

# God Leads to God

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You know, we all know something about the feeling of mourning, the feeling of going through difficult times, the feeling of struggle and wondering where God is in the midst of that and Psalm 43 kind of gives us a path to follow to go through that and to be able to come out well on the other side.

As we mentioned last time as we studied Psalm 42, many commentators take Psalm 42 and 43 together, in fact, in fact many actually, will say that these two were originally one Psalm. They see that because there are common themes in 42 and 43, if you look at verse 5 for example as we just kind of introduce things here, Psalm 42:5 says, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence." Verse 11 of Psalm 42, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God." Then in verse 5, "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God." So you have a repeated refrain in these two Psalms that are now separate in our English text, and so commentators look at that, they look at the fact that Psalm 42 has a heading and Psalm 43 does not, and they say, "We think that this was originally one Psalm that should be read and studied together." There are some early manuscripts that put them together so that's not an unreasonable view and it is held by so many good men that I wouldn't say anything critical about it but there is something at stake here and it's worth noting that that opinion is not unanimous that these two were originally one Psalm.

Charles Spurgeon said this and he says something about the nature of Scripture that I think is important for you to hear that goes beyond simply Psalm 42 and Psalm 43. Listen to what Charles Spurgeon said because this goes to a critical matter of the way that we consider the biblical text and the deference that we give to the Bible as we have received it. Charles Spurgeon said, "On account of the similarity of the structure of this Psalm to that of Psalm 42, it has been supposed to be a fragment wrongly separated from the preceding Psalm." So what he's saying is, commentators say it was originally one, they never should have been separated. Listen to what he says and let this inform your high view of Scripture. Spurgeon said and I continue to quote, "But it is always dangerous to allow these theories of error in holy Scripture. In this instance, it would be very difficult to show why this Psalm should have been broken. Its similarity would have secured its

unity had it ever been part and parcel of Psalm 42." In other words, if these were originally together, why would they have ever been broken apart from one another, is his point. And he says, "Is it not far more likely that some in their fancied wisdom, united them wrongly in the few manuscripts in which they are found as one?" Spurgeon says, "We believe the fact is that the style of the poetry was pleasant to the writer and therefore in later life he wrote this supplemental hymn after the same manner." In other words what he's saying is, let's not suppose that something went wrong in the composition of the Bible, let's not suppose that error took place and that explains why we have two Psalms that sound alike instead of one, let's not do that, let's just assume that there's another explanation and frankly it's an explanation that you can relate to and there is a pastoral reason that we would make a point like this and dwell on it a little bit. Isn't it true in your own life that there are certain Scriptures that you go back to again and again because they give you comfort in different seasons of life? It ministers to you at one point in life, you live on for a while and then something else comes back and you go back to that same passage of Scripture because it gives you comfort, it gives you strength, it gives you wisdom and insight? You know something about that, don't you? There are certain texts that you go back to that have ministered to you personally again and again. Well, you know something about the fact that you go back to the same fountain that you drank from that quenched your thirst before. Well, isn't it reasonable to think that a Psalmist would have a similar experience in his own life? Psalm 42 was written, composed, and the theme and the manner of argument of Psalm 42 was effective and so he comes back to it at another point in time and makes the same argument to his soul once again. That's not unreasonable. The writer draws upon spiritual principles that helped him earlier in life and has them now to help him again.

Well, whatever the history of the composition of Psalm 42 and 43 are, tonight we're going to turn to its exposition and we're going to treat Psalm 43 as a standalone Psalm and I think by the end of the night we'll be glad that we did and what we're going to see here is very very sweet and precious. And ultimately what Psalm 43 does is this: Psalm 43, written probably close to 2,500-3,000 years ago, Psalm 43 is going to be like a rocket launch pad that launches us clear into eternity with its perspective on God and with these five brief verses, we're going to break into three parts here tonight. First of all, we're going to see the mourning of the Psalmist as we open in the first two verses. The mourning, m-o-u-r-n-i-n-g, his sadness, his grief, his sorrow, his difficulty, and that's what opens the Psalm. This is one really cool Psalm. I can't believe that we are finally able to exposit it here together tonight. I'm very happy about that.

As Psalm 43 opens, the Psalmist is under attack. He is being criticized and undermined by men who were misrepresenting him and causing problems and so he appeals to God who knows all things, he appeals to God and asks for God's help in the midst of his sorrow and difficulty. Look at verse 1. He says,

1 Vindicate me, O God, and plead my case against an ungodly nation; O deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!

The word could also be translated "from an ungodly people," and he's saying, "Vindicate me or plead my case," he makes both requests and these are like legal terms. He's asking God to act like a righteous judge and to declare a verdict in his favor; to show him to be innocent of the attacks that are being made against him. He says, "God, help me like that. Be a Judge and declare my case to be innocent. Plead my case," he says, kind of from another side of the courtroom analogy saying, "God, be my defense attorney. Defend me against the deceptive charges that are being made against me." He says, "This is unjust. This is not right. This is premised on falsehood, the attacks that are being made against me." So he says, "God, I ask you from your position of omniscience, your attribute of holiness, your faithfulness to your people, God, I ask you to step into this situation and help me and vindicate me from what's going on around me."

"Deliver me," he says, look at verse 1 again, "Deliver me from the deceitful and unjust man!" He says, "Rescue me from the insinuations that are being made that are grounded in deceit and misrepresentation. God, I am in a position where I cannot defend myself. God, I ask you to defend me, to help me and to manifest the justness of my cause," he says. So whatever the historical background was, this godly Psalmist finds himself in a position where some kind of unfair personal battle not of his own making is being waged against him and he is calling upon God to help him.

Now watch what happens as you go on in the text. Here in verse 1, he is appealing to God to help him, appealing to the power, to the loyal love of God to come to his aid. Now, on what basis, on what ground does he approach God in that way? What is his right to step into the presence of God and to ask God to come to his assistance? Well, look at verse 2, he says, "For," I'm making this request, O God, because,

## 2 For You are the God of my strength

"You are over me. I belong to you and you belong to me and so I come to you in your capacity of my God of power, my God of protection, and I ask you to exercise the obligations of our relationship to one another. I ask you to exercise those on my behalf. You're the God of my strength, God. Bring your power to bear to answer my prayer."

Now, that's a little bit of a hinge point in the text and watch this: the fact that God is his God and God is a God of strength is both a help to him at this time and it is also a perplexity to him at this time. As his help, it becomes the ground of the request that he makes in verse 1 saying, "God, I need help. You are the God of my strength therefore on that basis, I ask you to intervene on my behalf." That's a help that he's got a God like that to call upon. But it is also perplexing to him and those of you that have been through some chronic long-term difficulties and it seems like the ear of God is brass to your prayers and it just kind of rings off his ear and nothing seems to happen as you call out to him, you can understand the sense of perplexity that is here. It's perplexity for this reason: the Psalmist cannot understand why God has not already delivered him when the sorrow has been so great and so deep and the waves have just come again and again to crush him time and time again.

So you look at verse 2 again with me, he says, "You are the God of my strength." Notice how he pivots and the fact that God is strong leaves him with an unanswered question,

why have You rejected me?

"Why haven't you done anything to intervene and change the course of these circumstances?" Look at verse 2 again,

Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?

"God, if you are the God of my strength, why is it that my soul is continually crushed before you and there is no sense of comfort that comes? God, why do you allow these things to go on so that it seems as though you have rejected me? God, I cannot understand this prolonged, deep crisis at the hands of a deceitful and unjust man. I can't understand why this is developing and continuing when you're a God of strength." The strength of God would seem to be at odds with the difficulty that the Psalmist is going through.

Well, can't you relate something, somehow to that kind of pain? You've felt this kind of pain before, haven't you? The pain of just repeated sorrows coming down upon you and it seems as though nothing changes? Perhaps you're discouraged in your isolation? Discouraged in your physical weakness? Discouraged by abandonment? And it seems like you've got nowhere to turn for comfort. There is no one with the strength or power to help you, no one with the ability to comfort your isolated and sorrowing heart. Don't you know something about that? I have in times gone by and so I can look at this Psalm and I can see my own sorrows in the past being played out before my own eyes, and if you can, then this Psalm should become precious to you as we go along.

Here's what I want you to see, beloved, two things really is that Scripture understands your sorrow. The Bible understands your weakness. The Bible even allows for these kinds of questions to be articulated. You know, the Psalms are given to us as a pattern that would help us express the sorrows and the deep movements of our heart in times of great affliction and you should draw a sense of strength and comfort from that, that somehow you hold in your hands, or have on your iPad, a book that understands you; a book that can read you; a book that identifies with you and expresses the deepest thoughts of your heart in a way that nothing else does; a book from God and God says, "I get it. I understand this is a common experience of the people of God." Once again, we're left with looking at this book and saying, "This is so precious," and you just draw it close to your heart to realize that we have something like this from God because, why is that so precious? It's precious because it is another assurance that God sympathizes with you in your weakness; that God understands it and that God has compassion and that God cares. That's why a Psalm like this would be in the Psalter in the first place. It's not there for God's benefit. God is perfect and unchanging. God is immutable. God is not affected by things that happen. It's here for us. It's here for you to look and say, "This is my entranceway into and understanding God."

But there's something that this Psalm also teaches us as it understands our mourning, as it expresses the mourning of the Psalmist, and this is something that in my earlier years in particularly intense times of mourning I missed. I didn't get this and I stayed in a stunted place of growth for far too long or more than I needed to, that's for sure, and now here I am in my mid-50s preaching, as it were, to the young Don in his late 20s. Here's what you need to understand, beloved, and those of you that struggle and you're in the midst of depression: take comfort from the fact that Scripture understands this, Scripture makes allowance for it. God understands. God is not threatened by your questions. Our Lord Jesus Christ, it says in Hebrews 4, sympathizes with our weaknesses. We have a high priest who sympathizes with our weaknesses because in his humanity he also suffered with the exception of sin. So you ask the questions but here's the thing that I missed for far too long: there is a way forward beyond the questions and it is your responsibility and your opportunity and your prerogative to move beyond the questions. And maybe I was just particularly bad and weird and all of that in the remote chance that perhaps some of you are now like I was back then, I kind of, you know looking back on it, I willingly stayed in the questioning stage too long and I engaged the questions longer than I needed to and it prolonged my agony and prolonged the difficulty, this talking about things from many many years ago. Here's the thing, beloved: God understands the questions but you have a responsibility and God has laid forth very clearly here in Psalm 43, the way to move beyond those questions and it is your spiritual duty to do so; to not simply collapse under the weight of your questions and to stay there as if there wasn't provision that would help you to move beyond them. This is so crucial for you to see. There is a way forward out of your questions that you must appropriate. It is your responsibility to do so if you are a Christian.

So we're going to move from the mourning to point 2: the meditation. The meditation, and one of the reasons that Psalm 43 should be treated separately and stand alone if for no other reasons than for teaching purposes, to pull out a 25 cent word, for pedagogical purposes. It's remarkable in the commentaries that you look at, how quickly they sweep through Psalm 43 because they have joined it together with Psalm 42. Well, it's our blessed privilege to slow down a little bit here this evening and to look at this meditation. As you move into Psalm 43:3, the Psalmist feels lost. He doesn't know where to turn. He's under the weight of internal mourning and he has external affliction from people who are opposed to him. He feels the weight of sorrow. He feels the depth of discouragement and it eats at him. "Why am I mourning like this? God, why have you rejected me?" He is tested here beyond his strength and he feels lost in the circumstances.

Notice the cry of his heart in that situation, verse 3. This is so sweet. The simple desperation of this prayer and yet the profound trust with which it goes out on its weak wings to the throne room of God. It is a strong trust but carried forth by a weak expression, a man in weakness expressing it, I should say. Verse 3, he says,

3 O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me

What is he saying there except, "God, I'm lost here. I don't know where to turn, and so, God, I ask you to guide me out of this mourning that I am feeling, out of this affliction,

out of this discouragement. God, I lay hold of your faithfulness, I lay hold of the fact that you are my God, I lay hold of the fact that you are strong and I ask you in the words of the old spiritual, take my hand and lead me home." That's what he's praying. He's appealing to God's faithfulness and to put it in today's language, he's saying, "O God, please don't leave me in this condition. Lead me to a better place." It's such a simple prayer.

Do you know what? That's a prayer that you can pray right here right now in the midst of your sorrow. You know, sometimes I think we try to out-think ourselves. I think we try to be too spiritual, we try to be too smart, we try to be too incisive in our thinking of things and we get wound up and you just start to introspect and, "What about this? And what about that? And this consequence might happen and that consequence may come. And I feel this way." And you just get all tangled up inside yourself in one great big knot. What if we just humbled ourselves to the simple childlike status that simply says, "God, lead me out of here"; in the simplicity of a heart cry that says, "God, this is painful. God, I need your help. God, I don't know what to do. God, lead me." What's wrong with that? That sounds pretty good, doesn't it, to appeal to God like that?

And look at what he says there, look back at verse 3 with me, he says, "O send out Your light and Your truth, let them lead me." He personifies the light of God. He personifies the truth of God and says, "Let them be those things, each one taking one of my hands and leading me out of this pit that I find myself in." It's somewhat similar in terms of personifying attributes of God to Psalm 23 where it says, "Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life." There's this sense of the active presence of God doing things as if it were a person standing alongside; sympathetic helpers alongside us to help us. Goodness and mercy in Psalm 23 lining our way, here in Psalm 43, the light and truth of God leading us. What is he saying when he asks for that? He's saying, "God, inform my understanding. Illuminate my mind so that I would understand things better. Order my circumstances through your providence so that" – watch this – "so that I would end up in a good place to replace this bad place that I find myself in. Lead me. Help me, O God."

Now, watch this, watch this. How many times have I read Psalm 43 and completely missed the point? Well, far too many. I want to point something out to you. One of the delights of biblical exposition and going verse by verse is that you can take time to slow down and just let Scripture say what Scripture has to say. I want to point out a simple two letter word to you in these two verses, verses 3 and 4, that just is like going to be turning on floodlights of understanding to what's going on here. Notice the little two letter word "to." T-o. To. You see, he's not simply asking God to lead him, he's asking God to lead him somewhere.

What does he want God's light and truth to do? Now, we're going to sweep through it so that you see the Scripture and then we'll go back and identify things a little more particularly. He says in verse 3, "let them lead me," do you see that there?

Let them bring me to Your holy hill And to Your dwelling places. 4 Then  
I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy.

You say, "Why is that so important?" Well, this is really really cool. There is an exhilarating progression that is going on in this prayer and he's going from outside, closer, closer, closer in. He says there in verse 3, "Let them bring me to Your holy hill," it's a reference to Jerusalem, "And to Your dwelling places." What's in Jerusalem? The dwelling places of God. In David's day this would have been a reference to the tabernacle where the presence of God was, in Solomon's day a reference to the temple where the presence of God was manifested. Now stay with me on this. So he says, "Lead to me to Jerusalem where the place of worship is," in verse 4, "Then I will go to the altar of God." In other words, "Once I get to the place of worship, I'll go more particularly to the altar, the altar where sacrifice was made in the course of public worship," where God's appointed means of meeting with him in the Old Testament economy was established. "Take me to Jerusalem where I can find the temple and go to the altar." Step by step, closer and closer and closer.

And beloved, watch this: what is the ultimate goal of this increasing closeness, this ever closer proximity? What is he zeroing in on? What is the laser beam starting to focus on? One single thing. "Then I will go to the altar of God, To God my exceeding joy." What is the ultimate goal of this ever closer proximity? He's obviously removed from the city of Jerusalem as he writes this and so he is asking God to bring him to the city, bring him to the temple, bring him to the altar. Why does he want that? Not for the physical structure. He wants God himself. That is the whole goal. He wants to be face-to-face with the presence of God. He's asking God – watch this – he's asking God, "Lord, let your light and truth lead me. Lead me out of this dark place that I find myself in. Lead me out of the discouragement and the pressing circumstances that I am in and lead me step by step. Let your word, let your providence order things so that I end up face-to-face with you." Let me say that again because that's really important. He says, "Enlighten my mind and order my circumstances so that ultimately I end up face-to-face with you."

And he says what will happen. This is the deep desire of his heart. What will happen, author of Psalm 43? What will happen when you see God face-to-face? He says,

And upon the lyre I shall praise You, O God, my God.

He says, "God, my desire is to be face-to-face with you and when I am face-to-face with you, my heart will burst forth in musical praise and I will worship you for the deliverance and for the leading that you give to me out of this situation." These are the most profound of righteous holy affections being expressed in the midst of very profound discouragement. He's saying, "O God, lead me so that these present circumstances of sorrow and mourning will yield, will give way to undistracted praise which will restore the joy of my heart. God, you're my exceeding joy. God, I have no good besides you. God, you are the desire of my heart. Take your word, take the power of your providence and bring me to the point where I am once again face-to-face with you so that I can give you the joyful worship that I long to give." Wow, that's one great prayer.

And see, notice that in this meditation as he's expressing the longings of his heart, notice what is presupposed in all of this. God is the God of his strength. This is his God that he's talking to and so he asks this, confident that the faithfulness of God will grant him what he is asking for. The loyal love of God – watch this – the loyal love of God guarantees that he will bring his people ultimately into his presence. God himself, Christian, is your joy. God himself is the subject of your song. Nothing else can take that place. The Psalmist says, "God, lead me so that I am face-to-face with you and that I can respond in joy and in song and in praise." It's the meditation of his heart. It's quite the thoughtful prayer under the weight of provocation. "God, step by step, bring me into ever closer proximity until I am with you face-to-face, and when I am, I will worship you, when I am, everything else will fail by comparison to the captivation of my heart to the glory of God and to the love that I want to express to you undistracted by wicked men and contrary circumstances." That's his meditation. That's the desire of his heart.

Do you want to notice something really cool about this? I need to come up with a better word than "cool." Something really profound about this? Something that gives you insight into what God does and who God is and why he does it and what the best thing for you is? Let's back up. I think it's probably fair to say that when many many times when we find ourselves in difficult circumstances, we ask God to guide us and it's good that we ask God to guide us and to place ourselves under his guidance and his leading, but far too often, I think, we probably just are saying, "God, help me to know how to navigate through this circumstance so that I can find myself in a different circumstance, a better circumstance, a less painful circumstance." Fair enough but that's not what the Psalmist is asking for here and here in Psalm 43, we get informed as to what God would have us seek as we ask guidance from him. The point of God's guidance is not some kind of earthly result or earthly circumstance change, that's not the point at all. What would be the best thing that God could do for you in his guidance? The best thing that God could do for you is to guide you right to himself; for you to know God more deeply, to worship him more fully, to trust him exclusively, to find the final satisfaction of your heart in him regardless of shifting circumstances. That's it and what this Psalm is showing us and what the Psalmist is asking for in his meditation, he's saying, "God, lead me right to yourself because that will provoke the joy of my heart." We spend so much of our time, don't we, asking for the wrong thing. We set our sights too low, we set it on earthly matters. "Change this. Bring that. Send that away." When all the while in the midst of it, there should be a preeminent affection in your heart that says, "God, just bring me to yourself. Bring me to know you better. Bring me to that undistracted understanding of who you are." The Psalmist is expecting him to do that as he prays.

That brings us to point 3: the motivation. The motivation and there is something really really hot about verse 5, not cool but hot. This is cool too is what I'm trying to say. Notice in verse 2, let me remind you, the Psalmist is asking why. "Why have you rejected me? Why do I go mourning?" He's asking, "Why? Why? O God, why?" Now in verse 5, he's asking why again but it's a completely different question and it's addressed to someone else. Look at Psalm 43:5,



5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

What is he saying here? He has just asked God to lead him to himself; he's asked God to lead the Psalmist to God, "Bring me into your presence once more." He knows that that's a prayer that God is going to answer; that that is a prayer that God would obviously grant to his people. It's the whole reason that he makes a people his own is so that we would be his people and he would be our God. That's the whole point of spiritual existence in the kingdom of God and so he knows that God is going to answer that prayer. He knows that. It is a given. It is a certainty. Notice what he's doing now, the total transformation that has taken place in five short verses. In verse 2, there is almost – I don't want to say too much – there is almost a tone of accusation against God, "Why have you rejected me? Why am I mourning like this?" By the time he remembers the destination of his soul and has entrusted himself to the guiding hand of God, he pivots and, as it were, he turns on himself and he cross-examines his own soul. "On what basis," he says to himself, "on what basis do you find yourself in this condition of despair and discouragement? How can you possibly justify that," he asks himself as he preaches to himself, "how can you justify that? Why are you like that?" Preaching to himself.

So instead, and his circumstances haven't changed here, instead of asking God why God is indifferent to his condition, beloved, this is what you must do in your own questioning spirit, he asks his own soul, "Why are you hesitating to trust God? Why would you not implicitly trust this God who is the God of power, the God of might, the God of his people, the God of their exceeding joy who will most certainly lead us to his presence? On what basis do you go around downcast?" he says to his soul. Beloved, mark it: what he's saying to himself is, he is saying to his soul, "There is no justification for your discouragement. There is no justification for you to be weighed down when God is the God of your joy and he will certainly bring you into his presence." Remember this, remember the final outcome, remember that you are headed toward the presence of God and find satisfaction there. The way that you deal with your struggling soul is, i.e., to make sure that you are in Christ and if you are in Christ, to remember the outcome in the future when you are face-to-face with God and, as it were, pull that future certainty into the present so that it flavors every aspect of your response to life.

Look at verse 5 there again. "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why are you disturbed within me? Hope in God," fix your certain expectation in God, "for I shall again praise Him," he says, "The help of my countenance and my God." The help of my countenance, "countenance" being a reference to the appearance of the face. And how is God the help of his countenance, the help of his face? What does that mean? That sounds kind of odd. Martyn Lloyd Jones expresses it this way and see if you can't find yourself in what he says. I quote, "The man who is unhappy and depressed always shows it in his face. He looks troubled and he looks worried. You take one glance at him and you see his condition. Yes, says the Psalmist, but when I really look at God, as I get better, my face gets better also. I lose that haggard, troubled, perplexed and introspective appearance and I begin to look composed and calm, balanced and bright. This is not putting on a mask

but something that is inevitable." When the Psalmist's hope is fixed on the true and living God, that his ultimate destination is to be in his presence and to worship him with exceeding joy and his confidence is rested there, it can only help to bring satisfaction and comfort to his heart which inevitably shines forth on his face, in that way God is the help of his countenance. Kind of like Moses having been up and seeing the glory of God and it was reflected in his face, in the same way for us when our heart is at rest in Christ, it shows in our face.

Now, let's bring this plane in for a landing. The Psalmist here knew God in the Old Testament manner of speaking, in the Old Testament economy, and so he speaks of the altar and alludes to the temple. You and I here in the New Testament, we find something greater in the progress of revelation and I've already said this but we're going to go a little bit further. Beloved, what does God do? How does God lead us? We have got to get away from our desire and our satisfaction with just paltry human circumstances. No, what God does is that God – watch this, this is not complicated – God leads us to God. The Holy Spirit when he convicted you of sin and brought you to faith in Christ, what was he doing? He was leading you to God. What was the whole purpose of the coming of Christ? "No man comes to the Father but through Me." He came in order to bring us to God. God is your highest good. God is your highest joy. Oh beloved, stop asking for things from an earthly perspective and ask God to bring you to a greater sanctified knowledge of him that would satisfy your heart, that would give you transcendent joy. That's what you need, not a change in your circumstances. Our Lord Jesus brought us to God when we were dead in sin. The Spirit of God sanctifies us in the knowledge of God and what is the ultimate outcome of your salvation? What is the final destination? When the train stops and you get off of the salvation train, so to speak, at what station will you be in? What platform will you get off at when the process is complete?

Turn over to 1 John 3. The Psalmist in Psalm 43 had said, "God, lead me ultimately to God, my exceeding joy." The God who saved you, the God who is sanctifying you, the God who will one day glorify you, what is his ultimate purpose in all of it? His purpose is that you would see him. 1 John 3:2, in the middle of the verse, "We know that when He appears, we will be like Him, because we will see Him just as He is." We will see him. We will see Christ face-to-face. We will see him in his magnificent glory. We will see him in resurrected power. We will see him unhindered by the flesh, unhindered by sin, unhindered by earthly limitations. We will be face-to-face with Christ, our Savior. Matthew 5:8 says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

And turn over to Revelation 22 as we get a glimpse into the eternal state. Revelation 22:3, "There will no longer be any curse; and the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and His bond-servants will serve Him; they will see His face, and His name will be on their foreheads. And there will no longer be any night; and they will not have need of the light of a lamp nor the light of the sun, because the Lord God will illumine them; and they will reign forever and ever." God will shine light on them. They will see God face-to-face and the ultimate fulfillment of Psalm 43 will find its full fruition. Face-to-face with God. Face-to-face with Christ. Beloved, understand this: you as a Christian will see God. You will see Christ. And beloved, that is more sure to you, that is more certain than

your next breath because that – we don't know what our next breath is, we don't know what tomorrow holds but we know that the eternal appointment of God for his people is that ultimately they will be with him face-to-face and his purpose can never fail. He has revealed it in Scripture and, beloved, the Scripture cannot be broken.

That's the outcome for you in Christ, face-to-face in the presence of ineffable glory, unspeakably wonderful blessing and bliss that tongue cannot describe. That's where you're going. That's the outcome for your soul. Bring that future certainty into your present uncertainty. Beloved, settle that in your mind that God will lead you to God. He will lead you into his perfect presence forever and ever and ever. And when that is fixed in your mind, then in the midst of your discouragement, you preach to yourself and you say to yourself, "Remember the wonders of coming joy," and then you hope in God. You tell your soul not to accept the discouragement but to hope in God and to fix your confidence on that and let the certainty of the future flavor your perception of a difficult present.

Let's pray together.

*God, you are our God. You are the God of our exceeding joy and we long to be with you face-to-face where the uncertainties of this life, the hardships that it brings, the difficulties, the tears, the unexpected setbacks. Father, we can look through all of them and see that they do not define ultimate reality for us. The ultimate reality is that you are our God, that you have led us to yourself through Christ, and that we know him now and that having begun the process, you will most certainly complete it until that day of Christ Jesus and then we will see him face-to-face and we will be like him and there will be no more curse. The throne of God and the Lamb will be in it and we will see your face. Father, may that be the strong assurance of every heart that is here tonight.*

*And for those that are here that do not know Christ, O Father, we pray that you would lead them to the cross. Help them to see that Christ was sent for sinners just like them, just like you as you are listening to me pray. Christ came for sinners just like you, gave his life for sinners just like you, rose from the dead, ascended on high and now calls you and says, "Come to me so that you might be saved, so that you might have this assurance and confidence that eternal life and forgiveness of sin might be completely yours." God extends that offer to you today through the Lord Jesus Christ. We invite you to receive Christ tonight, to repent of your sin, to receive Christ for eternal life, to leave this world behind and to reach forward for the one to come. Father, take these words of grace and comfort that we've seen tonight from your word and apply them according to the need of every heart as we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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