

Sermon outline notes: Psalm 44 Suffering Defeat

Introduction

Psalm 44 is a lament—a song in a minor key! In many ways it is similar to Psalms 42 and 43 as it expresses a sense of rejection, forsakenness, of being forgotten by God. However there is an important difference in Psalm 44—it is a community lament—an expression of the whole people of God in a time of defeat. Why was it that everything had gone wrong? Its not because of idolatry or disobedience to God's laws by the people, so why the defeat?

So what does God's word have to say to situations of defeat and doubt?

1) Examine your Roots

- These first three verses answer the question how they became the people of God. The psalmist acknowledges that their planting in the land (v2) and their national identity are totally dependent of God's initiative.
- The subject of all the verbs is God, and if you ask the question why did God bother with him, the answer is at the end of verse 3 'for you loved them'.
- The covenant commitment of God does not depend on anything in them. When you are feeling defeated and discouraged go back to your roots—the love of God who does not change.

2) Renew your Trust vv 4-8

- The psalmist remembers how they came out of Egypt into the land, how God went before them.
- It is God who brings the victory and in the midst of present perplexity God's people renew their trust and reassert their confidence v 8.

3) Express your Perplexity vv 9-22

- Why the defeat? This psalm shows that there was an openness between God and his people which enabled the people to express themselves with complete honesty.

- Notice an absolutely crucial observation—they entirely attribute the situation to God.
- The key to the beginning of an answer is in verse 22. The people are not suffering because of their apostasy, they have been a faithful people. They are suffering because of their faithfulness. Paul quotes this verse in Romans 8 v 36.
- Paul quotes verse 22 not in the context of being defeated but in the context being more than conquerors through him who loved us. It's the context of suffering for God's sake, but knowing that suffering will lead to glory.

4) Present your Petition vv 23-26

- When you have been honest with God, opened up the whole situation, then present your intercession.
- The psalmist asks passionately that God will intervene.

Points to Ponder

- 1) Share your thoughts on the sermon. What point spoke to you? Why?
- 2) "It implies the revolutionary thought that suffering may be a battle scar, rather than a punishment: the price of loyalty in a world which is at war with God. A reverse as well as a victory may be a sign of fellowship with Him, not of alienation".
(D Kidner)
"There are depths in the suffering, in the defeat, in the reversals, in the pressure, that we need to explore."
Discuss these two statements.
- 3) Study carefully Phil 3 v 10. Express in your own words what Paul is saying here.