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"Why Are You Downcast, O My Soul? Hope in God." Part 2
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Hope Calls Out to the Lord Psalm 42:6-11

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen. The Word from God through which the Spirit of Christ comforts our spirits is Psalm 42

O God, my soul is downcast within me; therefore, I remember you from the land of the Jordan and the heights of Mount Hermon, from Mount Mizar. Deep calls to deep at the sound of your rapids. All your breakers and your waves sweep over me.

During the day the LORD commands his mercy and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. I will say to God, my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I walk in mourning as enemies oppress me?" While my bones shatter, my enemies taunt me as they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why do you moan within me? Hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (Psalm 42:6-11).

This is the word of our Lord.

Dear friends in Christ, fellow saints washed clean in the blood of our risen Savior:

Mr. Stephen Fritze taught sixth graders at St. Martins, a WELS grade school in Watertown, SD. On Saturday, June 22, he was kayaking with two friends on the Minnesota River in Nicollet County. They got caught up on brush and the kayaks overturned. Two made it to shore, but Mr. Fritze was swept down the river, drowned. He was fifty years old, the father of three. (See [New Ulm Journal](#) and [The Public Opinion](#) accessed August 16, 2013).

As the river of life pulls us along, how suddenly tragedy can strike! The Psalm writer uses that imagery of deep calling to deep, of waterfalls, waves, and breakers. Dear Christian friends, no matter what waves have swept over you or what breakers are crashing against you, call out with the Psalmist. Call out to the Lord. For he alone is your hope. Hope calls out to the Lord. That's the theme today. Hope pleads: "Why do your waves crash against me?" And hope gives thanks, praying: "Your love, O Lord, is my song."

A. Hope pleads: "Why do your waves crash against me?"

Notice how the Psalmist says to God, "**your** waterfalls ... **your** waves" (Psalm 42:7 NIV84). He confesses that God is in control even over the troubles and tragedies that flood into life. That's important for you and me to remember when we struggle, dear friends. God is in control.

Sometimes we speak of how God permits or allows bad things. We speak that way to make it clear that God is not the originator of wickedness. He's in no way guilty or blameworthy. But notice the Psalmist doesn't say: "You allowed the waves to sweep over

me and you let the breakers crash against me.” That would've raised the question: Did God allow this because he couldn't stop it? To the contrary, the Psalmist makes it very clear that God is in control. The troubles and tragedies of life are God's waves, even when it's the enemy and his taunts that are churning the water. God is in control.

So don't lose hope, dear Christian. No matter what's around the next bend in the river of life, no matter what kind of brush might capsize you one day, no matter how deep the trouble or how many waves crash against you, put your hope in God. He's in control. They are his waves and waterfalls. Nothing will happen to you that is beyond his power.

This causes a dilemma in our fallen minds. We reason, “If God is in control but doesn't stop our troubles, doesn't that mean he's partially to blame?” Saying he only allows it doesn't solve the dilemma. If we could have stopped something bad but allowed it to happen anyway, don't we rightly feel some guilt? So we reason that God must be partially guilty for not stopping our problems. But our minds, our reason, and even our sense of rightness must be held captive by the word of God. In the Bible God reveals himself. He is the almighty God in control over all. And is the Lord -- gracious, merciful, compassionate, full of goodness, faithful to his promises. Both are the absolute truth whether we can make them fit together smoothly or not.

But as the waters of life churn our hearts and minds, we don't see clearly. We don't have the answers. We call out with the Psalmist, “Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?” (Psalm 42:9 NIV84). Why do your waves crash against me?

There's two ways of asking why-questions. One is the demanding, accusing why. Picture the mother looking down at her six year old and saying, “Why did you break that lamp?” That's not the kind of why the Psalmist is asking. And we need to guard our hearts against that kind of emotion. We don't want our prayers to become accusations accusing God for not stopping our troubles and demanding that he explain himself.

The other why is the humble, seeking, pleading why. It's the why that says, “I don't understand. I can't see the reason or purpose behind this. I'm turning to you, O God, for help, for guidance, for hope, because I'm too perplexed and confused without you.” It's the why in your dog's pleading eyes as he looks up at you while the vet takes a blood sample. He doesn't know why he's in this strange place, with this strange person, held down on a table as a sharp prick breaks his skin. He looks up with that pleading why but accepts that all must be right if his master's here.

That's the why the Psalmist asks, for notice that, as he asks, he calls God his Rock. “I say to God my Rock ...” (Psalm 42:9 NIV84). God is his sure foundation against the roaring currents of life. Nothing sweeps God away. He stands firm. All must be right if our God is with us. And no one who clings to him will be swept away, no matter how strong the waves.

So dear Christians, call out to the Lord your God. Bring to him your perplexity, your whys, your confusion, your troubles. Lay them all before him, not demanding an explanation or accusing him. But lay them before him as a humble servant pleading with his lord, seeking his strength and power to hold on. For Christ Jesus is your solid rock, dear Christian. His hands were pierced with nails to redeem you, so that he might hold

on to you as the waves crash. He's in control. Nothing can snatch you out of his hand, for he's taken up his life again. And in the end, don't these waves crashing against us lead you and me to hold onto him all the more? Hope calls out to our Lord.

B. Hope gives thanks, praying: "Your love, O Lord, is my song"

And even as the troubles swirl around us, hope calls out with thanks, praying: "Your love, O Lord, is my song."

In the middle of this double Psalm, while his soul is still downcast in the troubles swirling around him, the Psalmist writes, "By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me -- a prayer to the God of my life" (Psalm 42:8 NIV84). What hope! What hope that calls out to the Lord, singing of his merciful love.

Day and night around the clock the Lord's love and mercy is constantly with his people. The Lord's compassion and kindness never fail. God's people can be certain of the Lord's love, grasping it with sure faith and firmly holding on to it with full confidence in the Lord alone. Notice the strong language he uses to express how determined the Lord's love is. He doesn't simply say that the Lord talks about his love but that he **directs** his love, which could be translated: commands or orders. For the full will of the Lord is behind his love. You see, dear friend, the Lord's love is not a passing whim or a fickle fancy. Rather, with unbending resolution the Lord's love reaches out. The Lord is resolute and determined to act in love. This is his resolve. This is the Lord's unchanging, good will: to love with steadfast, immovable, unflagging, inexhaustible love. What determination! What resolution!

Now how serious, determined, and resolute is his love toward you? Look no farther than the cross, dear sinner. The Father gave his only-begotten Son for you, not sparing him in any way. The Son, Jesus Christ, endured not only the whip and the nails, the insults and humiliation. He endured the Father's rejection, the rejection our own sins had earned us. He suffered our hell on the cross as he called out, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" He was forgotten and forsaken in our place, so that we need never doubt the Lord's love and its resolve to save you and me. Was there ever love so resolute and determined as his?

When your soul is downcast, when you wonder whether God has forgotten you, when hope seems impossible, look to the cross, dear friend. See how strong, how resolute, how unyielding the Lord's love toward you is.

So strong is the love of Jesus Christ that he carried all the sins of the world to the cross. All those times that you and I doubted the Lord's control -- Jesus carried them all to the cross for you. What love! All those times that we have we cried out to the Lord with a complaining "why?" or even an accusing "why?" rather than a humble, pleading "why?" -- Jesus carried them all to the cross for you. What love! All those times our hope faltered and we wondered whether God had forgotten us -- Jesus carried them all to the cross for you. What love! All those times we've failed to marvel at how amazing and surprising the Lord's love toward us is -- Jesus carried them all to the cross for you, dear sinner. What love!

So our song is really his song. We sing of his love. We sing of his sacrifice. We sing of his grace and mercy and compassion. We sing of his victory, his resurrection. We sing

of his glory and honor and praise. And what a song of hope and joy and thanks that is -- all because of his love, his unfailing, resolute, determined love.

No matter how downcast and disturbed your soul is, dear friend, no matter what is coming around the next bend in the river or what waves crash against you -- even if sudden tragedy, loss, or death strikes, put your hope in God and praise him even as troubles swirl around you. Patiently wait, for his love has not failed you. Call out to him in hope. Bring to him your pains when the waves crash against you. And sing of his love. Amen.

The peace of God that surpasses all understanding keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.