within me. Therefore, I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon from Mount Miser. The psalmist's soul has not yet risen out of its cast down state.

And this is the way that the Christian life is sometimes. We can arrive at the right answers. In this case, remembering God's past faithfulness and we can trust in that theological principle.

[24 : 17] But our physical circumstances are still the same. Nothing has changed. In the case of the psalmist, he's still in a place he doesn't want to be. His physical circumstances haven't changed.

So what does he do? Does he give up? No. He persists. He prays. He resists joining his adversaries. He refuses to exchange the truth of God for a lie.

He will not abandon God and his faith in him. And so he models for us, again, how to respond when the darkness doesn't lift.

He reminds himself of God's presence in his present place, which was the land of Jordan and the Hermons from Mount Miser.

This is a region north of Israel, the place that is the source of the waters for the Jordan River. It's a place with valleys. It's a place with mountains.

[25 : 19] In this place, the psalmist is experiencing spiritual drought, panting for God, reminding himself of God's presence in his present circumstances, which he likens to drowning in verse 7.

Look at that verse again. Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls. All your breakers and your waves have gone over me.

Some people, when they face hard things or hard times, feel the need to protect God by letting him off the hook, acting as if God couldn't prevent their pain or as if God couldn't foresee their tragedy or maybe even thinking that their faith wasn't strong enough for God to intervene.

The Bible says that God is sovereign and he is in complete control over all things at all times.

Isaiah 45, 7 reminds us of this. God speaking to the prophet I form light and create darkness.

[26 : 41] I make well-being and create calamity. I am the Lord who does all these things. Isaiah 46, 9 through 10.

Remember the former things of old for I am God and there is no other. I am God and there is none like me declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done saying my counsel shall stand and I will accomplish all my purpose.

If God is not sovereign, if God is not in complete control over all things, then there is no reason for us to hope in him.

but God is sovereign and he does work all things together for the good of those who love him as Romans 8, 28 says.

Last week, I was at a pastor's retreat and around our tables, they encouraged us to share painful experiences in our life and how God used those things to shape us, to reveal himself to us and to the pastors that we are today.

[28 : 02] And person by person around the table, pastors, some who have been in the ministry for 40 years, some who have been in the ministry for 15, some who have only been in the ministry for a few years, sharing stories of tragedy, sharing stories of shame, shedding tears.

But there is a common message throughout all of these painful experiences. God is gracious. God is good.

God forgives. God helps. God loves. God is sovereign over our painful experiences, teaching us things about himself, that though we would never want to live through those things again, we learn to be thankful for because he brought us closer to him.

the psalmist trusts in God's sovereignty. Though he feels like he's drowning, he trusts that God has a purpose for it.

Commenting on this verse, John Piper says, in other words, all his crashing and tumultuous and oppressing and discouraging circumstances are the waves of God.

[29 : 31] He never loses his grip on the great truths about God. They are the ballast in his little boat of faith. They keep him from capsizing in the tumult of emotions.

the shadows. God paints on the canvas of your lives.

The dark threads that he weaves in the tapestry of your earthly existence emphasize the radiant!

The radiant colors of his glorious grace to save sinners in his love.

And by doing so, by sending his son, his only son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross as darkness filled the afternoon day and he who knew no sin became sin so that by faith in him we receive his righteousness.

Jesus Christ faced the most severe circumstances and he endured the harshest conditions of anyone ever as the Father, God the Father poured out his wrath on his Son for our sins as Jesus shed his blood atoning for our sins dying in our place.

[31 : 06] 700 years before this happened God gave the prophet Isaiah this prophecy describing this event in Isaiah 53 7-11 speaking of Jesus and what he would do he was oppressed and he was afflicted yet he opened not his mouth like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before it shears is silent so he opened not his mouth oppression and judgment he has taken away and as for his generation who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living stricken for the transgressions of my people and they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death although he had done no violence and there was no deceit in his mouth now hear this yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him he has put him to grief when his soul makes an offering for guilt he shall see his offspring he shall prolong his days the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hands out of the anguish of his soul out of the anguish of our Lord

Jesus Christ's soul he shall see and be satisfied by his knowledge shall the righteous one my servant make many to be accounted righteous and he shall bear their iniquities Jesus endured the darkest day to bring us into the light of his truth his grace his peace his salvation salvation and one day into his presence and in the meantime he's sealed us in salvation with the Holy Spirit who reminds us in our present of God's promises that he never leaves us he never forsakes us even when we are tempted to feel that he has day and night the psalmist weeps but day and night he likewise reminds himself of God's steadfast love in verse 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 he's getting there he's rising out of the pit of despair he knows that God is teaching him something in his present circumstances that have made him spiritually depressed he trusts in God's presence in his present situation but he's not out of it yet verses 9 through 10

I say to God my rock why have you forgotten me why do I go on mourning because of the oppression of the enemy as with a deadly wound in my bones all my adversaries taunt me while they say to me all the day long where is your God I love how the Bible is real patience patience is a fruit of the spirit and it's a fruit that manifests itself in times when we are forced to be patient I also love how God encourages us through the psalmist to be real with him when we talk to him tell him what's on your heart tell him what's on your mind he already knows the psalmist is saying I know what you've done in the past I know that you have a purpose in my present but I can't get the voices to stop they won't stop taunting me they won't be quiet he's on a roller coaster of emotions he's saying

I'll praise you again God but where are you your love is steadfast God but I feel as if you've forgotten me right now up and down up and down and then in verse 11 he repeats the message that he preached to himself in verse 5 he preaches the truth to himself instead of listening to himself or any other person why are you cast down on my soul why are you in turmoil within me hope in God for I shall praise him my salvation and my God God's word is what we preach and to preach God's word to yourself you must know what God's word says use God's word to inform your feelings don't allow your feelings to cause you to doubt what God says in his word!

feelings know God's word preach God's word to yourself trust that God knows more than you and that he is working in your present to cause all things to come together for the good of those who love him now the third application rest in God's future provision he's remembered he's being reminded and now he's resting in God's future provision Psalm 43 vindicate me O God defend my cause against an ungodly people from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me for you are the God in whom I take refuge why have you rejected me why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy stand out your light and your truth let them lead me let them bring me to your holy hill!

[37 : 14] to your dwelling 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 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 rollercoaster of emotions goes up and goes down a time or two more!

here but it comes to rest in the hope that God will send out his light and his truth and that God will lead the psalmist back to the place where he wants to be but this time did you notice that this time he talked about a joy before but this time he says his joy will be exceeding after God brings him out of the place where he wants to be the psalmist chooses to trust in God and believe in his word he chooses to hope in the Lord that's his message to himself in 1 Corinthians 13 13 Paul says so now faith hope and love abide these three but the greatest of these is love and from that passage we learn that two of the greatest gifts that

God gives us our faith and hope Hebrews 11:1 says now faith is the assurance of things hoped for the conviction of things not seen hope is built on faith hope is the peaceful assurance that something that hasn't happened will happen Romans 8:24 says for in this hope we were saved now hope that is seen is not hope for who hopes for what he sees faith is grounded in the reality of the past hope is looking forward to the reality of the future without faith there is no hope and without hope there is no true faith my dad worked in radio still does and as kids with that job he had access to tickets to go to baseball games concerts professional wrestling sneak peeks to movies all kinds of awesome stuff and he would come home and he would tell me and my sisters that he would get tickets or sometimes we would know about this thing that was coming dad can you get tickets for us and when he had those tickets or knew that he could get them he would say I'm going to get those tickets or I'll have those tickets and when he said that to us we didn't think to ourselves or say out loud I doubt it I doubt that you're going to do that we didn't instead we were excited because our father kept his word to us and even though we didn't have those tickets in hand and even though we weren't in that place we trusted in our father's promise that that future thing would become a present reality for us one day our heavenly father has made greater promises to his children and he says that he will take you to an eternal place one day where there'll be no more suffering no more sin no more death ever again how do we get to that place

Jesus tells us in John 14:6 through 7 I am the way and the truth and the life no one comes to the father except through me if you had known me you would have known my father also from now on you do know him and have seen him in times of spiritual depression you preach to yourself to hope in God and in preaching that message to yourself you must preach the gospel to yourself reminding yourself that the worst thing the most unfair thing that has ever happened to anyone happened to Jesus Christ and it was God's plan because in his love he sent his son to live the sinless life that you and I could not live to endure our grief to endure the shame to endure our punishment on the cross dying in our place and rising again on the third day and

[42:20] Jesus says it's by faith in him and him alone that anyone is saved that anyone is rescued from hell and granted! heaven to be in God's presence forever and it was in God's love that greatest gift that he did this for you and so in your times of despair remember that that the worst thing that ever happened to anyone achieved the greatest thing that could ever happen for millions of people and remind yourself that God loves you that God will not forsake you that God will keep you preserve you and bring you to the place where we want to be no more sin no more death no more Satan perfect peace in paradise with him and if you don't know him he's brought you here today to hear that truth because your spiritual depression if you don't know

Christ you have no hope and I say that to you in love and he's brought you here to hear his message of hope so how do we adjust to what we've heard this morning in these psalms remain hopeful remain hopeful it's hard in times of spiritual depression to remain hopeful read this psalm psalms again read Hebrews 11 that's the place where I often go whenever I'm unsure whenever my faith seems weak I read Hebrews 11 we call that the hall of faith where the writer takes us through Old Testament history and all the men and the women whom God worked through in their faith in the hard times to bring about great things to bring about the arrival of his son Jesus Christ read Hebrews 12:1 through 2 I'm going to end my sermon with this passage we'll let the word of God have the last word therefore since we are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses all these people whose faith in God did not disappoint let us also lay aside every weight and sin which clings so closely and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us looking to Jesus the founder and perfecter of our faith who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross despising the shame and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God let's pray Lord you know every person in this room God you know everything that they've been through everything that they're going through and everything that they will go through in this life and

Lord you've shown us you've reminded us through your word that for those whom you've been gracious to save you give us reason to hope God forgive us that like the psalmist so often we hear competing voices with yours we hear our culture and we hear unbelievers and we hear their taunts and their challenges when we're down we know that Satan is the roaring lion that he seeks us when we're vulnerable to do what he can to discourage us but God we have this promise in your word we have these reminders Lord of your faithfulness in the past we have the promises in your word Lord that remind us that you are sovereign and in our present even though we're going through something that we don't want to go through that you have a good purpose for it that you'll receive

the glory for it and God we can rest knowing that you have your promises for our future that in Jesus Christ the way the truth and the life that by faith in him Lord we are saved you are working in our lives to sanctify us you are preparing us for that place where you will one day take us and so God I pray that when we are discouraged that you will encourage us I pray for those who are discouraged today that they will be encouraged by you I pray Lord that when we see other people who are discouraged that we wouldn't turn a blind eye or just say something like I'll be praying for you and not really follow through with that but to be a source of encouragement for you to them to remind them of who you are what you have done and what you will do!

[47:17] Lord of all people in this world we have the most reason to hope because Jesus Christ has died for our sins and he rose again and he intercedes right now on our behalf and he's coming again to take us to that place that you have prepared for us and nothing Lord can take away the salvation that you have been gracious to give to us and so Lord may we always hope in you and encourage one another to do the same thank you God for who you are we praise you for what you've done and we look forward to the day where we are united with you forever and ever and always in Jesus name we pray amen