

Biblical Reflection 16: “Don’t give up Hope”

July 26, 2021



One day, all this horror will be over.

The ancient Israelites from Judah languished in captivity in Babylonia for 70 years, but when their captors were overthrown, they were finally able to return to their homeland. The 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic killed millions of people worldwide over two years, but then one day, the virus died out, and people could resume their normal lives again. During WWII, millions suffered horribly throughout the world; and yet, after several years, the war ended. The evil-doers were defeated. The countries began to rebuild.

And so it has been throughout human history. Crises come and go, and those who do not give up hope, often live to see God breathe new life into those who keep putting their faith in his mercy and grace.

Nevertheless, along the way, the darkness can seem so dark, the future so hopeless, and the dangers so great that you may feel as if all is lost. In Myanmar, first the coup, and now COVID. No one knows who is going to get sick, who is going to be hospitalized, or who is going to die. Your days are filled with tears, terror, and pain. As people of faith, you are calling out to God for deliverance, but so far, the situation has only gone from bad to worse. In Psalm 43, we find a prayer for times like these, which is both full of honesty and faith. Read the words aloud, slowly, and thoughtfully, two or three times.

“Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people; from those who are deceitful and unjust deliver me! For you are the God in whom I take refuge; why have you cast me off? Why must I walk about mournfully because of the oppression of the enemy? (vv. 1-2)

“O 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 harp, O God, my God. (vv. 3-4)

“Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my help and my God.” (v. 5)

As you meditate on this psalm, and let his prayer become your prayer, notice how the psalmist draws from his heart, his head, and his faith all in the same prayer.

- He prays honestly about his distress and earnestly asks for God’s intervention to save him from evil-doers and all his suffering—just as you have been doing in Myanmar. (vv. 1-2)
- However, he does not just pray for physical victory over his enemies. He also prays for God’s light and truth to fill him and to lead him out of his darkness to God—this is the spiritual dimension of his prayer. (v. 3)
- He also looks forward to the time when he can experience joy once again, joy that comes from seeing God, his God, at work in his life once again—his heart’s desire and personal love for God join together. (v. 4)
- He concludes by consoling himself. He does not know how God is going to help him, but he reminds himself that God is the one true source of hope that he can count on—these are words of faith, not sight. (v. 5)

I know that some of you are barely hanging on. You’re facing the greatest crises of your life. Now is the time to focus on survival. Now is the time to use common sense and to do whatever needs to be done to care for yourself, your family, and those around you who need a helping hand.

Don’t give up hope. Don’t give up on God. There will be a better day.

With Christ’s love always,

Dr. Tim

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