

Who Can You Trust?

Psalm 43

Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause
against an ungodly people,
from the deceitful and unjust man
deliver me!

For you are the God in whom I take refuge;
why have you rejected me?
Why do I go about mourning
because of the oppression of the enemy?

Send out your light and your truth;
let them lead me;
let them bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling!
Then I will go to the altar of God,
to God my exceeding joy,
and I will praise you with the lyre,
O God, my God.

Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you in turmoil within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my salvation and my God.

Ungodly people. Deceitful and unjust men. Oppression. Sounds like our world today. Our *sinful* world. And it's not just people you meet in your neighborhood or work. It's scammers calling your telephone. It's hackers trying to get you and your personal information online. Zoom bombers. It's people coming to your door trying to sell you on work you don't need. And more. Sometimes it's really hard to tell who's telling the truth and who is not. Who is just trying to deceive me and take advantage of me? And sometimes we are hurt badly by such people. Sometimes much harm is done.

And there are times when it even seems *God Himself* cannot be trusted. **Why have you**, my God, **rejected me**, this psalm asks! Because sometimes it feels that way. That God is not keeping His promises. That I need help and I'm not getting it. That sin and evil seem to be winning in the world and in my life. So where are you God?! Where are you when I need you?!

God is everywhere, but that doesn't really comfort when it seems that He is nowhere - or at least, not where I am; not where I need Him. But there is one place we can go where He has promised to be for us. One place where His gifts are always given, to forgive our sins, strengthen our faith, and give us His Spirit and hope. In Old Testament times, that was the Temple, God's dwelling place on earth, on God's **holy hill**. In our day, it is the Church. God has promised that where His Word is proclaimed in truth and His Sacraments given as He gave them, He is there to bless. Guaranteed. You never have to wonder where God is or where to go to get His gifts. You will always know. And while God could give His gifts in different places and different ways (He's God after all!), in His Word and Sacraments is where He has *promised* to be for us. Guaranteed.

That assurance is what brings joy, according to this psalm. In the midst of a sinful, deceiving, unjust, and oppressive world, the psalmist says: ***I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy.*** For there is our help and refuge. There is our hope and comfort. No matter what else is happening in the world and in your life. God is there to help and bless. Guaranteed.

Now, that doesn't mean everything will instantly get better for you if you go to church! God never promised to make your life all sunshine and rainbows, and the devil is still prowling about. There is still sin. You're going to have heartache and challenges. Count on it. But He did promise to be with you through it all. To never leave you or forsake you. To be your light in the darkness and your strength in weakness. And because Jesus not only died but rose from the dead, He is all that for us always. So while sin and death will have its day, it does not have the final word - forgiveness and life does. Evil can - and will! - attack, but it cannot conquer those who are in Christ Jesus.

So ***why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me?*** Yes, life can get dark. We can get discouraged. But even in the darkest times, we have the light of hope. For we have the light of the world, Jesus. And His Word that proclaims Him and all that He has done for you, and His Sacraments that give you His forgiveness, life, and salvation, are exactly what you need. You really can trust and rely on Him.

Lord Jesus, sin has wreaked havoc in the world. So many are deceitful and unjust, trying to hurt others and help themselves. Sometimes I wonder where You are and why You allow this to go on?! Help me to trust in You. That You know and are working good even in a troubled world. That You are working to save me and all people. And when I get discouraged and hurt, heal me with Your forgiveness and give me life. Help me not hate or want to hurt those who hurt me, but forgive them as You have forgiven me. And help me to be confident that You will never forsake me, but to go and receive You and Your gifts always, where You have promised to be for me, that Your goodness sustain me and bring me safely through this difficult life to life eternal. Amen.