

Psalm 42-43

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good day everyone. I'm Josh. You know, I grew up in England and lots of the kids I know in churches in England know their memory verses in Aussie accents.

You know, really Aussie accents because they learn them through Colin. Anyway, we're going to read from Psalms 42 and 43 this morning, which I might just briefly explain.

But the general consensus among scholars, most scholars, is that these were originally one psalm and no one quite knows how they got divided. There are clearly three sections of a similar length to each other. They all end in the same repeated refrain, the chorus.

Psalm 43 has no title, which is pretty unusual for this part of the Psalter. So I think whatever the process is that got us here, what we're left with is these two psalms that are meant to be read together.

And forgive me, but some of you I know will have already heard this sermon at Uni Church, or most of it, the first draft. But hopefully it will still be a benefit a second time around.

[1 : 0 7] A lot of life is about remembering things, isn't it? Not just learning new things. So hopefully this will be a chance to meditate on God's word a little bit more. Let me read Psalms 42 and 43 for us.

To the choir master, a masculine of the sons of Korah. As a deer pants for flowing streams, 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 the 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?

[2 : 0 8] Hope in 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. From Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep. At the roar of your waterfalls. All your breakers and your waves have gone over me.

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.

[3 : 0 7] 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. 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 psalms we are looking at this morning are basically about depression and anxiety. And I don't just mean clinical depression, right?

[4 : 07] Or clinical anxiety. But I don't want to exclude those things either. Because I think they're sort of all on a bit of a spectrum. Some of us experience more severe bouts of depression than others. Some of us are chronically afflicted by such things.

Some of us go up and down. Some of us will benefit from counseling and medication and professional intervention. And for others that won't ever be necessary or helpful.

But just talking at the sort of broadest possible level. Depression and anxiety are universal experiences. And that's what this psalmist is obviously experiencing right now.

Three times he says. Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you in turmoil within me? In other words, the psalmist keeps trying to talk to himself.

Trying to address his inner self, his soul. And what we might call depression and anxiety. He says he feels cast down and in turmoil. Now of course there are a variety of factors that contribute to our moods.

[5 : 16] Aren't there? I'm not going to spend much time on this. Or as much time as I spent at UniChurch. But I still do just want to note it this morning.

That there are biological and physiological factors. There are social factors, environmental factors. All sorts of things that contribute to our depression and anxiety.

In this psalm there might be social reasons. Enemies that the psalmist is facing. Physical reasons. It sounds at points like he might be sick. Lots of different things.

And depression and anxiety in some ways are a very good and healthy response to the world we live in. I want to stress this because I think in some versions of Christianity.

And in lots of ways just in the non-Christian culture around us. We approach these things as if there is absolutely no place for negative emotions. And they are always unhelpful.

[6 : 14] Or even ungodly. Your life should always be happy and comfortable. If you have got the Holy Spirit then you should always be joyful. And there is a truth to that.

But it is not the whole truth. Remember Jesus was a man of sorrows. There is a place for grief. I think joy and grief can be all mixed in together at the same time.

So that we rejoice in the Lord. In the midst of grieving. Feeling miserable. Feeling worthless and hopeless and depressed.

In the midst of you have lost a loved one. Or you have had a serious falling out with a friend. It is not going to be too surprising if your mood is low in response to that. And in fact that is a healthy and right response.

To the brokenness of our world. Even if in the midst of that you cling to joy in the Lord. And hope of a better world to come. Or likewise anxiety.

[7 : 17] Is about helping us when we are in danger. Responding to life's stresses and threats around us with heightened alertness. It only becomes a problem when it is a constant feature of our lives.

Or out of proportion to the real dangers that we are in. Or when we don't know anywhere where we can find peace and safety again. But it is not automatically wrong or a bad thing.

Certainly not unfaithful. Okay. So I am not trying to be comprehensive this morning. Just illustrative. That there are a variety of factors that contribute to our moods. And then of course these psalms are not designed to tell us everything about how to deal with anxiety and depression.

And not trying to be the kind of one size fits all solution. As if you get your spiritual life sorted out. And then that will automatically take care of your biology and your chemistry too.

Or change the way you were brought up. Or immediately change your circumstances. Of course not. Many years ago. Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones.

[8 : 23] Who was a very great English evangelical preacher you might know from the 20th century. He preached a very famous sermon series. I think the whole series was entitled Spiritual Depression.

And his first sermon was on Psalm 42 verse 5. And I think that that sums up this psalm quite well. That apart from all the other things in life. And apart from all the other things we are.

We are spiritual creatures. And so we need as it were spiritual solutions to our spiritual problems. Just as you might take medicine or exercise for physical bodily ailments.

So you need spiritual medicine for your spiritual and spiritual exercises for your soul. The Bible tells us we live on a battlefield.

Talk about a stressful anxiety inducing situation. There are principalities and powers arrayed against us in the spiritual realm all the time. Trying to destroy our faith.

[9 : 27] The devil prowls around like a roaring lion. And I think it's safe to assume that these things target different people at different times and in different ways.

And can vary in intensity. And of course chiefly the devil's power lies in his lies. So we live in a culture at the moment that is constantly bombarding us with the lies of materialism.

Secularism. Sexual immorality. These atheistic lies that keep stripping all the joy and meaning out of everything. And it's exhausting to keep combating them.

We are under siege. The accuser wants you to sin. And then when you do, he wants you to believe that you're beyond redemption. Beyond forgiveness. Or that God is a sort of stern, disappointed headmaster.

Rather than a loving father. A faulty view of God can be a great cause of despair and dejection. So these psalms keep reminding us.

[10 : 32] And in the face of such feelings. To remember the truth. The truth is the spiritual balm. That God wants us to keep applying when we are feeling battered and bruised.

By the lies of the world. From our war with the devil. Okay. So if you've got an outline in front of you. You'll see each section of the psalm intensifies as we progress from one to the next.

In verses 1 to 5. The psalmist is feeling far away from God. Isolated and alone. Then in verses 6 to 11. He's feeling forgotten. Out of sight. Out of mind.

And then finally in Psalm 43. He's feeling even worse than that. He's feeling rejected. Okay. So feeling alone. Then feeling forgotten. Then feeling rejected. We'll work through those three sections together.

In verse 1 he says. As a deer pants for flowing streams. 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?

- [11 : 36] This image of a panting deer is obviously very evocative, isn't it? It's one of desperation. We all know the feeling of thirst. But imagine being out in the desert.
- Or lost in the bush. Like some English tourist. And you're desperately thirsty. You know it's a matter of life and death. This is serious. That's how the psalmist is feeling here.
- Not just a bit parched. But he longs to be in God's presence. He needs God. Or he'll die. Notice he calls God the living God in verse 2.
- And it's not just that God is alive as opposed to dead like the idols. Although that's true. But it's more than that. It's that life is only found in knowing God.
- Life is something that God has in himself. And he shares with us. So God never gets thirsty. God never needs anything from outside of himself to sustain him.
- [12 : 32] But when we get thirsty. We need God. To share his life with us. Because God is the fountain of all life. So in verse 3. The flowing streams of God.
- That the psalmist longs for. Are contrasted with the tears of the psalmist. The only water that he has. Think about the poetry here. The psalmist wants to drink of the waters of life.
- From God. But instead all he's got are his own tears to eat. Literally the psalm says his tears are his meat. Or his tears are his food.
- And all day long. His tears or maybe the enemies that feature later in the psalm. They're nagging him with questions. Where is your God?
- Throughout these two psalms there are lots of questions. And I think that's meant to reflect the turmoil that the psalmist feels. You know when your mind is buzzing with questions. And doubts. But you can't seem to latch on to any clear answers.
- [13 : 34] And maybe there are people around you. Maybe there aren't. But there are voices. That are kind of pressing in on you. And accusing you. Confusing you. And they seem to be overwhelming. So the psalmist has all these questions.
- Swirling around his head. How do you answer these horrible questions? Well then in verse 4. He remembers the good old days. He remembers when he used to go up to the temple.
- When he was happy. 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. Again I guess we all know how this kind of reminiscing can help in times of sorrow.
- But it can also make the pain more acute. So we skipped over the opening superscription. But let's just go back to it now. This is a psalm to the choir master.
- A masculine of the sons of Korah. The sons of Korah were a group within the tribe of Levi. They were famous because of their very unfaithful ancestor. If you know that incident with Korah.
- [14 : 43] And his rebellion against Moses. But they became a particularly devout group within the tribe of Levi. In rejection of him. So they were employed as temple musicians.
- So that's what the psalmist is remembering. When he used to lead the people in singing praises to God. Going up to the temple in their various festivals. Like the Passover or Pentecost.
- That's what he longs to enjoy again. He wants to be in God's presence. And in the midst of his people. Leading them in worship. Now these days of course. Our worship is not restricted to.
- Or centered on a temple. We don't need to go on pilgrimages. Or to special holy places. Or anything like that. And our church buildings are not temples of course.

But we might feel a similar sense of isolation. When we are away from our church family for too long. The temple of the Holy Spirit. We miss the encouragement of our brothers and sisters. Singing together.

[15 : 42] Serving one another as members of the same body. And we might feel a similar sense of despondency. Being far away from our heavenly home. The new Jerusalem. We long to be in God's presence.

We long to be with the loved ones who have gone before us. So I think we can understand something of what the psalmist was going through. He's longing to be with God. And with God's people.

That something is keeping him away. Okay. And then in verses 6 to 11. Our psalmist is not just feeling far away. But he's feeling forgotten. He says.

My soul is cast down within me. Therefore I remember you. From the land of Jordan. And of Hermon. From Mount Mizar. Now the land of Jordan and Hermon.

Are in the far north of Israel. Mount Mizar literally means little mountain. And this is the only place it appears in the Bible. So it could have been a real place.

[16 : 41] But we don't know where it is. I think it's probably the psalmist way of just taking a dig at Mount Hermon. Okay. Mount Hermon was the biggest mountain in Israel. Is the biggest mountain in Israel. But I.

Way up in the north there. But I think what he's probably saying is something like. You know. I'm stuck out here. Next to this tiny pathetic little mountain. I long to be in Mount Zion.

I long to be on the temple mount. That's the great mountain. But I'm stuck here next to this pipsqueak of a thing. Mount Hermon. Anyway. Either way. The psalmist is obviously somewhere far up in the north of the country.

He can't make it to the temple for whatever reason. We don't know why. People speculate. But the key word in verse 6 is the word remember. He remembers God.

You see. But in verse 9. He says to God. I say to God. My rock. Why have you forgotten me? In other words. This is a section about unrequited love.

[17 : 40] You know. Imagine you've been separated from your beloved for the whole of the summer holidays. Or for years and years. And you've desperately been longing to be together.

You've been clinging on. Longing to be home again. And then when you return. You find that your beloved has completely forgotten about you and moved on. You know. Well that is what the psalmist is kind of worried about here.

Out of sight. Out of mind. He remembers God. But he wonders if he's been forgotten. He feels like he has been forgotten. In verse 7 he says.

Deep calls to deep. At the roar of your waterfalls. All your breakers and your waves have gone over me. Notice the image of water gets picked up again here.

So we've had streams of life now. We've had tears of sorrow. And now these waters are really about death. Right. The Tehom. The deep. Is the deepest darkest part of the underworld.

[18 : 38] Down at the very bottom of the ocean. In the LXX it's translated as the abyss. You know. This is the place where Jonah went. Down in the belly of the fish. So the psalmist is feeling overwhelmed.

Tossed about like he's drowning in the darkness. And he knows. That all this chaotic water has come from God. Notice the pronouns in verse 7.

He keeps saying. Your waterfalls. Your breakers. Your waves. In other words. He believes in the sovereignty of God. Doesn't he? He believes that.

Even as he's drowning. It's because God is sending the waterfalls and the waves. It's not just sort of. Random chance. He's not just materialistic. It's not just evil forces in the world.

That are otherwise. Kind of somehow thwarting God's. Nice and comfortable plans for him. He knows that God is totally in control. Both in life and in death.

[19 : 35] When life is a great joy and easy and fun. God is in control. When life is chaotic and scary and disorienting. God is in control. But in the midst of these 30 foot waves.

And the chaos of the vast ocean. He's worried that God seems to have forgotten about him. You know. He feels small. As you would.

The universe is so big. When the lightning strikes. Or the plagues like COVID-19 sweep through the land. It's hard to imagine that God has little you and me in mind. Isn't it? And such massive things are happening.

Have you forgotten Lord? That I'm here? I'm stuck on this wave. But then out of the blue. That brings us to verse 8. And this is really a significant.

And magnificent verse. At the heart of this psalm. There's something different about verse 8. That I think makes it the centerpiece of the psalm. It is. It is the dead center of the psalm.

[20 : 35] And I wonder if you notice what is different about it. For those of you who are at UniChurch. Don't give the game away of course. Or do you remember? I wonder if you remember. What makes verse.

Does anyone remember what makes verse 8 different? Has anyone noticed? Yahweh. Thank you brother. Right. It's the word Lord in all caps there. Right.

Or the word Yahweh in the Hebrew. This is the only time it occurs in the psalm. See the word God. Or Elohim in the Hebrew. Is a title.

It's not a personal word. It tells us about what God is. Not who he is. It's like the word president. Or king. Or even human being. Right. A God is a something.

An Elohim. Is a powerful ruler from the spiritual realm. Okay. I think that's probably a good definition for the word Elohim. Sometimes angels are called gods.

[21 : 31] Or they're called Elohim. Satan is called the God of this world. Even the prophet Samuel is called a God. If you remember the scene. The crazy scene with the witch of Endor. When Samuel rises up from the spiritual realm.

He's called a God. An Elohim. Because a God in the Bible is a powerful ruler from the spiritual realm. But the word Yahweh tells us about who God is.

Right. Yahweh is the personal name for the God above all other gods. The God who has revealed himself to his people so that we can know him and call upon him in faith.

Right. So it's like the difference between knowing that I am a man. Maybe knowing that I'm a husband. And knowing that I'm Josh. You know. So there's knowing about me. And then there's knowing me.

So in this psalm the word Elohim is repeated 21 times. But the word Yahweh occurs only once. And it's right here in this central verse. So it's worth thinking about why that is.

[22 : 34] And I think that it's meant to provide a glimmer of hope. In the midst of the sorrow. See. Because it's one thing to know that there is a God above us.

But it's quite another thing to know who that God is. And what he is like. If the God above us is like Allah. You know. As the Muslims describe him. Then what comfort and hope do we have in the midst of depression or anxiety?

Not much. If the God above us is like Baal or Zeus or Ganesh or whoever. Then what comfort and hope do we have? In fact what a depressing and horrible idea.

But knowing that Yahweh reigns in heaven. That is good news isn't it? That does bring hope in the midst of despair. Because we know what Yahweh is like.

His name carries his reputation. The things he has said and done in history to show us who he is. In the Old Testament. So for this psalmist.

[23 : 40] It was the exodus from Egypt in particular. Where God revealed his name. Displayed his character. And so you will notice that as soon as the psalmist mentions Yahweh.

He talks about his steadfast love. His hesed. And in the New Testament we would talk about the cross. As the defining moment where God displayed his name to us.

Where God showed off who he is. And he displayed his defining characteristic. His grace. His generosity. His unrelenting. Steadfast.

Committed love. Yahweh is a God whose love remains strong and true. Even when his people stumble and sin. He looks upon his chosen people with compassion and kindness.

He wants to help us. To free us from our sin. Rather than to condemn us. As we deserve. So in the midst of his dejection. The psalmist remembers the Lord's name.

[24 : 41] And his character of steadfast love. That God has commanded his steadfast love. It's just an interesting idea isn't it? But I think he's saying something like. The Lord has commanded his steadfast love.

To kind of watch over and guard me. Every day. And at night. God has given him a song. Which is also a prayer.

Which is quite beautiful the more you think about it. What the psalmist is saying is that. Even our songs and our prayers that we sing. Are actually gifts from God to us. So we're the ones singing them.

But God is the one who gives us songs of faith. To sing in the midst of the darkness. In the trials and troubles in life. And isn't that good news?

Because if it were up to us. Then in our despondency. We wouldn't have the strength to lift our heads. Would we? We wouldn't look to God. In our sinfulness. But thankfully God graciously plants faith.

[25 : 43] In our hearts. So that we can look up to him. Even in the midst of dark nights. And find hope. But in verse 9. We're not out of the woods yet.

Because even though the psalmist remembers God's steadfast love. He still feels like God has forgotten him. And that he is dying. Verse 9. 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?

So now we get some sense of what the psalmist is going through. There are very clearly enemies. Gathered against him. He talks about a deadly wound in his bones. Maybe that indicates some kind of illness.

As is very often the case with psalms. They're not meant to be too specific. Psalms doesn't exactly want us to speculate. Or try to nail down his circumstance.

[26 : 40] Because it's meant to be a song written for all of us to sing. In a variety of circumstances. So there are a variety of things that are distressing him. And God seems to be nowhere.

Could it be that God has forgotten him? Which brings us then to Psalm 43. And I wonder if the song slash prayer.

That God gave the psalmist in verse 8. To sing at night. You remember. I wonder if he was talking about Psalm 43. So he said that this is kind of a song within a song.

In other words. When you think about it. God has given us. Not just various songs and prayers. To hold on to him in the darkness. But he has specifically given us. These songs hasn't he?

And when you think about the arrangement of the psalm. We are at the beginning of book 2. Of the Psalter here. So I think it would make sense. For the psalmist to be reflecting on God's grace. In giving us.

[27 : 39] All these inspired songs. To express our faith in him. You might notice also. That the first word of Psalm 43. Psalm 43. Is actually the first time.

The psalmist. Has prayed to God. In song. And in Psalm 42. There are no prayers to God. No requests. The psalmist is pouring out his heart to God.

But not actually presenting his request to him. So again. As Psalm 43. Reaches a new level of intense anguish. The psalmist is feeling rejected.

Now. Not just forgotten. Not just isolated. But he's also been given these words of faith. To cry out to God. Vindicate me.

Oh 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.

[28 : 37] 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. Then I will go to the altar.

Of God. To God my exceeding joy. And I will praise you with a lyre. Oh God. My God. See how in this second psalm. There are six imperatives. Okay. That is six specific prayers.

Vindicate me. Defend my cause. Deliver me. Send out your light and your truth. Let them lead me. Let them bring me to your holy hill. So you could never prove this I suppose.

But I take it that this is the prayerful song. That God has given the psalmist in the midst of his distress. And I suspect that that's why the two things have been separated. And this psalm expresses the kind of thing we can confidently pray to God when we are in similar circumstances.

Vindicate me oh God. And we are being falsely accused of things. Defend me and my cause when we feel like we can't defend ourselves. Deliver me when we're in danger from those who would seek to harm us.

[29 : 50] Send out your light and your truth when we are in need of guidance. Let them lead me. Let them bring me to your holy hill. And to your dwelling. You see how the psalmist wants God to carry him home.

He's praying for the perseverance of the saints. For his own perseverance. He wants to worship and enjoy God. Just like we are pilgrims in this land.

Living in exile. And we want to make it home. The psalmist is praying for guidance. To keep walking the path of righteousness. By faith. Until he gets to enjoy God's presence again.

Okay. So it's about time to wrap up. I want to finish by reflecting on the chorus. That keeps punctuating all this misery. I know some of you are worried that I just hadn't noticed it was there. Or it was never going to come up or something.

But in verse 5 and verse 11 and verse 5 again. We keep getting this refrain. Why are you cast down oh my soul? And why are you in turmoil within me?

[30 : 52] Hope in God. For I shall again praise him. My salvation. And my God. So let's finish with this. It's the idea of talking to yourself.

And again I want to take you back to Martin Lloyd-Jones. And his famous sermon on this. If you've never heard Martin Lloyd-Jones. He's such a cracking preacher. And he's got a great Welsh accent.

You can listen to him. And he's a classic one for preaching. You know half a verse at a time. For you know a decade. So anyway. This is a bit of a long quote.

But I couldn't help myself. He says. I suggest that the main trouble. In this whole matter of spiritual depression. In a sense is this. That we allow our self.

To talk to us. Instead of talking to our self. Am I just trying to be deliberately paradoxical? Far from it. Now. This is the very essence of wisdom in this matter.

[31 : 52] Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life. Is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself. Instead of talking to yourself. Take those thoughts that come to you. The moment you wake up in the morning.

You have not originated them. But they start talking to you. They bring back the problems of yesterday. Etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Yourself is talking to you. Now.

This man's treatment was this. He's talking about the psalmist. This man's treatment was this. Instead of allowing this self to talk to him. He starts talking to himself. Why art thou cast down?

Oh my soul. He asks. His soul had been depressing him. Crushing him. So he stands up and says. Self. Listen for a moment. I will speak to you. Do you know what I mean?

If you do not. If you have had but little experience. The main art in the matter of spiritual living. Is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand.

[32 : 50] You have to address yourself. Preach to yourself. Question yourself. You must say to your soul. Why art thou cast down? What business have you to be disquieted? You must turn on yourself.

Upbraid yourself. Condemn yourself. Exhort yourself. And say to yourself. Hope thou in God. Instead of muttering in this depressed unhappy way. And then you must go on.

To remind yourself of God. Who God is. And what God is. And what God has done. And what God has pledged himself to do. Then having done that. End on this great note.

Defy yourself. And defy other people. And defy the devil. And the whole world. And say with this man. I shall yet praise him. For the help of his countenance. Who is also the health of my countenance.

And my God. This is the essence of the treatment. In a nutshell. Lloyd-Jones was a doctor. He liked talking quite a lot of it. About applying spiritual medicine to people.

[33 : 51] Now I don't think he's saying. That this is the only treatment. For depression. Or you know. Or no matter what its cause is. Or anything like that. And again. I certainly don't think it is. I think that would be extremely unhelpful.

But what he's saying. I think is still very helpful. Because sometimes when it comes to depression. And anxiety. Our first problem. Is that we think of ourselves.

Only in terms of circumstances. And biology. Right. We are materialistic. In our mindset. Atheistic. So that we don't consider. The spiritual aspect of our lives as well.

But remember. Brothers and sisters. We are not just bodies and brains. In a physical environment. We really have souls as well. A mind.

And a heart. And we engage in spiritual battles too. Between light and darkness. Between lies and truth. And then secondly. Very often.

[34 : 44] We think of ourselves. Merely as victims of these troubles. Rather than looking to the weapons of war. We have to fight back. So just as we might fight back.

Against our broken bodies. With exercise. And sleep. And a good diet. And medication. Or we might fight back. Against our circumstances. By taking a holiday. Or getting off social media.

Or moving somewhere. Where the mortgage isn't so stressful. So also. We must fight back. Against the world. The flesh. And the devil. We must fight.

In the spiritual realm. As these things keep telling us. We are beyond hope. We are unloved. We are alone. Or whatever it may be. We must fight back.

Against these lies. With faith and truth. With knowledge. Of who God is. And what he has promised. And so on. To put it another way.

[35 : 40] We need to fight. Feelings. With facts. That's solid. Bible. Facts. My old friend. Philip Jensen. Used to call it.

Hopetivism. So this has always stuck with me. Right. You might know. That apparently. Optimists. Always do better in life. Than pessimists. It's just one of those things.

It's kind of obvious. When you think about it. The only problem. The only thing. Pessimists do worse. Than optimists. Sorry. The only thing. Optimists do worse. Than pessimists.

Is being realistic. So pessimists. Are usually right. That business. Probably will fail. That design. Probably is flawed.

But in the end. Optimists do better. Because they actually. Give things a go. And sometimes. They come off. Right. It's a bit of a tragic. Dilemma. Isn't it? Just about. Life. But Philip.

[36 : 36] Used to talk about. Hopetivism. Right. Hopetivism. Is not just. A silly. Deluded. Optimism. No. It's real. Optimism. Grounded on.

The character. And promises. Of God. It's not about. Painting. Kind of lipstick. On a sinful world. Looking for the silver. Linings. Around us. It's about.

The character. And promises. Of God. This is what. We must cling to. When we go through. The dark nights. Of the soul. Practically speaking.

I think we need to try. And articulate. Our feelings first. Just like the psalmist does. We can be honest. About how we're feeling. Where we're at. What's going wrong. One of the books.

I quite like. It's Philip Carey's book. Good news. For anxious Christians. Ten practical things. You don't have to do. It's a really excellent book. But anyway.

[37 : 33] He talks about. Inviting your feelings. Into your living room. And sitting them down. For a cup of coffee. And interrogating them. You know. You want to have a chat with them. They mustn't be allowed. To kind of hide in the dark.

You're not. You're not trying to suppress them. Or ignore them. They won't go away that way. But you're trying to have. A good chat with them. So that you understand them. We interrogate our feelings. And then we start. Fighting back.

Not just with my own willpower. Or with chipper. Glib kind of lies. Like you know. The optimists. You know. There's a silver lining on that. That kind of. Fake and flimsy optimism.

None of that is Christian. Or very helpful. Or sustainable. But what Christians have. Is much better. We have a real. Substantial God. Of steadfast love. A God.

By the name of Yahweh. He has demonstrated. His love for us. In Jesus. He has promised. To save us. And his promises. Are always certain.

[38 : 30] And true. One day. He will bring us. Into his eternal. Presence. It will be. A happily. Ever after. For all those. Who keep persevering.

All the old. Sorrows. And frustrations. Where will they be. In a billion years. Far behind us. He will wipe away. Every tear. From our eyes. And he will be happy.

We will be happy. Forever. Let's pray. Loving Father God. Have mercy upon us.

Help us as we struggle. With souls that are cast down. And turmoil within us. Help us. To look to you. To sing prayerful songs.

In the midst of the darkness. To keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. Your great love for us. Revealed in him. And to keep our eyes fixed on the heavens.

[39 : 29] Looking to Jesus return. And the day when all of our troubles. Will be gone. And we will get to praise you. Face to face. Eternally joyful.

With each other. Never fearing. That we are alone. Or rejected. Ever again. We pray these things in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.