

A song for my tears

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[0 : 00] Let's come to the Lord in prayer. Lord, we thank you for the gift of your word. Let the words of my mouth and the thoughts of our hearts bring us nearer to you.

Amen. Last week, Pastor Brian preached to us on anger, a song for my indignation.

Today, I'll speak on sadness, depression, a song for my tears. The book of Psalms is a book of songs and prayers.

The Israelites use this book in their worship to God. The Psalms speak the language of our emotions.

Every conceivable emotion, every emotion you can think of ecstasy, joy, delight, hope, despair, sorrow, grief, anger, is expressed in these Psalms.

[1 : 12] These Psalms bring us to the heights of heaven, rejoicing in God, rejoicing in His ways, rejoicing in His words.

But these Psalms also bring us to the depths of the earth, describing the horrors of sin, describing the horrors of suffering.

Most importantly, the Psalms teach us in every situation how to respond to God.

Psalms 42 is a song of lament. It's a hymn of lament. It is a psalm expressing human struggles, human sorrows and grief.

This psalm is a song for the discouraged, a song for the depressed, a song for our tears. All of us live in a broken world with broken people.

[2 : 16] That's why it is so easy to be discouraged by people and by the events happening around us. All of us, if we have lived long enough, would have personally been broken ourselves one way or another.

We get depressed. We become sad. We have no energy or excitement. No interest in anything. We become pessimistic and hopeless.

At the outset, I would like to say that if you are experiencing clinical depression, then I will advise you to see a medical doctor.

Our mood, our emotions can be affected by the chemical imbalance in our body. Cindy, Cindy, are you here, Cindy? Cindy, are you here?

Cindy is there. Okay, Cindy put it on. Cindy is there. Cindy is a medical doctor who is going to specialize in mental health. You can see her for advice if you have clinical depression.

[3 : 35] So, Cindy, put your hand so that people know who you are, so that they can refer. Yes, here, Cindy, okay? It's a few jobs.

Actually, I was surprised to know that Cindy is doing mental health. You know why? It's not easy, okay? It's not easy, okay, to be dealing with people who are depressed all the time. If you've got a problem, see her.

What I'll be talking about is spiritual depression, which all of us experience one time or another. Whether you are a Christian, you are a Christian, you are still, you can still be overwhelmed by depression.

Martin Luther. Martin Luther. Martin Luther. Martin Luther, the great reformer, the one who started the Christian reformation, was for a period of time overwhelmed by depression.

Charles Spurgeon, the prince of preachers. The prince of preachers, a great preacher, also experienced severe bouts of depression. Hey, when you read your books, he described his depression.

[4 : 42] His depression is not mild, it's really severe, severe bouts of depression. You can read his biography. Even Apostle Paul was not spared times of discouragement and despair.

The Apostle Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians 1 verse 8, We were under great pressure, far beyond our ability to endure, so that we despair, we despair of life itself.

Every one of us have to prepare ourselves to face depression. Here, Psalm 42 can help us. What Psalm 42 does is to give language, give words, give expression to our sadness.

Not only that, Psalm 42 also gives us hope. It helps us to deal with our depression. First, we will deal with the reasons for the Psalmist depression.

After that, we will deal with the remedies for his depression. Let's start with the reasons for the Psalmist depression. First, spiritual thirst unfulfilled.

[6 : 00] Verse 1 and 2. As the deer pends for streams of water, so my soul pends for you, my God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When can I go and meet with God? The Psalmist uses the picture of a deer longing for water to express his deep spiritual longing.

Just as a deer longs for water, he longs for God. He wants God. He thirsts. He desires.

He longs for the living God. Actually, his longing for God. His longing for God is not like the way we crave for ice cream.

We long for ice cream on a hot sunny day. No. It's not this type of longing. It is more like craving, like longing for air.

[7 : 02] Craving for air when you are underwater for a bit too long. Your lungs need the air. If not, what happens? You will be drowned.

If the deer longs for water but doesn't get it, what happens? The deer dies. It is not longing for a luxurious item.

It is longing for what he really needs. But this longing, this desire is not fulfilled. How do we know that this desire is not fulfilled?

Because he says in verse 2, When can I go and meet with God? He is nowhere near the temple of God.

According to verse 6, He is far away from Jerusalem, where the temple is. He is at Mount Miza, about 300 kilometers away from Jerusalem.

[8 : 11] Verse 6 says, My soul is downcast within me. Therefore, I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon from Mount Miza.

For the ancient Jews, the temple is where God is. God dwells in his temple in Jerusalem. His special presence, his special presence is in the Jerusalem temple.

The Psalmist is so far away from a temple of God. He is so far away from God. He longs for God. But he is not able to meet God in the temple.

He is like a deer, thirsty, panting for water. But the water is nowhere to be found. No refreshment, no relief.

Have you ever felt this way? You look for God, but you cannot find him. You want his presence, but you only experience his absence.

[9 : 19] That's how the Psalmist feels. He is so depressed. He is so depressed about this, that he cries so much.

Verse 3, My tears have been my food day and night. My tears have been my food day and night. His soul is thirsty.

He is going through the dark night of his soul. He has prayed and found no peace. He has read the scripture, but found no comfort.

He has searched for joy and found only despair. He is like a wanderer, wandering in a spiritual wilderness, desperate for life, desperate for hope, desperate for God.

He wants to drink the living water. He wants living water. But instead, all he drinks are his own tears. And this is his constant diet.

[10 : 27] Drinking his own tears day and night, every hour of the day. If you have been a Christian, if you have been a Christian for some time, you know what this feels like.

You know what a dry season feels like. Before, it seems so natural to love God, so natural to read the scriptures, to love and to serve.

You used to be full of joy, peace and thankfulness. But, in a dry season, you don't feel like loving God. You don't feel like obeying God.

If that's you, you are in good company. First reason for the psalmist's depression, unquench spiritual thirst. Second reason, criticism from others.

Verse 3 and verse 10. People say to me all day long, where is your God? Verse 10. My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, where is your God?

[11 : 36] The psalmist is surrounded by critics. They told him, they mock him all day long. You obey God. You obey God. You worship God.

Then, why are you in such a miserable situation? Where is your God? Is he hiding somewhere? No one enjoys being criticized.

No one enjoys being mocked. All of us feel discouraged when we are being criticized or being mocked. Especially, when you are doing something good, when you are doing the right thing, when you are obeying God, and yet, you are being criticized, being mocked.

Now, it can be a very lonely experience. There was a Christian named Mr. Ed Murphy. Mr. Edward Murphy.

I will call him Murphy. He planned to go to the Bible school to prepare himself to serve God full time. But, his mother objected.

[12 : 38] His mother was against it. His mother told Murphy, told the son, if you go to the Bible school, you will never be my son again. You will never be my son again if you go to the Bible school.

Against the mother's wishes, Murphy went to the Bible school. He worked during summer holidays to pay for his expenses. But, he did not have enough money to pay for his first year school fees. He was just short of 60 US dollars. which was a big sum of money then. He was required to pay up the full fees before he took the first year final exam.

He tried very hard to raise the money, but he couldn't. Finally, in desperation, he wrote to his mother saying, it's on the screen, mother, mother, I know, you don't like what I'm doing, but, I feel that of God to do it.

I have now come to a difficult time. I lack 60 dollars of my school expenses, but, I have to pay it, I have to pay it before I take my final exam.

[13 : 54] You have helped me in other matters in the past, and I just wonder, if perhaps, you might relent, you might change your mind, and help me again. I will pay you back this summer.

His mother wrote back, this is what his mother said on the screen, son, when you left this house to go to a Bible college, I told you that you will never to come back again.

I wanted nothing to do with you as long as you continue in the Christian faith. You told me at the time, your God will take care of you, but now that you come to a time of trouble, you run back to me. If your God is really the God who says he is, then let him take care of you. I will be in Los Angeles this next weekend. You tell me that if you haven't received this money, you will have to drop out of school.

I will be at this address, and if you want to come home with me, come there, and I will know that you have dropped all this foolishness. When Murphy read this letter from the mom, how did he feel?

[15 : 06] What do you think was his emotions at the moment? Of course, he was discouraged and disappointed and depressed.

What happened next? I will tell you the remaining of the story at the end of this message. But for now, I just want you to feel how he feels.

The third reason for the psalmist depression, accumulation of troubles. Troubles keep piling up one after another. Verse 7, Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls.

All your waves and breakers have strapped over me. Deep calls to deep is a difficult phrase to interpret. But one Bible version, if you want to know the version, New Century version, translate it as troubles come again and again, sounding like waterfalls.

Troubles like waves and breakers have swept over the psalmist. Waves do not happen once. They come again and again.

[16 : 19] One wave crashing into another. one trial hasn't ended yet another comes along and another and another. They keep piling up.

The psalmist feels like he is drowning under all these waves of trouble. 60 years ago, 60 years, 60 years, 60 years ago, two psychiatrists, two doctors, they did a study on life-changing events. life-changing events that cause stress-related illness. Events, life-changing events that will cause stress, and that stress will cause illness. They assign number of values to each of these life-changing events.

Here are some examples of the values they assign. So if you experience an event like death of a spouse, the impact values on your life is 100, the stress values.

Divorce, 73. Marital separation, 65. Death of a close family member 63. Marriage, 50. Oh, marriage, also I have sex in, stress, stress.

[17:28] Stress, no, don't get me wrong, stress, okay. Yeah, 50. Sometimes pronunciation wrong, okay, sorry. Marriage, stress, okay, 50. Fired at work, 47.

Retirement from work, 45. Trouble with in-laws, 29. Trouble with boss, 26. Change in church activities, 19. While all this can cause stress.

According to their research, if you have accumulated 300 points or more in one year, it implies 80% chance, 80% chance of you having a major health problem, major health issues in the next two years.

I would like to add that you might also be a candidate for a nervous breakdown, depression.

Accumulation of troubles can depress a soul and wear you down.

Here's the fourth reason, memory of the past. The memories of the past can encourage or discourage you. So there's a good use and a wrong use of our past experiences.

[18:36] Verse 4, these things I remember as I pour out my soul, how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.

We talk about the good old days, the nostalgic feeling. The Sallamist also has this nostalgic feeling about his good old days.

He remembers what worship in Jerusalem is like. He used to be a worship leader, leading the many people in joy, in praise, in jubilation.

But now, he's far away. He's alone, cut off from God's people. He longs for what is lost.

He misses those days. To put it in our context, in the past, it was such a joy to follow Jesus.

[19:35] You found it a delight to listen to sermons, a joy to share the gospel, a privilege to be part of the fellowship. But now, it seems like following Jesus is just filled with stress, filled with suffering, filled with painful circumstances beyond your control.

And so, those memories of the past, those memories of joy, begin to torment you. What happened to the joy of following Jesus? you ask, was that even real?

What's wrong with me and my present circumstances? This can cause you to spiral into depression. We have looked at some of the reasons for spiritual depression.

Now, I want to talk about remedies. There are a lot of remedies, but many of them are not good remedies. Some people will drink heavily.

they drink a lot. Some will take drugs. They take drugs. Some will spend a lot of time watching television. Very often, the reason we do such things is to distract, to distract ourselves from the negative feelings, hoping that it will eventually go away.

[20:59] This will not make things better. The situation will get worse and worse. These are not good ways. What are the good remedies?

We can find at least two of them from this passage. Number one, speak God's truth to yourself.

Notice the Psalmist talks to himself twice, verse 5 and verse 11.

He's talking to himself.

Hey, you, yes, you, my soul, like looking in the mirror, you know, taking selfie, looking in the mirror, you look in the mirror and talk to you. Yes, I'm talking to you. Hey, I'm talking to you. I'm talking to you.

I'm preaching a sermon to you. Yes, like looking yourself in the mirror, talking to that person. Yes, I'm talking to you. No one else talking to you. I'm preaching a sermon to you.

[22:01] He's talking to himself. Why are you so depressed? Why are you so upset? And he says, put your hope in God. Put your hope in God.

I will praise him again, my savior and my God. Martin Lloyd Jones say this on the screen. Martin Lloyd Jones say this. Have you realized that most of your unhappiness, most of your unhappiness, listen carefully, most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening.

You are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself. Let us sing in. Let us sing in. I'll say it again. 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.

Preach to yourself, question yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself, put your hope in God instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way.

Remind yourself of God, who God is, and what God is, and what God has done, and what God has pledged himself to do. Defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil, and the whole world, and say with this man, I will praise him again.

[23 : 31] In this life, you will feel, you will face spiritual depression, and you must respond by preaching to yourself. Preaching what? Preaching the truth of God to yourself.

Why are you so discouraged, oh soul? Christ died for you. He took away your sin and brought you to God. He loves you.

Why are you so discontented, my soul? Christ is your reward, your hope, your joy, your peace. In him, you have everything, abundant life forever.

Why are you so depressed, oh my soul? Heaven is one day closer. On that day, there will be no fear, no tears, no death, no depression.

On that day, finally, you will be free from sin, free from suffering, forever in a Savior's arm. Hope in God, oh soul.

[24 : 35] that is why, that is why we listen to sermons Sunday after Sunday. We are hearing, we are learning the truth that nourishes our soul.

This is why we memorize scripture. We are strengthening our hearts for the hard times to come. That is why we sing songs of praise and songs of worship.

We can sing away the darkness of the soul. When you don't feel like singing, that is exactly the time when you need to sing the most.

You need to sing the most. Remember this, we need to sing the most when you don't feel like singing. You must not let your feelings dictate who you are or what you are.

God detaches who you are and what you are. And God is the truth. First remedy, speak the truth.

[25 : 39] Speak yourself with God's truth. Speak to yourself with God's truth. Second remedy, bring your despair to God. It is human nature to be self-absorbed in our suffering.

When we are in trouble, we only think about ourselves, but we need to bring God into the picture. Talk to God.

That's what verses 8 and 9 are all about. Verse 8 and 9. By day the Lord directs his love. 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? He is telling God how he feels. He is pouring out his feelings to God. Why must I go out? Why must I go about moaning, oppressed by the enemy?

We can follow the example of the psalmist here. Sometimes we are so confused, we are so confused ourselves and we do not know what to say to God.

[26 : 43] Here, the psalmist help us to put our deepest feelings into words. This is a lament, a complaint to God. Now, why is this complaining okay?

Why is it okay to complain to God in this case? Because God already knows everything. What if you pray? If you pray something like this, God, I am so depressed, I am so depressed, is he going to say, oh dear, I have no idea, why are you so depressed?

What if you say, God, I don't feel like reading the Bible, is he going to say, what? How dare you? Since when you don't feel like reading the Bible, is God going to say that?

Nothing shocks him. He already knows. In fact, he knows your despair and pain even more than you do. And since he already knows all about you, you can trust yourself into his loving hand.

But you might question, really? Does God really know? does God really know how bad I feel? And if that is your question, then God will gently redirect your gaze to the cross.

[28 : 12] He will point you to the cross. For at the cross, what do we find? We find Christ, we find Christ himself crying out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And yes, there is much misery in this cry. But one thing is clear, God does know. He knows and understands how bad you feel.

And he's done something about it. He's given his only son to reconcile you to himself, so that you know that he is always with you even when you don't feel it.

So, bring your despair to God who loves you. Bring your depression to the God of joy. Bring your all, bring everything, bring your all, the good and the bad, the beautiful and the ugly, to your God.

If you don't know where to start, just say, God, I don't even know what to pray. If you run out of words, read the Psalms out loud.

[29 : 25] Read the Psalms out loud. Make them your prayer. Let them be the springboards for your prayers. You can also share your struggles with others who know you and ask them to pray with

you.

Here, I would like to share with you my own struggle with a mild depression that lasted for a few months. When my father died 35 years ago, I went through a period of depression.

I was questioning my Christian faith, my Christian belief. I went through a crisis of faith. I had no more joy of salvation. I didn't even want to preach God's word.

I shared my struggle, my questioning with some members from my previous church. They noticed that I was going through a period of depression. Two sisters from the church came to visit me, to encourage me, and to pray with me.

What made this visit special is that one of the sisters was suffering from advanced stage of cancer. She was suffering advanced stage of cancer.

[30 : 38] She was only in the mid-30s. She was in pain. She was dying. dying. Yet, she came to encourage me and to pray with me. It should have been the other way around.

I should be the one encouraging her. She was in a deeper crisis, humanly speaking. Deeper crisis than me, humanly speaking. A few months later, she passed away.

Some of you in this church may know her. She is Sister Mary Fool. God did answer their prayers. God has restored me.

That's why I'm still preaching God's word today. You need to be honest with God of heaven and earth. Pray boldly in your suffering.

I'm so depressed here, Lord. My life is full of mourning, full of oppression. Why, Lord, where are you? I know you love me. Why do I feel like you have forgotten me?

[31 : 40] Why does my suffering seem to have no end? Help me, Father. Help me hope in you. Remind me of your great love. Save me, O God. Your honest prayer will not shock God.

You will not shock God. Our God can handle the most intimate fragile parts of your life. In his time, he will lift you up. Corrie Ten Boon on the slide on screen, Corrie Ten Look around and be distressed.

Look within and be depressed. Look to Jesus and be at rest. Now, I would like to share the concluding story about Murphy.

Murphy did not have the money, so he could not sit for the final exam. He packed his bags, called his mother, and told the mother that he will meet her to go home with her.

Just as he was going out the door with his bags, the dean, the dean of education stopped him and asked him, how much do you owe the school? Murphy said, \$60.

[32 : 56] The dean said, well, it's strange, I have this slip of paper with your name on it, and it says you have \$40 to your credit.

\$40 extra. Murphy said, there must be some mistake. I only know I owe the \$60. What actually happened? What actually happened?

Someone that very morning has sent in \$100 credited to the account of Murphy. Later, Murphy told his mother, Mom, God has supplied me the money and gave me not only the \$60, but \$40 extra.

How did his mother respond? What do you think? How did his mother respond? His mother was disappointed. Very disappointed. Not happy.

And she did not say a word. She did not say a word to Murphy. But two weeks later, his mother wrote to Murphy, the mother wrote to Murphy, son, I want to know your God.

[34 : 07] Son, I want to know your God. I'm not laughing. This is not just true story, okay? This is Murphy's overseas crusade, but a long time ago.

If you are a truly child of God, even if you have packed your bags, even if you have packed up your bags and given up hope, God will still meet you somewhere to encourage you, to restore you, because he loves you.

So today, put your hope in God. He is your savior. He is your God. Let's pray. Father, we live in a broken world with broken people.

You know that all of us will feel discouraged and depressed at one time or another. some of us here may be overwhelmed by depression now.

Hear their cry. Bring encouragement to their depressed soul. Help them to see that you still love them no matter how they feel towards life.

[35 : 21] We can always put our hope in you for you are our savior and our God. In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.