

“Discernment When Downcast About Life”
August 31, 2014 – Rev. Michael Olmstead
Psalm 42 & 43

Intro: What did Isaac Newton, Ludwig Von Beethoven, Charles Van Gogh, Leo Tolstoy and Charles Spurgeon have in common? Sounds like a Jeopardy question! These men and many others suffered from severe depression at some point in their lives. The scriptures honestly records many who God used in wonderful ways who wrestled with depression/discouragement. Ps.42,43 reveals three truths about life and dealing with depression.

I. Our Souls Thirst for God—Ps.42.1,2

1) Every person is created to worship. Haggai 2.7; Eccl.3.11 We sense that we are built for eternity-there is a purpose to life-extends beyond us. John Stott in *The Contemporary Christian* notes people are on a quest for transcendence, significance and community.

3) The author of these two Ps.’s knows that the innate thirst of his soul for transcendence, significance and community can only be finally quenched through his relationship with the only living God-provision-who is alive/ruling/reigning over his creation. The author can’t see him, meet with him face to face and ask him questions that he wants answered, wishes he could.

II. We Experience many troubles in this broken world—Ps.42.3,9,10; Ps.43.1,2

- 1) Source of his troubles is hinted-Vs.4; vs.9; vs.10. Plus- 2x (vs.3,10) the taunt ‘Where is your God?’ Ps.43.1,2.
- 2) What are the signs a person is depressed? I was in 1991,92- my darkest years!
*feelings of helplessness and hopelessness * loss of interest in daily activities
* appetite or weight changes *sleep changes * anger or irritability
* loss of energy * self-loathing *reckless behavior * concentration problems
*unexplained aches and pains
(Source: Helpguide.org/depression)
- 3) In 1967 psychiatrist Thomas Holms and Richard Rahe looked at medical records of 5k+ patients to see if there was a link between stressful events and illness. Results:

(1) Death of a spouse	(6) injury or illness
(2) Divorce	(7) marriage
(3) Marriage separation	(8) fired from job
(4) Jail term	(9) marriage reconciliation
(5) Death of a close relative	(10) retirement

In 2001 the Holmes/Rahe Inventory was tested by Anne Spurgeon+ -similar/diff:

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| (1) Death of a spouse | (6) period of homelessness |
| (2) Jail sentence | (7) immediate family seriously ill |
| (3) Death of an immediate family member | (8) unemployment |
| (4) Suicide of an “ “ “ | (9) divorce |
| (5) Getting into debt-beyond repayment | (10) break up of family |

(Source: 'Top Ten Stressful Life Events as Predictors of Mental and Physical Illness.'
HealthCentral.com)

Satan whispers his lies: 'God doesn't love you! Loser! Punished for sins! Doesn't care you!'
--Whole Churches can go through troubles-FBC-Congress St. /Canco-shrank.

- 4) Our emotions follow our thoughts, like cars of a train follow the engine. Stressful events can spur the engine of our minds to race down tracks-What if A,B, C happens?

III. The Path of Resilient Living—Ps.42.5-8; Ps.43.3-5.

- 1) Resilience=bouncing back into shape/ability to recover strength/H. attit./joy, etc.
- 2) How? Critical reflection; Asking's: 'Do I have the right perspective on this matter/myself/situation? All facts?' Downcast=murmur-associated with anger.
- 3) The beginning of our way out of depression/despair begins with focus-God's character. Rivet the three qualities of God's character found in these Psalms in your mind:
 - (1) **God's Love**-Ps.42.8-read-lovingkindness-great love
(**ILL.**) Lamentations 3.19-24
(**ILL.**) Ps.130.7,8
God's love is most clearly seen in Jesus Christ-knocks at door-Rev.3.20
 - (2) **God's Light**-Ps.43.3 =? Isaiah 10.17-Holiness isn't wicked; isn't evil.
Goal-Jesus
Sometimes he disciplines his children-Hebrews 12.5,10. Share-H./Inten-G.
God's light-holiness gives us courage to press on; don't fear; don't be afraid. Ps.27.1
 - (3) **God's Truth**—Ps.43.3-reliability/dependability/faithful-promises, stable. He provides what we need/asks us to be faithful, reliable, dependable, keep P.
- 4) Ps.43.3-These 3 qualities of God's character-Love/Light/Truth gives us guidance!
(**ILL.**) Ps.23.3—direct us in paths of righteousness-before God and men.
- 5) This is also true for whole churches-*Comeback Churches*-Stetzer-10/#1-Prayer!
 - **Testimony of Ed Crooker**
 - **Conclusion:**

For further study on this topic:

Winter, Richard. *The Roots of Sorrow: Reflections on Depression and Hope*. Marshall Morgan and Scott: Basingstoke, UK. 1985.

Lloyd Jones, Martyn. *Spiritual Depression: It's Causes and Cure*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans. 1983.

MacDonald, Gordon. *The Resilient Life*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson. 2004.