



*This week at Magdalen Road Church we started a new series in Psalms 42-43 entitled "what to do when you're down". The Psalmist, in the midst of a difficult situation, gives us a number of pointers to help us respond in a way that is godly.*

We noted initially that there are 4 reasons given for why the Psalmist is struggling, each of which resonates with our context in Lockdown

1. Far off (42v2 and 42v6). He is far from the temple and so far from worship and far from God.
2. Firing Line (42v3, 42v10). There are opponents who are mocking him for his ongoing trust in God.
3. Festivals (42v4). He looks back to a time when he could be at the temple, and it brings both joy but also a sense of longing.
4. Forgotten (42v9). He feels like God has forgotten him.

Whilst the context is not quite the same in our day, there are ways in which his situation resonates with ours.

He then models three ways where we can find help in the darkness.

a) Remember to speak to your God. Again and again they lament to God, both telling him about their pain and frustration, but also petitioning that he would bring relief by getting him to the temple once again.

b) Remember to speak to your self. Three times the psalmist speaks to himself (42v5, v11 and 43v5) - not allowing his feelings to shape and dictate what he believes to be true.

c) Remember the big story. Despite the hardships the Psalmist remembers and clings to the hope that he has, as well as the reality of God's sovereignty (42v7).

We then finished by reflecting on Christ as the one who cried out, was cut off and forgotten that we might always have access to the face of our Father in Heaven.

Here are a few short questions to help your groups:

- Which of the 4 F's resonate with you? Have you felt the back and forth, up and down mood swings that the Psalmist exemplifies?
- Are we those who speak to God in lament? Why or why not?
- In 42v5, 11 and 43v5 he sternly speaks to himself - what does he say and why. How can we get better at doing this?
- How do we get better at remembering the big story? What difference does this make to