



# Community Group Discussion Guide

The Psalms: Psalm 44 – November 28, 2021

## I. Starter Question:

- Have you experienced a time of deep pain or disappointment that caused you to question where God was?

## II. Discussion of Scripture:

This week we're reading through Psalm 44. The title of the psalm indicates that this is a *maskil*, which means *song of instruction*. This psalm has two distinct sections—there's a clear break between verses 8 and 9. And if the content of the psalm didn't make it clear enough, the psalmist includes an explicit break by using the word *Selah* to cause us to pause and reflect.

In the first section, verses 1 through 8, we see that *God has been faithful*. Specifically, God has been faithful to establish the nation of Israel through our fathers (vv. 1-3). Additionally, God has given victory to the Israelite community as well (vv. 4-8). What's more, all this blessing came by God's hand, not by our fathers' hands, or our own.

### A. Psalm 44:1-8 (ESV) – Come To Our Help

*To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah.*

<sup>1</sup> O God, we have heard with our ears,  
our fathers have told us,  
what deeds you performed in their days,  
in the days of old:

<sup>2</sup> you with your own hand drove out the nations,  
but them you planted;  
you afflicted the peoples,  
but them you set free;

<sup>3</sup> for not by their own sword did they win the land,  
nor did their own arm save them,  
but your right hand and your arm,  
and the light of your face,  
for you delighted in them.

<sup>4</sup> You are my King, O God;  
ordain salvation for Jacob!

<sup>5</sup> Through you we push down our foes;  
through your name we tread down those who rise up against us.

<sup>6</sup> For not in my bow do I trust,  
nor can my sword save me.

<sup>7</sup> But you have saved us from our foes  
and have put to shame those who hate us.

<sup>8</sup> In God we have boasted continually,  
and we will give thanks to your name forever. Selah

**For Discussion:**

1. In verses 1-3, the psalmist recounts God's deeds done in the days of their fathers.
  - **What were some of those deeds?**
  - **What are some ways God blessed the generations before you?**
2. In verses 4-8, the psalmist remembers how God has given the current-day community victory.
  - **Why is it important to remember how God has blessed you in your life?**
  - **How has God shown His faithfulness to you?**
  - **Why is it important to know that victory, success, and blessing are by God's grace alone, and not your own doing?**

In the next section, the mood flips considerably—we've just reflected on God's faithfulness, but now we feel the crushing defeat that has come to God's people. They wonder why such ruin has come on them when they have remained faithful to God. They cry out to God in this pain and disappointment.

**B. Psalm 44:9-26 (ESV)**

- <sup>9</sup> But you have rejected us and disgraced us  
and have not gone out with our armies.
- <sup>10</sup> You have made us turn back from the foe,  
and those who hate us have gotten spoil.
- <sup>11</sup> You have made us like sheep for slaughter  
and have scattered us among the nations.
- <sup>12</sup> You have sold your people for a trifle,  
demanding no high price for them.
- <sup>13</sup> You have made us the taunt of our neighbors,  
the derision and scorn of those around us.
- <sup>14</sup> You have made us a byword among the nations,  
a laughingstock among the peoples.
- <sup>15</sup> All day long my disgrace is before me,  
and shame has covered my face
- <sup>16</sup> at the sound of the taunter and reviler,  
at the sight of the enemy and the avenger.
- <sup>17</sup> All this has come upon us,  
though we have not forgotten you,  
and we have not been false to your covenant.
- <sup>18</sup> Our heart has not turned back,  
nor have our steps departed from your way;
- <sup>19</sup> yet you have broken us in the place of jackals

and covered us with the shadow of death.  
<sup>20</sup> If we had forgotten the name of our God  
or spread out our hands to a foreign god,  
<sup>21</sup> would not God discover this?  
For he knows the secrets of the heart.  
<sup>22</sup> Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long;  
we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.

<sup>23</sup> Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord?  
Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever!  
<sup>24</sup> Why do you hide your face?  
Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?  
<sup>25</sup> For our soul is bowed down to the dust;  
our belly clings to the ground.  
<sup>26</sup> Rise up; come to our help!  
Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!

### **For Discussion:**

1. To get a sense for the crushing defeat the psalmist is describing here, **highlight each main word or thought in verses 9 through 22 and describe each in depth.** For instance, what does it mean to be rejected? What does it mean to be disgraced? What does it feel like to have to turn back from your foes? What does it mean to be sold for a trifle? Meditating on each will be heavy for the group, but it will help to understand the gravity of pain being described here.
2. In verses 17-22, the psalmist asks God why this defeat is being handed to them when they've been faithful.
  - **Is the psalmist saying that they've been sinless?**
3. Verses 23-26 show a community who is desperate for the Lord to intervene on their behalf and to come to their rescue. And, it ends there.
  - **Have you experienced a sense of desperation like this? How has God answered?**
  - **Read Lamentations 3:21–24, and 3:31–32. How does this, in concert with Psalm 44, help illuminate how we are to view and respond to life's pains and disappointments?**
  - **How has Christ decisively rescued us?**

### **III. Responding in Prayer:**

1. Ask your group if any are experiencing deep pain or disappointment, or if any are wondering where God is in their situation. For those who have felt comfortable sharing, gather around them, and raise their cries for help to God. He has been faithful, and he hears

our cries for help (Ps. 34:15). Pray 1 Peter 5:6-11 over them, rehearsing that the Lord cares for them during intense pain, and that He will rescue!

**1 Peter 5:6-11**

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.*

2. Pray for our church, that we “walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace” (Eph. 4:1-3).