

Sermon Series: “Comfort for tough times”—Lord of Life Lutheran Church, Westfield, IN—2/2/2003

Title: “Hope for Discouraging Times”

Text: Psalm 43: 1-5 & Hebrews 13: 5-8

Intro.: *Ills.: Hope Springs Eternal*

Theme: To avoid being swamped by discouragement in our lives begins with letting the God of hope deal with our internal attitude of the heart before and as he delivers us from the external circumstances that swirl around us.

Identifying the Seeds of Discouragement and weeding them out (Print and read Psalm 43: 1-2)

- The *discouragers* of our lives
 1. *Unjust accusation* which bury us in guilt and keep us off-balance
 2. *Unfair and deceptive scheming* of others to take advantage of us
 3. *Perceived Divine rejection* because God does not come through on our schedule and for our agenda
 4. *Unfair success of my adversaries* who appear to be rewarded for their wickedness
- God’s antidote to discouragement
 5. *Remember God’s promise* to stand beside you because you are declared “guiltless” by him in Jesus
 1. “What, then, shall we say in response to this? If God is for us, who can be against us? . . . Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies.” *Romans 8:31,33*
 2. David asks God to “plead his cause” and “contend” as his advocate (in a legal sense)
 3. Live in your guiltless state in Jesus “*There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus.*” *Rom. 8: 1*
 4. **Ills.: The Devils favorite tools**
 6. *Remember your purpose* as you go through times of “desert walks” in your life
 1. Example of Elijah in one of the lessons for today
 2. “*To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow.*” *1 Pet2:21*
 7. *Remember God’s perspective* on what is fair, what is his timing, and what is his agenda
 1. “*Be still before the LORD and wait patiently for him; do not fret when men succeed in their ways . . . For evil men will be cut off, but those who hope in the LORD will inherit the land.*” *Psalm 37: 7,9*

God’s travel-kit for life’s turbulent journey (Print and read Psalm 43: 3-4)

- God’s pathfinder
 1. **Ills.: Travel Club’s vacation finders (directions and tips and emergency numbers)**
 2. God gives us more than just helpful hints how to get through life (Print and read Hebrews 13: 5-8)
 1. His *promised provision* of our all of our need
 2. His *powerful word* pointing to God’s light and truth in Jesus to keep us from stumbling along the way (vs. 3)
 - “*I am the light of the world: he that follows me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.*” *John 8:12*
 3. His *perennial presence* of forgiveness and life with us in His Son, Jesus Christ
- God’s rest stop
 3. **Ills.: Next rest stop 72 miles – you better stop now**
 4. Sometimes we forget that God’s intent is to give us planned rest stops of praise time-outs in his house of worship
 5. “*My feet stand on level ground; in the great assembly I will praise the LORD.*” *Psalm 26:12*
- God’s fuel
 6. “*Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*” *Neh. 8:10*
 7. We’ve got to stop trying to be happy and look for joy that only God could give him (David reminded himself of it)

Spiritual Pep Talks for My Soul (Print and read Psalm 43: 5)

- Ask yourself the question, “Why am I so bummed out?”
 1. We often are “*looking backwards in regret*” too much instead of “*forward in anticipation*”
- Lift your eyes off the trouble and onto the Deliverer

- Focus on what is God **IS** doing in your life
- 2. **Ills.: Missed Opportunity**
- 3. *“Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things.” Phil. 4: 8*

Hope Springs Eternal

A man stopped to watch a Little League baseball game. He asked one of the youngsters what the score was. "We're losing 18-0," was the answer. "Well," said the man. "I must say you don't look discouraged." "Discouraged?" the boy said, puzzled. "Why should we be discouraged? We haven't come to bat yet.

The Devil's Favorite Tool

I read once that the Devil was having a yard sale, and all of his tools were marked with different prices. They were a fiendish lot. There was **hatred, jealousy, deceit, lying, pride**--all at expensive prices. But over to the side of the yard on display were two tools more obviously worn than any of the other tools. They were also the most costly. The tools were labeled, **GUILT** and **DISCOURAGEMENT**. When questioned, the Devil said, "They are more useful to me than any other tool. When I can't bring down my victims with any of the rest of these tools, I use guilt & discouragement, because so few people realize that it belongs to me."

Missed Opportunity

You perhaps have heard of the old sales managers' device of holding up a large piece of paper with a small orange spot down in one corner. He says to his salesmen, "What do you see?" They all report that they see that orange spot, and he says, "That's your weakness as a salesman. You see the spot and don't see all of the open opportunity before you."

Psalm 43:1-5

¹Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; rescue me from deceitful and wicked men. ²You are God my stronghold. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy? ³Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.

⁴Then will I go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the harp, O God, my God.

⁵Why are you in despair, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.[NIV]

Hebrews 13:5-8

⁵Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." ⁶So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" ⁷Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. ⁸Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. [NIV]