

Psalm 43 • Send Forth Your Light and Truth

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Psalm 43. This is a short Psalm. It's actually only 5 verses, but it's actually very similar in structure to the message of the previous Psalm. In fact, they have an identical ending, and they are so similar that there are some Bible scholars who have postulated that perhaps they were all one Psalm and mistakenly got separated.

I don't know about that. I don't think there's any reason to believe that these can't stand on their own, but because there's something different going on here, and there's a different petition that is the theme of this Psalm. Let's read through these 5 verses. It says,

“Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people, from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me! (And that is the theme right there. Hang on to that. We'll come back to that) 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? ³ Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling!

⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. (And then it ends much like the last Psalm. Same words) ⁵ 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.” (ESV)

Now, in this Psalm, the psalmist cries out to God for vindication. In other words, he's asking the Lord, to clear him from some kind of accusation of wrongdoing. That's why vindication is needed.

Look again with me in verse 1. *“Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people from the deceitful, those who lie. And also, the unjust man, (he says) deliver me.”*

And so, he cries out to the Lord for vindication to be cleared from this idea of wrongdoing. I just, I have to wonder, have you ever been in a situation like that

where you've been falsely accused or someone has said something about you that is false? Perhaps you've been misunderstood by something that you've said, and now people think badly of you or whatever the situation.

But the psalmist is finding himself in a similar circumstance. God, I need your vindication. I need to be vindicated. I didn't do what they're accusing me to have done. So his cry to God is found in verse 3. Look at verse 3. *“Send out your light and your truth.”* This is a vitally important prayer, and if you haven't, it might be even worth underlining in your Bible.

And the reason it is important when you're praying for vindication is because that's exactly what needs to happen, what he's praying for. For the light and the truth to be made known. In other words, you want the truth to be brought into the light so that it might be seen and known. And that's what the psalmist is praying for here.

He cries out to God to shed His light and His Truth, and that's, well here's the next question. Here you've been falsely accused. Maybe something's going on, lies being spread about you or something like that and obviously there is a need for the truth to come to light. So why would you pray about it? Well, the apostle John actually gives us the answer. It's in 1 John chapter 1 verse 5. Let's put it on the screen so we can see it together. Look what he writes.

1 John 1:5 (ESV)

“This is the message we have heard from him and proclaim to you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.”

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I really love that verse. I love it because it is a declaration about the person of our God. In Him is no darkness. He is light. So there's no place for anything to hide. There's no place for untruth. There's no shadows for lies and, misunderstood things or whatever. And by the way, this word picture of light and darkness, this is a huge favorite for the apostle John.

He likes to use it. He uses it often to make his point. In fact, as we read on in this very verse or this very passage, look what it goes on to say in the next 2 verses. 1 John 1, 6 and 7. It says,

1 John 1:6-7 (ESV)

“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

“If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, (There's a benefit that goes with it. In fact, two of them) we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.”

I want to leave this passage up on the screen for just a moment, if we could, because it speaks of walking in the light. Walking in the light is what you and I are called to do, and there I think there's a lot of people who think that walking in the light is walking in like purity without sin. Actually, that's not the case.

If it were, then John wouldn't have had to say, and the blood of Jesus, his Son cleanses us from all sin. And it actually means keeps on cleansing us from all sin. Walking in the light is simply walking in the revelation of our sin, confessing it openly, and repenting. That's walking in the light. When we walk in the light, there are two wonderful benefits that take place. John outlines them there.

First of all, we have fellowship with one another. Nothing keeps brothers and sisters apart more than when there is some unconfessed or hidden attitude that is being allowed to live in the shadows. And it breaks fellowship. We break fellowship with people all the time. We see Christians breaking fellowship because there's something that just, they just refuse to resolve in the light of God's presence.

And so the light has that effect. It brings things out in the open. You've got to deal with them. That's what the psalmist is praying for. Let your light and your truth shine forth. Let them come forth so that these things can be illuminated, and we can see what's really going on here. But as we've already mentioned the other benefit is that the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin or as I said before keeps on cleansing us. That's one of the beautiful things about being in the Word of God.

When we keep ourselves in the Word of God, we keep ourselves in the light and, as followers of Jesus, we always try to do that. We want to try to keep to the light as much as possible because our flesh wants to recede into the darkness. Our hearts and minds long for the darkness. The flesh longs for the

darkness, to withhold, to live in the shadows. But the light of God's Word, the light of His presence, keeps those things in the forefront that we have to deal with.

Even though you and I try to our best to keep ourselves in the light, walking in the light, there are times in life, as we see here with the Psalmist, when we find ourselves fighting against an onslaught of darkness. And that is rife with misunderstandings and lies, and I really believe that it's a work of the enemy. And we see this thing come in waves, It comes in waves.

We'll go through periods of time in the body of Christ where we'll be at rest, and then there's just this wave of the enemy that comes as an attack into the body of Christ. And all of a sudden people are getting offended, and they begin to just get angry, and they struggle to resolve issues with one another, and friends separate, and people leave churches, and then the wave recedes, and we stand back and just kind of assess the damage and we wonder what happened here.

It was just like this cloud of darkness just descended upon us and let me tell you something, when that time of darkness confronts you personally in the sense that you're get, you're caught up with it. Maybe somebody's offended with you, or somebody's mad at you, or they've taken something wrong that you said, or whatever the situation might be.

It's very, very difficult to deal with, and it's very discouraging. It's discouraging from the standpoint that false accusations and rumors are things we find that many people are all too ready to believe. And they delight to believe in the worst. Worst possible scenario. I don't know why it is, but there's something about our human flesh that just loves to believe the worst.

And that can be very, very challenging, and in fact, in verse 2, in this Psalm, the psalmist expresses some of that discouragement. Look at verse 2 with me again. He says, *"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 (or the attacks) of the enemy?"*

And this is the voice of the Psalmist who is just in the midst of this period of darkness. The shroud of difficulty, and there's just nothing worse than feeling like you're just being sucked into it, and you don't want any part of it. But the question remains, how do you battle against it? How do you battle against people who are saying things? When your personal reputation is on the line, perhaps?

And people are believing the worst about you. Well, obviously, the thing you and I don't want to do is sink into the darkness and attack them on that same level. That's the last thing we want to do. But that's what our flesh wants to do. We want to defend ourselves. Boy, that comes really easy, too. I've got to defend myself. We don't even think about allowing the Lord to defend us. We just get right in there. Somebody comes to us and says, you're not going to believe what I heard about you.

What? They start telling you. And you just, boy, I tell you, you want to just set the record straight. I believe that the best attack is a two-pronged approach when the darkness is gathering, and the first is what we see here in the example of the Psalmist, and that is to cry out to the Lord in prayer. And it might sound cliché, but it's not. The prayer of the psalmist in verse 3 is key. Send out your light and your truth.

And this is a prayer for God to expose that which is shrouded in darkness, and the Lord can do that. We've got to be careful never to forget what John said to us about the light of Christ. Let me show you John chapter 1, verse 5. It's a great passage. He said,

John 1:5 (ESV)

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."

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Now, I know that statement is specifically referring to Jesus Christ. I understand that, but it is also a general statement that is given as a rule that the world is never going to be able to defeat the light of the Lord. It's just not going to happen. The Lord is always going to win, and that ought to greatly encourage your prayers. When that darkness is just shrouded around you, go to the Lord.

Cry out to Him. Ask Him to bring light. But the other prong of the attack that you and I need to use at a time like that is the Word of God is the Scripture. When you are under attack and darkness is mounting, it is absolutely vital that you stay daily in the Scriptures in order to keep your footing. You remember what it says later on in the Psalms way ahead in Psalm 119, you guys know this.

Many of you have probably memorized it. *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."* People, that's not just fancy, Christian platitudes. That is a solid statement about the benefit of staying in the Word regarding the times when darkness closes in. It is the Word of God that is going to keep my foot from stumbling. It's going to keep the path ahead of me illuminated. It's going to

make me to know where I am going. We must stay focused on the Word of God during a time like that. And look what Peter says in 2nd Peter chapter 1, verse 19, he says, I love this,

2 Peter 1:19 (NIV)

“And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place...”

“And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, (What does he mean by that? Peter says, he's basically saying we have the Old Testament made more certain through the fulfillment that we have through Jesus Christ. And of course, you and I have it also through the writings of men like this, the apostles of Jesus. And he goes on to say) and you will do well to pay attention to it, (Look at this) as to a light shining in a dark place...”

Peter wants you to know that the Word of God is a light shining in a dark place. And there are those times when darkness just comes right in, and that's why we have to stay in the Word of God. So incredibly important. So here, in Psalm chapter 43, after asking the Lord to send His light and His truth. The psalmist says this, verse 4,

“Then I will go to the altar of God. (He's saying after you shine your light, after you bring the truth to light. I will go to the altar of God) to God my (exceeding) joy,...(and) I will praise you with the lyre Oh God my God.”

And that is to say, after truth is brought to light, I will praise Your name for your mighty deliverance and I will sing your praises because you are the Lord who delivers me. In the 28 years that we've been here at Calvary Chapel, we've seen some of those times of just clouds of darkness, just descend on the body, and it's messy, and it's confusing, and it's discouraging, and sometimes I've been the recipient of some accusations.

And other times I've watched as other people in the body were the targets. But I remember during one season that was very difficult and very dark for a period of time, and The Lord just really impressed upon my heart not to defend myself. Not to and not to speak against my enemy, to say nothing of the individual who is perpetrating whatever darkness happened to be coming out of their mouth at the time.

The Lord said, the Lord was very clear about it. Do not speak a word against this individual. You leave that to me. You let me take care of that. You, Paul, he said to me, you just be faithful. You put one foot in front of the next and just

keep teaching my Word. Day after day, week after week, month after month, and you let me worry about when this darkness dissipates and how it all washes out in the end.

But do not be concerned for your own reputation. You be concerned for My reputation, and be faithful, and when someone tries to speak evil of this individual say nothing but good. That's what the Lord told me to do. Say nothing but good. That's not what comes naturally from the flesh. Can I just tell you that right now? The flesh does not want to say good things when somebody is roasting you on an open fire.

The flesh does not want to hold its tongue when someone has made false and hurtful accusations against you personally and are saying mean spirited things. That's not what the flesh wants to do. The flesh wants to defend itself, and it wants to vilify that individual, so as to make yourself look good. That's what the flesh wants to do. And what the Holy Spirit basically said to me was, do not follow the flesh.

Do this instead. Be faithful to me, and I really think that's a word, an important word when, whenever those kinds of dark times are coming, just like the psalmist is dealing with here in Psalm chapter 43, as he begins this Psalm by saying, Lord, I need to be vindicated by You. I need Your vindication. I need the light of your Presence. The truth of who you are, to invade this situation, to bring it to light.

But meanwhile, Lord, I'm going to be concerned most about you doing Your will. You and I can get caught up in the same darkness that other people tumble into, and we can get sucked into it too and then where are you? Then where are you? You're just, you're in there duking it out in the flesh, and that's not going to do you any good and you're not going to grow in the Lord.

You're not going to learn to trust. It is really hard to trust when you feel like everybody thinks badly of you, but I believe that's what this Psalm is largely teaching. Lord, send out your Light and your Truth.