

Psalm 44:23-26 NLT - 23 Wake up, O Lord! Why do you sleep? Get up! Do not reject us forever. 24 Why do you look the other way? Why do you ignore our suffering and oppression? 25 We collapse in the dust, lying face down in the dirt. 26 Rise up! Help us! Ransom us because of your unfailing love.

We can sense the frustration expressed here. The psalmist knows God is capable of saving them but doesn't understand why He hasn't moved on their behalf yet.

What are some of the unhealthy ways we see people deal with their frustration, confusion and pain?

The final conclusion of this psalm is not that they should be rescued because they are worthy or deserve God's favor.

What is the reason any of us should expect to be ransomed or redeemed? (v.26)

Wrap Up

All of us will experience pain and trials in this life. At times we may feel overwhelmed and confused that God would allow this to happen, and that relief is delayed. But the psalms show us that God hears our laments and that just as He has been faithful to us in the past, He is in control and keeps us in His loving care. We may not understand the "why" behind our circumstances, but we should never hesitate to come to God with our honest, heart-felt prayers when we suffer.

Memory Verse

God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble.
- Psalm 46:1-3 NLT

PRAYER (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life: _____

Pray for your group members' needs. _____

Challenge- Is there something in your life that feels unsettled or frustrating? This would be the time to bring it to God in an honest prayer. Tell Him your feelings and then make your requests. But don't forget to give thanks for all He has done in your life too.

"Psalm 44"

Chroma- #3

INTRODUCTION

Life, like the Psalms, is not always filled with joy and celebration. Psalm 44 is a lament, written at a time of great national distress. Each of us has faced or will face such times of distress when we struggle and suffer. At those times God can seem unresponsive, absent or silent. Certainly, He doesn't always respond to us at the speed with which we would like Him to. But what do we do with our pain and sorry while we wait on God? In Psalm 44 the psalmist laments; he expresses his distress and that of the nation directly to God. You might not be comfortable bringing your complaints to God, but this psalm is an example of an honest prayer in the face of disappointment and confusion which can be an example for us to follow.

Ice Breaker (Optional—8 min)

Did you ever tell God that you were mad at Him?

STUDY QUESTIONS (45 MIN)

1. Remembering first

Psalm 44:1-8 NLT - 1 For the choir director: A psalm of the descendants of Korah. O God, we have heard it with our own ears--our ancestors have told us of all you did in their day, in days long ago: 2 You drove out the pagan nations by your power and gave all the land to our ancestors. You crushed their enemies and set our ancestors free. 3 They did not conquer the land with their swords; it was not their own strong arm that gave them victory. It was your right hand and strong arm and the blinding light from your face that helped them, for you loved them. 4 You are my King and my God. You command victories for Israel. 5 Only by your power can we push back our enemies; only in your name can we trample our foes. 6 I do not trust in my bow; I do not count on my sword to save me. 7 You are the one who gives us victory over our enemies; you disgrace those who hate us. 8 O God, we give glory to you all day long and constantly praise your name.
Interlude

Before he brings a word of complaint, the unnamed author of this psalm sets the tone by remembering God's faithfulness to the nation in times past. And we see this is not the lament of an individual, but it was a corporate psalm.

Have you ever been involved in a corporate prayer gathering where you prayed as a group addressing God rather than bringing your individual needs? This is different from praying “for a group”, it is a time you pray in the first-person (e.g. We need you, our sins). If so, share that experience with the group.

It is important to remember our history with God. The first 8 verses of this psalm recount God’s power and faithfulness in Israel’s victories over their enemies in the past.

What would you say are some of the ways God has been faithful to our church and our nation?

In verses 4 – 7 the psalmist recognizes that God is the source of victory and not Israel’s own power. We see a similar statement in Zechariah 4:6.

Zechariah 4:6-7 NLT - 6 Then he said to me, "This is what the LORD says to Zerubbabel: It is not by force nor by strength, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. 7 Nothing, not even a mighty mountain, will stand in Zerubbabel's way; it will become a level plain before him! And when Zerubbabel sets the final stone of the Temple in place, the people will shout: 'May God bless it! May God bless it!'"

What is the result of relying on God’s power for victory that we see in verse 8 of Psalm 44, and why is that compromised when we view the victory as a result of our own resources?

2. Wondering and Waiting

Waiting for God to move is hard! We find many examples in the scriptures of faithful followers of God who suffered and wondered why God did not respond. Job and Paul are two examples.

Job 13:24 NLT - 24 Why do you turn away from me? Why do you treat me as your enemy?

2 Corinthians 12:8-9 NLT - 8 Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. 9 Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

In verses 9 – 22 of this psalm we see the expression of pain and confusion over the suffering Israel was experiencing.

Who do they believe is responsible for their condition?

On the one hand, they acknowledge that God is in control, but on the other, they are angry with Him about their situation.

How do you feel about holding God responsible for suffering or being angry with God? Which of these statements would you agree with:

- *God doesn't want to hear my complaints.*
- *God won't give me more than I can handle.*
- *I just need to make the best of a bad situation and be quiet.*
- *If God isn't answering my prayers there is something wrong with me; unconfessed sin, or faithlessness.*

Any of the above statements might lead us not to acknowledge the pain we are suffering, and in so doing we may fail to recognize its true source. Acknowledging what we are experiencing allows us to process our feelings. Bringing those feelings to God involves Him in resolving them.

The alternative to disappointment with God, is disappointment without God, and that’s not a good thing.

How is the role of God in our suffering expressed in Psalm 73:26 and Psalm 46:1?

Psalm 73:25-26 NLT - 25 Whom have I in heaven but you? I desire you more than anything on earth. 26 My health may fail, and my spirit may grow weak, but God remains the strength of my heart; he is mine forever.

Psalm 46:1-3 NLT - 1 God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. 2 So we will not fear when earthquakes come and the mountains crumble into the sea. 3 Let the oceans roar and foam. Let the mountains tremble as the waters surge! Interlude

3. Petition and Declaration

The requests of the psalmist in the final four verses are more like desperate pleas. What are the six things he requests God to do?