

The Divine Cure for Depression

(Psalm 43)

From The Fifth Quarter film

In February 2006, 15 year old Luke Abbate accepted a ride home from a fellow student following his high-school team practice. In a severe case of irresponsible and reckless teen-age driving, and over the objections of Luke and the other young passengers, the driver lost control of the car at nearly 90 miles-per-hour, spinning off a narrow road and landing in an embankment some seventy feet below. Luke suffered irreparable brain damage, and died in the hospital two days later - just four days before his sixteenth birthday.

Following his brother's death, Jon considered giving up his football career - but knew that doing so would not properly honor the younger brother who loved and idolized him. Upon his return to Wake Forest, Jon was given the approval of head coach Jim Grobe to change his number from his long-standing 40, to his brother's number 5. And, in so doing, dedicated the new season to the memory of his brother.

A tradition began to evolve during the following Wake Forest games. In paying homage to Luke, Jon would signal his family sitting in the stands (Section 5) by holding up his hand with all 5 fingers outstretched. He did this at the end of the third quarter. Gradually, the rest of his team started to do the same. Within a couple of games, players from both teams, the fans in the stands, and those watching the games on television, would begin the final quarter by raising their hands with all 5 fingers outstretched in honor of Luke's memory. The final quarter became known as Luke's Quarter, the 5th Quarter, and this humble signal crystallized the entire team.

And, although having lost their starting quarterback, starting running back, and starting defensive end to injuries at the beginning of the season, Wake Forest went on to complete their most successful season in school history, winning 11 games against 2 losses. Coach Grobe was selected the ACC's Coach-Of-The-Year, and Jon performed brilliantly in the ACC Championship Game with fifteen solo tackles against powerhouse Georgia Tech.

The film has scenes that reminded of Psalms 42 and 43. The struggling parents have meltdown moments.

One scene shows Jon's anger at God expressed to his girlfriend, "If God is good, then how can he let such bad things happen to good people?"

David questions God 10 times in these song: The man after God's own heart.

"Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted in me? (42:5, 11; 43:5).

The Psalmist found the remedy in God. In these two Psalms, the author refers to God thirty seven times. He did not, however, find God as his remedy over night.

There is a progression of dealing with depression in these three stanzas:

1. The Believer is in a Spiritual Drought in 42:1-5 and Complains

- A. Problem: I am drying up spiritually
- B. Solution: Is not to run from your problem and blame God and people.
 - 1. Come to Christ (John 4:14) “Whosoever drinks of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life”
 - 2. Drink from God’s Word (Mt 5:6) God’s Word is milk, bread, and meat.

2. The Believer is in a Devastating Storm in 42:6-11 and Complains

- A. Problem: I am overwhelmed in the storm
- B. But, there is progress:
 - 1. There were tears day and night in verse 3 and now there is not in verse 8
 - 2. Before he remembered things in verse 4 now he remembers God in verse 6

3. The Believer is in a Dark Cave in 43:1-5 and Prays

(There is even more progress. Before each stanza opened with complaint, now he opens with prayer. Complaining is unproductive. God’s Word forbids complaining. God’s Word says, “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much”)

A. The First Prayer (43:1-2) Vindicate Me

- 1. Vindicate me before this group and their leader. Possibly David refers to Saul and Absalom and their followers.
- 2. Briefly he questions once again in verses two. There will never be complete victory in this life. But there can be more victory than defeat.

In an interview, last night on Huckabee, Maryanne Abbate told Governor Huckabee, “I did not wake up one morning after the death of my 15 years old son and do the Happy Dance and all my struggles were over. It is still a battle.

B. The Second Prayer (43:3-5) Restore Me

- 1. Restore with the Light of God’s Word. Notice he does not focus on the darkness but on the remedy. Show me how to respond to my enemy. “Thy word is a light unto my feet and a light unto my pathway” (Psalm 119).
- 2. Restore me to worship in my cave. Notice, he does ask to be delivered from the trial but to be delivered in the difficulty.

Let’s look at a cave experience of David where he was vindicated and lead by God’s Word in regard to his enemies. David is in exile in 1 Samuel 21-31.

1. God Helps Us Not To Retaliate Against Our Enemies (1st Samuel 24)

“Whoever shall smite you on your right cheek turn to him the other also” Matthew 5:39).

2. God Helps Us Not To Seek Revenge Against Our Enemies (1st Samuel 25).

- A. David is a low point now in life. There will never be complete victory in this life. But there can be more victory than defeat. Just because you do not cry day and night anymore does not mean you will never cry again.
- B. David forgave King Saul for attempted murder but in his low point he will forgive the ingratitude of Nabal.
- C. Spiritual Abigail interceded. If you men have an Abigail, thank God.

3. God Helps Us To Love Our Enemies (1st Samuel 26)

- A. David grows between chapters 25 and 26
- B. David takes the initiative and does right again and is vindicated again by God
“Whosoever shall compel you to go a mile go with him two miles” (Matthew 5:41).
“Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them who despitefully use you, and persecute you” (Matthew 5:44).