

Psalm 44

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[0 : 00] Our Father in heaven, thank you that we can spend time together now in Psalm 44, your living and active word. Please be at work in us, we pray, to grow in our love and adoration of you and your righteous character in this world and for the good of all people.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. So Psalm 44. To the choir master, a masculine of the sons of Korah.

O 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 them you planted. You afflicted the peoples, but them you set free. For not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them.

But your right hand and your arm and the light of your face, for you delighted in them. You are my king, O God. Ordain salvation for Jacob.

[1 : 20] Through you we push down our foes. Through your name we tread down those who rise up against us. For not in my own bow do I trust, nor can my sword save me.

But you have saved us from our foe and have put to shame those who hate us. In God we have boasted continually and will give thanks to your name forever, Salah.

But you have rejected us and disgraced us and have not gone out with our armies. You have made us turn back from the foe.

And those who hate us have gotten spoiled. You've made us like sheep for slaughter and have scattered us among the nations. You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them.

You've made us the taunt of our neighbours, the derision and scorn of those around us. You've made us a byword among the nations, a laughing stock among the peoples.

[2 : 22] All day long my disgrace is before me and shame has covered my face. 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've broken us in the place of jackals and 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 be slaughtered.

Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord?

Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever! Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression? For our souls bow down to the dust, our belly clings to the ground.

[3 : 37] Rise up! Come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love! Well, before we spend some time looking at God's word together, why don't you have a yarn to the person next to you about the thing that stands out or the thing that strikes you as strange in this passage.

I'll have a minute or two and then we'll dig in together. Okay. We won't have a question time after the church this morning, but we can discuss things over morning tea some more if you like.

Let's do that. But faith's all about trusting something that's worth trusting. The word faith just means trust really. So it's not a good way of describing it.

But anyway. But if we are trusting in something and it doesn't turn out to be just what we thought it was, it can cause our faith to falter.

So picture these two scenarios. First one. You wake up in the morning after a great night's sleep. Right? You have breakfast. You read the Bible and you say your prayers. The kids are all healthy and there's no fighting or screaming in the morning.

[4 : 57] They head off to school. Everything is going fine. You get in the car and get all the green lights to work. In fact, you arrive a little bit early and the meeting you're prepared for goes smoothly and everyone gets along beautifully.

It's a wonderful day. It's great being one of God's people. But the next day, you sleep through the alarm.

One of the kids has a temperature. Another one's been vomiting all night. You stagger through breakfast. You don't read your Bible or say your prayers.

Neither child can go to school. And you've got a big presentation to give today. You've been working on for the last month. You frantically call around to find someone who might be able to look after your kids while you go to work.

And then the car has a flat tyre on the way to work. The dog eats the lungs all week. You have to park on the side of the road and then call a taxi to get to work or else you'll be late for the presentation, which is the first thing on this morning.

[6 : 10] You then spill the coffee and somehow manage to get it down the shirt and the day continues to snowball from bad to worse, from one disaster to the next.

And you think to yourself, what is going on, God? Surely I don't deserve this, do I? I have been faithful to you. He has obviously been on my side in the past.

Things have gone well. What's going on now? Why aren't things going on so good as it's working out as I expect them to work? Well, Psalm 44 ponders the question of unjust suffering.

Far more than the mild scenario I just painted. God's been for us in the past, right? I am one of God's people, the psalmist is saying.

God's given us victory over our enemies in the past. He saved us. And yet, now we are suffering even though we have been faithful to Him.

[7 : 18] God was so for us, right? Really for us. And now it just seems like He's against us. In fact, the presenting reality is He is against us.

What's going on? And so verse 20 and 22 summarize what the psalm is about. Have a look at it with verse 20 to 22. If we'd 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 be slaughtered. In effect, we've been faithful, yet now we're suffering.

How, God, can you let this happen to us? I wasn't expecting this. God, do you know what's going on? Do you even care? God, please do something about this now.

Now, the psalm looks back to the past, remembering that God was, and really so is, for us. Have a look at God being celebrated in verses 1 to 8.

[8 : 31] God's for us, in verses 1 to 4. God, we've heard about ears. Our fathers have told us what deeds you performed in their days, in the days of old. That's the fathers' days, the days of old.

With your own hand you drove out the nations. You put them, but them you planted. You afflicted the peoples, but them, that is the fathers, you set free. For not by their own sword did they win the land, nor did their own arm save them.

But your right hand and your arm, and the light of your face, for you delight in them. The psalm recaps the past, reflecting on the conquest of the land, under Joshua, after the great salvation from Egypt.

They were rescued out of Egypt from Pharaoh, then Joshua led them into the promised land, and they had victory after victory. And Deuteronomy chapter 7 teaches them, that God delighted in them, and it was God who saved them.

Let me read to you Deuteronomy chapter 7, picking up at verse 7. It was not because you were more in number than any other people, that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples.

[9 : 43] But it's because the Lord loves you, and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

And notice, in the psalm it says, that the fathers have taught the children. It's imperative that the fathers teach the children, and the children's children get taught down in generations.

It's imperative that fathers teach the children their Christian heritage. And indeed, the fathers have done that, in obedience to God's command.

Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 20, when your son asks you in time to come, what is the meaning of the testimonies, and the statutes, and the rules that the Lord our God has commanded you?

Then you so say to your son, we were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand, and the Lord showed signs and wonders, great and grievous against Egypt, and against Pharaoh, and all his household before our eyes.

[10:45] And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in, and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. So God has told them to teach the kids, and the fathers have taught the kids, and instructed the kids, and reminded the kids of God's great victories to them, what they've done.

Notice, it was God who brought them out of Egypt. It was God who brought them into the land, driving up nations before them. It was God who did this. It was God who fought for them. God who saved them.

Why? Because God decided he would do it. God chose them, and he delighted in them, the smallest of all nations.

He didn't choose the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Gergishites. He chose the Jews, the Israelites, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And the fathers have been telling the children of these events, now, for at least 400 years, by the time the psalm is written.

So the psalm's about, you know, around about the thousands BC. And the events you're talking about, are sort of in the 1400s BC. That they've been teaching the kids, all this over the history.

[12:05] And in verses 4 to 18, we see that, in God, we boast. God is their king, and he continues to save his people, and his powerful name, he continues to save his people.

It's not trust in military might, in the bow or the sword, it's God who does it, and we know it. And so we boast in God, they're saying. God's our strength, God's our refuge, God's done it all.

He's the one that's at work, bringing about his victory. And so it's appropriate to thank him, and to praise him. He's the one to boast in, he's blessed us, and we've been faithful to him.

And yet the big turning point, right, is there in verse 9. But, if God's for us, and have we been trusting in him, been true to him, why is it that God's against us?

What's going on here? And so they confront God. Why God? Why? You've rejected us, and disgraced us, and have not gone out of their armies.

[13:18] Verse 17. All this come about upon us, though we have not forgotten you, and we have not been false to your covenant. Our heart has not turned back, nor of our steps departed from your ways.

Yet you have broken us, in the place of jackals, and covered us with the shadow of death. The present situation, doesn't follow on, from our natural way of thinking.

A way of thinking, that goes like this. We've been faithful to God. God should then bless us. But instead, God's against them.

God's against us. And that confounds us. We just can't be sure, of what period of history, we're talking about here in Israel. Some people think it's the time, after the exile, right?

After they had been, kicked out of the land, and in Babylon, that's the kind of period, some people think about it. Which makes sense of them being scattered, among the nations. But, how could they say, they'd not forgotten God?

[14:29] That they were living, true to the covenant, in verse 17. And that they didn't deserve, to be rejected by God, because that's exactly what they deserved. They had forgotten God, they had worshipped idols, and God said, I'm going to send you into exile.

So, it's probably before the exile, right? And, there were raiding parties, from the Edomites, you can read about in Amos chapter 1, who came and raided them, and grabbed hold of them, and defeated them, and plundered them, you know, at times.

And they had been defeated, they had been demoralised, and they had, even lost hope, and even lost confidence. The assertion is, that they have done nothing wrong, but they are suffering, none the less.

They are led like innocent sheep, led to the slaughter. It's a theme that comes up, in the Bible often, doesn't it? You think of Job, unjust suffering, came upon Job as well, done nothing wrong.

So, who God, who? If there's one thing, that's being emphasised, over and again, it's this, in this psalm, is that God is actually, acting, against, righteous Israel.

[15 : 56] Those who had, not forgotten God. Shorthand for saying, they had not turned, to worship idols. That they had not been, false to the covenant, that's been established, between God and Israel.

It was given to them, by Moses, the covenant, you know. And they have, not worshipped, the foreign gods. And God knows, this is true, because, he knows, the secrets of the heart. See verse 21, would not God, discover this, for he knows, the secrets, of the heart. And yet, verse 22, for your sake, we are killed, all the day long, we regard the sheep, to be slaughtered. Just to repeat, what was said, back in verse 11. To be absolutely clear, it's righteous Israel, that's suffering here.

Now, our natural reasoning, would be, righteous Israel, should rightly, be blessed. how can it be, that God would bring, suffering, upon them?

[17 : 05] Which is why, the righteous Israelite, cries out in verse 23, awake, why are you asleep, oh Lord? Rouse yourself, don't reject us forever.

Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget, your affliction, and the oppression? For our soul, is bowed down, to the dust, our belly clings, to the ground, rise up, come to our health, redeem us, for the sake of, your steadfast love.

And so, the only hope, is if God, acts for them, and they are, championing God here. They are desperate, and they're destitute.

Their soul, is bowed down, to the dust. You can't get much, lower than that. Their belly, clings to the ground. And notice, they call out to God, to save them.

Not because they are righteous. Not because they have been righteous. Not because of any good work, they have done. Not because they've been, faithful to God.

[18 : 08] But please God, demonstrate, that you are God. Your steadfast love, endures forever, for the sake, of your glory.

That's what, they are praying. To be true to his character, for his sake, and for the sake of his fame, among the nations.

God never sleeps. God never forgets. God knows, what's going on, and there's confidence, hope that God, will come to their help, because without him, they can do nothing.

They can't save themselves. Well, that's the psalm. where does it lead us?

Well, first, I think it's got to lead us, to the cross, to God's, revolutionary wisdom. The unjust suffering, of the righteous one, is the very wisdom, of God.

[19 : 25] It's God's, revolutionary wisdom. Without knowing, this wisdom though, the cross makes, absolutely no sense.

Because it was Jesus, who is the perfect, Israelite. the one, and only perfect, righteous, Israelite, who can sing, Psalm 44, with complete integrity.

He's the one, who is always, faithful to his God. Always faithful, to God the Father. He trusted in the Father, completely, his whole life. And yet, he was considered, a sheep, to be slaughtered.

He was mocked, and ridiculed, by his enemies. He was strung up, on the cross, and suffered shame, and humiliation. Taunted, and reviled, by those, who crucified him.

And yet, in God's, perfect wisdom, it was God's, perfect plan. His confounding, wisdom, that the Christ, would suffer, and that three days, later be raised, from the dead.

[20 : 39] And God, God did raise him, God did save him, and through him, is able to save, all Israel, perfectly, and God has, demonstrated, his steadfast love.

This psalm, is a psalm, of Israel. It is the hope, of the righteous, Israel. Israel. And yet, it finds its fulfillment, in the one, and only, true Israelite, King Jesus, Christ Jesus.

And secondly, his people. All, who are now, righteous, Israel, can own, this psalm, as theirs, as well.

We can own, this psalm, as ours, as well. You and I, who have trust in the Lord Jesus, and his unjust suffering, are now counted, as the true, and righteous Israel, confounding, the wisdom of the world.

And so, helping us, come to understand, the place, of unjust suffering. It's God, and his wisdom, that brings us about, for plans, are bigger, than just what, we perceive them, in this world.

[22 : 06] And we find, Psalm 44, on the lips of Paul, in Romans chapter 8. So, come to Romans chapter 8, with me. So, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Acts, Romans, Romans chapter 8.

As, Paul, considers the sufferings, that he goes through, in this world, and the suffering, that all believers, go through in this world, for the sake, of their allegiance, to Jesus Christ.

We suffer, with him, so that we might be, glorified with him. Have we got, chapter 8, verse 17. So, if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and fellow heirs with Christ, provided, in order that we suffer, with him, in order that we may, also be glorified, with him.

And then, you can read all, of chapter 8, it's a fantastic read, but come down to verse 28. Down to verse 28. And, we know, that for those, who love God, all things, work together, for good, for those, who are called, according to his purpose.

Verse 29. For those, whom he foreknew, he also predestined, to be conformed, to the image, of his son. And then he goes on, to say, in verse 31, coming out of verse 31, what shall we say then, of these things?

[23 : 44] if God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own son, but gave him up for us all, how will he not also, with him, graciously give us all things?

Who shall bring any charge, against God's elect? It's God who justifies. Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus, the one who died, and more than that, who was raised, who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is in seating for us.

Who shall separate us, from the love of Christ? Get this. Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword?

So nothing can separate us, from the love of Christ, no matter what the situation, we're facing, can separate us, from God's love for us, in the Lord Jesus Christ, right? And then he quotes, Psalm 44. As it is written, for your sake, we are being killed, all the day long. We are regarded as sheep, to be slaughtered.

[24 : 53] Verse 37. Now in all these things, we are more than conquerors, through him who loved us. For I'm sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else, in all creation, will be able to separate us, from the love of God, in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

So in God's incredible wisdom, and everything, even if, we are being, persecuted, and hunted down, and things seem to be going completely against, how we think they should be going, and we are righteous, in God's wisdom, in the big unfolding plans of the world, God is still for us, and with us.

So as Derek Kidner says in his commentary on the psalm, the revolutionary thought is this, hear this, that suffering might be a battle scar, rather than a punishment.

Alright? Suffering might be regarded as a battle scar, rather than punishment. That is the price of loyalty in a world, which is at war with God.

And if this is so, and this is a bit hard to understand in the first instance, a reverse, that is, things not going as well as we hoped they would go, as well as a victory, may be a sign of fellowship with him, and not of alienation.

[26 : 37] So a setback, suffering, apparent defeat, as well as victory, and things going fantastic for us, may be a sign of, really, of fellowship with him.

Not of alienation, not his rejection of us. The reality is that God is not asleep, but that God is demonstrating his steadfast love, his revolutionary wisdom, and we might be getting battle scars for our faithfulness.

The battle scar is one to rejoice in, being worthy to suffer for the name of Christ. Rejection and suffering in this world comes from God, alright, as much as victory and success.

Rejection and suffering in this world is not necessarily a sign of God's rejection of us, but can actually be a sign of his approval, which took the Lord Jesus to the cross.

Without this understanding of things, we will never get the wisdom of the cross. And so, we can actually rejoice in God's revolutionary wisdom.

[27 : 59] Now, brothers and sisters, this is the kind of stuff we need to know before suffering comes, alright? That's what the fathers need to be teaching their children as we read the scriptures in our families.

This kind of thing. The whole counsel of God. Not just the bits we really particularly think is easy and we like, and it's light and fantastic.

It is, don't be wrong, but this is just as crucially important as well. I had a phone call with a friend while I was away over Christmas and spoke to him and we were on beach mission together, taking

the gospel to kids and families over Christmas for many years.

And we were recounting stories of the people that we know who had been on beach mission with us and how various struggles and trials in life had come and that actually given up on God.

Tragic. Tragic. Tragic. Tragic. So as we move into 2026, not 2016, 2026, we need to look beyond the reductionistic thinking about life in this world and keep on embracing the revolutionary wisdom of our loving Heavenly Father in all its fullness, which so confounds the wisdom of this world and those we live amongst.

[29 : 46] Let's pray. Our Father in Heaven, as we consider your incredible wisdom, we pray, Father, that as we stay faithful to you, that we might not doubt your love towards us.

Help us to indeed be faithful faithful and trust you and not to walk away from you and not to worship the idols and stay faithful to the covenant established in Christ Jesus.

And as we do that, we pray you give us, help us with great joy and gladness and even if things don't turn out how we think they should, help us to keep trusting you in that and to welcome some battle scars along the way of our heading towards being with you for eternity in glory.

So please be with us, we pray, in 2026 as we live to your praise and glory through the thick and thin of life. We pray it in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.