



Psalm 44

Wake up! Can't you see what is happening? Why? What have we done to deserve this? It is the cry of every person who has trusted in God and has felt abandoned. *Rouse yourself! Why do you sleep, O Lord? Awake, do not cast us off forever! Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression? For we sink down to the dust; our bodies cling to the ground. Rise up, come to our help. Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love.* The psalmist is mystified. He remembers the stories of old, how God had brought his people out of captivity into freedom, how God had given them the victory. But now, though the people of God are faithful to the covenant and look to God for the victory against their enemy, God is nowhere to be found. God has abandoned them. *Yet you have rejected us and abased us, and have not gone out with our armies. You made us turn back from the foe, and our enemies have taken spoil for themselves. You have made us like sheep for slaughter, and have scattered us among the nations. You have sold your people for a trifle, demanding no high price for them. Yet, the people have not forgotten God. All this has come upon us, yet we have not forgotten you, or been false to your covenant. Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way, yet you have broken us in the haunt of jackals, and covered us with deep darkness.* Why then has he abandoned them and left them to the taunts and ravages of the enemy?

It is a question that some of us may well have asked in our own times of abandonment. You are faithful in your love for God and in your commitment to live for God in Christ; you strive to be an obedient disciple, to do what is right, but it seems to make little or no difference. Where is God? Why doesn't God do something? There have been times in the past, when as a pastor, I have felt obligated to make excuses for God when caring for people asking those questions. What I find comforting about this psalm is that the psalmist makes no pretense at excuse. He simply lays out the situation, the inequity of it, his disappointment with God, and calls upon God to be faithful to who he is. *Rise up, come to our help. Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love.*