

Save Me, My Spirit Faints

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Preacher: Shawn Woo

[0 : 00] Psalm 143, a Psalm of David. My spirit faints within me. My heart within me is appalled.

I remember the days of old. I meditate on all that you have done. I ponder the work of your hands. I stretch out my hands to you. My soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

Answer me quickly, O Lord. My spirit fails. Hide not your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit. Let me hear in the morning of your steadfast love, for in you I trust.

Make me know the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul. Deliver me from my enemies, O Lord. I have fled to you for refuge. Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.

Let your good spirit lead me on level ground. For your namesake, O Lord, preserve my life. In your righteousness, bring my soul out of trouble.

[1 : 29] And in your steadfast love, you will cut off my enemies. And you will destroy all the adversaries of my soul, for I am your servant. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

I don't know if you're like me, you've probably had experiences where you encounter difficulties and hardships, disappointments.

And then you wonder whether it's God punishing you. It's because of something you've done wrong. Something, the repercussion of your own failings.

If you're in that place, Psalm 143 is a wonderful example of how we should respond in a situation like that. Because we see here David, who is unrighteous, flinging himself upon the Lord's mercy on the basis of his righteousness.

And so this psalm is divided into two parts, marked by the break, Selah at the end of verse 6. And both sections are a prayer for God's deliverance. So we see the dire circumstances that he's in, verses 3 to 4.

[2 : 33] He says, For the enemy has pursued my soul. He has crushed my life to the ground. He has made me sit in darkness like those long dead. Therefore my spirit faints within me.

My heart within me is appalled. So he mentions his enemies three times. Two more times he mentions his enemies in verse 9, verse 12. So he's under attack. His life, his very life seems to be in jeopardy.

And you can think about it figuratively or literally for yourself. And we can see that kind of threatening that mortal danger he is in, in the repetition of the word soul.

Which is the same word that means life. Verse 3, he says, For the enemy has pursued my soul.

Verse 6, he compares his soul to a parched land that's basically dried, about to, there's no life left in it.

Verse 8, he speaks of entrusting his soul to God. Verse 11, he asks God to bring his soul out of trouble. And in verse 12, he expresses his faith that God will destroy all the adversaries of his soul. And the word life is also repeated twice in verse 3 and verse 11.

[3 : 36] He says, he has been sitting in darkness like those long dead. And then he says, if God doesn't answer soon, he feels he will go down to the pit. So both being like long dead, going down to the pit are metaphors for death.

So he feels very close to death. Maybe you can relate to it. This, if you've had dark moments in your life, whether it's just mental health or, or real danger, wherever you are.

Have you felt the grip of death closing in on you? Just the long darkness. Or have you felt like your soul was being crushed to the ground? Somebody's grabbing you and continuing to crush you down against the ground.

Do you know what it feels like to have your spirit fainting? Feeling like it's failing you. It's weak. It's despondent. And then, and that's what David says in verse 7.

My spirit fails. Literally, that means my spirit comes to an end. And so have you felt like that, you know, being pummeled in your life, being crushed? And that's not even the worst of it.

[4 : 38] Because as David is going through this terrible suffering, what's worse is that he feels like he may have brought this upon himself. In his heart of hearts, he feels that he deserves this.

But nonetheless, he cries out to God in verses 1 to 2. Hear my prayer, O Lord. Give ear to my pleas for mercy. In your faithfulness answer me. In your righteousness enter not into judgment with your servant.

For no one living is righteous before you. Notice that contrast between verse 1 and verse 2. In verse 2, David admits that no one living is righteous before God.

So he is admitting he's not righteous. I've sinned. I deserve punishment. God's wrath is warranted. And yet, David prays, In your faithfulness answer me.

In your righteousness. So not his own righteousness, but God's righteousness. That God will do what is right. That God will be faithful and true to who he is and what he has promised.

[5 : 43] That's the basis for David's confidence. And so he reiterates this in verse 11. For your namesake, O Lord, preserve my life. Not for David's namesake.

For your namesake, O Lord. And then in your righteousness, bring my soul out of trouble. And why is it right for God to rescue David? You know, why is it right for him to do that?

It's because of the covenant that God has made with David. David says in verse 10, You are my God. And then he says in verse 2 and verse 12, I am your servant.

Precisely because God has graciously identified himself with David. Associated himself with him by calling him his servant. Making a covenant with him. Entering into relationship with him.

Now, God's name and reputation depend on David's welfare. David trusts that God will deliver him because of God's righteousness.

[6 : 39] Because of his loyal, steadfast love, which he mentions in verse 8 and verse 12. So this pattern of God's fullness on the one hand and David's emptiness kind of runs through this entire psalm. So you can see how in verse 6, David stretches out his hand to God in emptiness.

Just desperate longing. He's like a parched land that thirsts for water. But as he does this, he does this because he remembers the works of God's hands in verse 5. So David's hands empty and longing, stretching out for God in God's hands, remembering the works of God's hands.

And then similarly, you can see in verse 4 and verse 7, David says, My spirit faints. My spirit fails. But then in verse 10, he prays, God's good spirit would lead him on level ground.

Though his spirit fails and faints, God's spirit will lead him and sustain him. And Paul actually quotes this psalm, verse 2, which says, For no one living is righteous before you.

He quotes that actually in two of his letters. One is the famous passage in Romans 3, 20 to 22, that you guys are all familiar with, which says, By works of the law, no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

[7 : 53] But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. The second instance of this verse being quoted by Paul is in Galatians 2, verses 15 and 16, where it says, If you want to escape the enemy of your soul, Satan, right, the ancient serpent who accuses our brothers, who accuses us night and day before God, your righteousness will never be an adequate ground for your acquittal.

It will never be sufficient grounds for your deliverance. Instead, the enemy of your soul will crush you repeatedly to the ground, and your spirit will faint and fail, and you'll be counted among the perishing.

So to try to stand on our own righteousness before God is to try to stand on sinking sand. But if you ask God to answer you in his faithfulness, from his righteousness, and if you depend on the righteousness of God counted as yours through faith in Jesus Christ, his life, death, and resurrection on your behalf, then your salvation and deliverance will come.

Then Christ will be your solid rock, a firm foundation among which you can stand before God. And I think there's probably someone here that's wrestling in their conscience with these kinds of issues, not in a technical or theological way, but more in a life way probably wrestling with this.

The reason why I think that is because I was reading Galatians this week, and I actually preached on Galatians 2 at one of the dawn prayer meetings, and then I didn't know this was our psalm for this week, and then it came again, and then Galatians 2 came out again.

[9 : 58] I think there's somebody that needs to hear this, and that's whoever's wrestling with just in your conscience feeling like you can't stand before God, feeling like your conscience is not purified before God, that you need to count all of it in Christ Jesus, that he's the only one that can be your confidence, and then that could be your sure footing for you to approach him.

And so I hope that speaks to you. If you think that was intended for you, I mean it's intended for all of us, but if it's specifically something that you've been wrestling with, let us know so we can pray for you at some point during the night.
I think that'd be good. Thank you.