



*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday  
after Pentecost*

22<sup>nd</sup> June 2025

*How to have Confident Hope during Seasons of Discouragement*

**Main Point:**

When discouragement clouds our hearts, we can be honest with God like the psalmist in Psalm 42–43, trusting that our hope is secure—not in our efforts—but in what Jesus has already done for us. Galatians 3 reminds us that through faith, we are children of God, fully accepted and loved, which gives us a lasting hope even in the darkest seasons.

**Intro**

In my conversations with many of you, I've come to realize just how many are navigating through challenging and stormy seasons right now. These are seasons when discouragement can seem to be hanging over you like a dark cloud. Perhaps you're experiencing that feeling at this very moment. You may know in your mind that God is good and loves you, yet your heart feels heavy, leaving you to question whether or not God has possibly forgotten you.

I want to encourage you: if you're feeling this way, you're not alone. Many have walked through deep valleys of doubt and despair, including the heroes of our faith. Take the prophet Elijah, for example. We just read that after witnessing God's incredible power on Mount Carmel, you'd expect him to be on a spiritual high. Yet, just hours later, he was so discouraged that he asked God to take his life. (1 Kings 19:4)

David, too, expressed his feelings of despondency in today's Psalms. He cried out, "Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me?" (42:5a, 43:11a). And he's brutally honest about his feelings, isn't it? He says, "My tears have been my food day and night..." (v 3); and questions, "Why have you forgotten me?" (v 9).

This honesty reveals deep discouragement. He feels far from God, longing for His presence amidst overwhelming darkness. Have you been there? I think we all have at different times.

**Point 1 | God Sees and Understands Our Discouragement**

Even in this discouragement, however, we notice that David gives priority to bringing all his feelings to God. He doesn't hide them or try to fix them first; he pours out his soul.

That's like the key that unlocks the doorway of hope, and hope is the first stepping stone of faith. David has hope that God sees him in his discouragement and responds to God's invitation for us to bring your whole self—even the confused and struggling parts—to Him.

## **Point 2 | Our Hope is Secure Because of What Jesus Has Done**

Notice also that David doesn't allow himself to wallow in that place of discouragement. Yes, he pours out his complaints, his despair, his pain ... but that's not what makes up the entirety of his prayer. Rather, in his darkest moments, David develops the habit of speaking to himself, reminding himself of God's faithfulness.

Have you developed a habit of speaking to yourself, truths that God has spoken over your life? If not, let's settle this here and now. The person who said that the first sign of madness is talking to yourself, certainly hadn't read the Bible, because God's word is filled with commandments for us to remind ourselves of God's promises.

And David doesn't just do it once. In both psalms he says to himself: "David .... *"Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him—my Saviour and my God"* (42:5b, 43:11b).

And what promise is David reminding himself of? "... *each day the Lord pours his unfailing love upon me, and through each night I sing his songs praying to God who gives me life*" (v 8).

David shows us how to confront those dark hours when clarity seems elusive. When he wakes up at night, (probably at 2 or 3 am like the rest of us), his head swimming about life's challenges, he tells himself, "Put your hope in God and praise Him!" This is a habit worth developing—don't worry about who may hear you; your neighbours might be struggling with sleeplessness too!

David also asks for God's guidance, saying, "*Send out your light and your truth; let them guide me...*" (Psalm 43:3).

But here's the thing worth noticing: as wonderfully familiar as David's prayer is to us when we are discouraged, what David longed for, we *now live in* because of Jesus. Do you see that David's prayers reveal a longing to be brought back into God's presence. He had a desire to climb God's holy mountain to worship God in the temple (42:2, 43:3).

But we now have something even greater!

Paul reminds the Galatian believers—and us—that we no longer need to search for God on our own, nor do we need to climb mountains to meet Him. As wonderful as a pilgrimage is, we don't have to travel overseas to experience God's presence. Nor do we need to earn our entrance into God's presence. Paul tells us, we are already *in* God's presence because of our faith in Jesus.

Paul writes,

*"He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit"* (Galatians 3:14).

God's Spiritual presence isn't hidden away from us in some locked cupboard in a grand cathedral somewhere. Rather, Jesus promised that the Father would send the Holy Spirit, to dwell in the hearts of those who loved Him and obeyed His commands (John 14:23).

And the Holy Spirit's presence in our heart changes everything!

I'll paraphrase what Paul writes, in verse 26 and 27, "Because you've placed your trust in Christ Jesus, you now belong to God's family—you are His beloved child. When you were baptised, you were wrapped in Christ like a garment. His love, righteousness, and identity now cover you completely."

I like to think of it this way: 'When you join a club or team, like Rotary or Lions, or a sports team, you're given a uniform to wear which marks you as a member'. When you all go to events, you all wear your uniform as it shows everyone to whom you belong, and what or who you're representing.

In the same way, when you place your faith in Jesus Christ, you're given Christ's uniform marked with the emblem of God's signature – now you're marked as God's own, a member of God's family, your wrapped in Christ's identity of love, your given His righteousness, and are continually washed with His forgiveness – you're now completely covered.

So, when we walk through seasons of discouragement – let's remember we are wearing Christ's uniform. That will make our journey markedly different from those who walk through discouraging times without Christ's indwelling presence. When we wear Christ, we remind ourselves that we're not alone in the dark; Jesus' Spirit is with you, and your hope is secure in Him, not in your circumstances.

### **Point 3 | You Belong to God's Family—and That Changes Everything**

Belonging to God's family changes everything. Unlike a club or sports team, your membership isn't based on your experience, qualifications, or how often you volunteer at church. You are part of God's family because of your faith in Jesus. This truth anchors us when our emotions waver. We're not trying to earn God's approval; we already have it. We're not waiting to be welcomed; we've been brought in. Real hope comes from resting in what Jesus has done and remembering who we are now.

### **Application | What to Do When You Feel Discouraged**

So, what do we do when we're feeling discouraged? Here are a few simple steps to take with you:

1. **Be Honest with God:** Like David, pour out your heart. You don't need to filter or fix it; just bring it all to Him.
2. **Remind Yourself of Truth:** Say to yourself, "I will put my hope in God, I will praise Him again—my Saviour and my God" (v 5). It may be time to develop the habit of preaching to your own soul. Write it down, say it out loud, and ask a friend to remind you too.
3. **Rest in What Jesus Has Done:** Your hope doesn't come from having it all together; it comes from Jesus, who holds you together. You are secure, loved, and known.
4. **Lean into Community:** Galatians reminds us we're part of a bigger family. When discouragement clouds your view, don't walk alone. Reach out, let someone pray with you, and sit in the presence of others who can hold hope for you when yours feels weak.

When discouragement comes—and it will—remember: You are not forgotten. You are not disqualified. You don't have to fix yourself to return to God; He has already made a way. Jesus is your hope, even when the clouds of discouragement hang low.

So today, let's join with David saying, "I will put my hope in God, I will praise Him again, my Saviour and my God."

### **Closing Prayer:**

Gracious God,

Thank you that in our discouragement, you are still near. Thank you for the hope we have—not because we've earned it, but because of Jesus. When our hearts are heavy, help us to remember your promises and to lift our eyes to you. Remind us that we are your children, loved, chosen, and secure. Teach us to rest in your grace and to walk each day by faith, not by striving. In Jesus' name we pray, **Amen.**

### *Reflection Questions*

1. When have you felt like the psalmist in Psalm 42–43, asking, "Why, my soul, are you discouraged?" What helped you in that season—or what might help you now?
2. How does knowing your relationship with God is secure through Jesus (Galatians 3:26–29) shift the way you respond to discouragement or spiritual weariness?
3. Are there ways you've been striving to "be good enough" for God, rather than resting in the finished work of Jesus? What might it look like to let go of that striving?
4. What does it mean to you to be clothed in Christ and part of God's family, as Galatians describes? How does that truth speak to your current season?
5. How can you preach hope to your own heart this week, like the psalmist does when he says, "Put your hope in God, for I will praise him again"?