

When God Is Silent
Songs of Grace: The Psalms of the Sons of Korah
Psalm 44
October 25, 2026

Intro: Have you ever listened to someone tell a story about God's faithfulness and wondered why your own story seems so different? I have. You believe what they're saying. You may have experienced that same kindness yourself. You've seen God answer prayers, restore relationships, carry people through suffering, and accomplish things no one could have anticipated. You know He's good. And yet, there are times when you look at what's happening in your own life, and you wonder what God is doing.

Sometimes the hardest questions come from people who've trusted God for years.

- A parent prays for a child and watches that child move farther from the Lord.
- A couple faithfully serve Christ, and then a diagnosis changes everything.
- Someone loses a loved one, and the house grows terribly quiet.
- A friend or spouse proves unfaithful, and every relationship is tainted.
- A job changes, or ends, and the future seems uncertain.

The question isn't whether God exists. It's why the God we know seems so silent.

Last Sunday we met the sons of Korah. Their family history included a terrible rebellion against God, yet the sons didn't die. Grace gave that family a future. In time, their descendants served in the worship of Israel, and their songs became part of Scripture.

Today we begin listening to those songs. And the first one doesn't begin with an easy answer.

Psalm 44 teaches us what to do when what we know about God seems difficult to reconcile with the suffering we're experiencing.

- This is a communal lament.
- The people speak together.
- They remember what God did for their fathers, and then describe defeat, shame, and scattering.
- Most troubling of all, they insist that they haven't abandoned His covenant.
- Their suffering doesn't fit the explanation that they simply turned away from God.

APP: What do we do when we trust God, but don't understand what He's doing?

Big Idea: When suffering makes God's ways difficult to understand, we can remember His faithfulness, tell Him the truth about our pain, remain faithful when answers don't come, and appeal to His steadfast love.

First: Remember What God Has Done (vs 1–8)

The whole Bible records who God is. Moses wrote Genesis to reclaim the Hebrew God from among the Egyptian gods. Throughout the OT, Israel called on the “*God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob*” because those names summarized God’s faithfulness and power throughout their history.

a) Israel remembers

And so, the psalm begins, “*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*” (v 1).

Before these worshipers say a word about their present pain, they tell the story of God’s past grace. That’s important. How did they know?

- Someone told them what the Lord had done.
- Parents and grandparents passed down the testimony.
- Israel’s memory was a gift entrusted to the next generation.

This is what Jane’s podcast, “*Your Story, His Glory*” does. It records God’s faithfulness to others so that we might be encouraged. You can access it on the church website and app.

b) Israel recognizes

The story they remember is the conquest of the land. Yet listen to where they place the credit:

“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” (v 3).

IMP: They don’t deny that their fathers carried swords. But they deny that swords – or their strength - explain the victory. Instead, they attribute the conquest of the land to God’s face and delight.

That’s an important distinction.

- We’re often quick to celebrate the visible means of an accomplishment.
- We remember the physician, the teacher, the person who offered help, the decision that turned out well.
- We should be grateful for all of them.
- But faith sees beyond the means to the Lord who gives every good gift.

The psalmist remembers that Israel’s history ultimately testifies to God’s initiative and grace. It always does!

Note: You just think you were looking for God. Actually, God was looking for you. And that’s important because you need to know that salvation, from start to finish, is God’s idea and by God’s grace. That lets you rest in that grace and not in your own efforts. (If you’re saved by works, you have to keep working to stay saved).

c) Israel confesses

In vs 4–8, memory becomes confession: *“You are my King, O God; ordain salvation for Jacob!” (v 4).*

The people speak as though past victories belong to the present because **the God who won them hasn’t changed.**

“For not in my bow do I trust, nor can my sword save me” (v 6).

Notice the movement.

- They’ve heard what God did.
- Now they declare whom they trust.

IMP: Remembering God’s faithfulness is more than looking back fondly. It’s an act of worship that tells the truth about God when our emotions struggle to do so. That’s an important thought.

That’s one reason we gather week after week in small and large groups. We read the Scriptures, sing the songs of the church, pray with one another, and tell stories of grace. We’re helping one another remember. The day may come when someone beside you can barely sing. Your voice may help carry the truth that their heart is struggling to hold. And then, one day, they will do the same for you.

But there’s a tension here. Remembering God’s past faithfulness can comfort us, and it can also sharpen our question. If He did those things for His people, why does He seem absent now? Thankfully, Psalm 44 doesn’t avoid that tension. It moves directly into it.

Second: Tell God What Hurts (vs 9–16)

The turn in v 9 is startling: *“But you have rejected us and disgraced us and have not gone out with our armies.”*

Eight verses of testimony and praise are followed by the little but consequential word *“but.”*

Everything they know about God seems to collide with everything they’re experiencing. They went to battle expecting the Lord’s help, and they came home defeated.

Listen to the accumulation of their pain.

- They retreat before their enemies.
- Their possessions become spoil.
- They’re scattered among the nations.
- Their neighbors mock them.
- They become a byword, an object of ridicule.
- Their disgrace is public, and the shame never seems to leave them.

“All day long my disgrace is before me, and shame has covered my face” (v 15). (I know someone else who felt that way...on the cross).

This is more than a disappointing turn of events. Their identity as God’s people seems to have become the occasion for humiliation.

What makes this psalm remarkable...and helpful...is that they’re not talking to each other. They’re talking to God.

They take their questions to the very One whose actions they cannot understand.

IMP: That’s one of the distinguishing marks of biblical lament. Faith may be confused, wounded, or even angry, and still turn toward the Lord.

- That’s not a lack of faith.
- That’s the definition of faith.

We need to hear that because some of us have learned to speak as though grief was a spiritual failure. We know how to say, “*God is good,*” and that’s true. But sometimes we say it so quickly that we never acknowledge how much something hurts. We may even expect others to move from sorrow to reassurance before they’ve had time to weep.

ILL: Many of you have faced losses that have become part of the landscape of your life. If you haven’t, you will. Loving Jesus doesn’t erase the absence at the table or the memories that still bring tears. And when we stand beside someone carrying that kind of grief, our first responsibility is rarely to explain it. Instead, we can listen, weep, pray, and stay.

The words of Psalm 44 are daring, and we need to understand what they mean. The psalmist claims God has rejected His people. He gives voice to their experience of defeat and abandonment, **without** fully explaining God’s hidden purposes.

The Bible gives us these words so that we can bring our real sorrow into His presence. The Lord is not honored by pretending that we feel no pain. (The Daily Devotions speak to this).

What do you do when the answer doesn’t come? Keep speaking to the Father. Tell Him where it hurts. He already knows, and He invites you to come. But what do you do in the interim?

Third: Remain Faithful When Answers Do Not Come (vs 17–22)

Now we arrive at what may be the most unsettling part of the psalm.

“All this has come upon us, though we have not forgotten you, and we have not been false to your covenant” (v 17).

The people insist that they haven’t turned away.

“Our heart has not turned back, nor have our steps departed from your way” (v 18).

They even appeal to God’s knowledge of their hearts.

“Would not God discover this? For he knows the secrets of the heart” (v 21).

They know they couldn’t hide their sin from God if they wanted to.

We need to understand what they’re claiming. They aren’t saying they’ve never sinned. They’re saying any wrongdoing they may have committed in the past doesn’t explain this particular calamity. They’ve suffered while seeking to remain faithful. **And the psalm refuses to provide a tidy explanation for why.**

Of course, the Bible teaches that sin has consequences and that God disciplines His children (Hb 11:6). We should never ignore that.

- But we must also remember Job. His friends were sure they understood his suffering, and they were wrong.
- Remember the man born blind in John 9? The disciples wanted to know whose sin caused his condition. Jesus rejected their assumption.

We ought to be very careful about claiming to know why God has allowed another person’s pain.

Sometimes our desire to explain suffering is really our desire to make life feel manageable. If every tragedy has a cause we can identify, then we can imagine that avoiding the cause will protect us.

But the Bible is more truthful about life in a fallen world.

- The righteous suffer.
- Faithful people bury those they love.
- Prayers can remain unanswered for years.
- The Lord never promised that obedience would spare us every sorrow.

Then comes v 22: *“Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

Notice those opening words: *“for your sake.”* Their suffering is bound up with their belonging to God. This verse doesn’t mean every hardship is persecution. It does mean that loyalty to the Lord offers no guarantee of an easy life. And sometimes it’s harder to live in a fallen world as a Christian.

Centuries later Paul quotes this very verse in **Romans 8:36**. Think about where he places it. He has asked, **“Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?”** Then he names tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, danger, and sword.

He quotes Psalm 44 precisely because the people he’s writing to are facing the same struggles. And Paul isn’t embarrassed by the psalm’s pain. His readers need to hear it. So, he brings it into his great declaration of the security of God’s love.

And what does he say next? **“No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us” (Ro 8:37).**

Notice: *in all these things*. The victory he describes isn't an escape from every trial. It's the assurance that none of these trials can sever us from Jesus.

- The suffering is real.
- God's love is more certain still.
- Why? The suffering will pass. God's love won't...and...God's love can transform it for good for you.

This is where we have to be especially careful with one another. A suffering Christian doesn't always need another explanation. Sometimes they need a brother or sister who will sit beside them and remind them, gently and patiently, that Christ is still holding them. They may not be able to see what God is doing. They can still remain His, and He remains theirs.

And that brings us to the last point.

Fourth: Appeal to the Love of God (vs 23–26)

The final movement begins with a cry that may make us uncomfortable: *"Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord? Rouse yourself! Do not reject us forever!" (v 23).*

Does God sleep? Of course not. Psalm 121 tells us that the One who keeps Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps. But this is the language of a wounded people begging the Lord to act. It's the language of prayer under the pressure of prolonged sorrow.

"Why do you hide your face? Why do you forget our affliction and oppression?" (v 24).

- Their bodies are bowed down to the dust.
- They can't lift themselves out of their distress.

"Rise up; come to our help!" (v 26). They have no sword strong enough to save them, no explanation that can settle their hearts, and no power to rescue themselves.

And so they cry, *"Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!" (v 26).* What a prayer!

Psalm 79:9 - Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of your name; deliver us, and atone for our sins, for your name's sake!

Jeremiah 14:21 - Do not spurn us, for your name's sake; do not dishonor your glorious throne; remember and do not break your covenant with us.

The sons of Korah know this from personal experience. They don't lead worship in Israel because of their glorious past, but because of God's goodness.

And that's where they finally rest their ultimate appeal. They can't demand rescue because they've earned it. No one can. They plead for redemption because of God's steadfast love.

The Hebrew word, you know very well, is *hesed*, a word we heard again and again in Psalm 119. It speaks of the Lord's enduring covenant faithfulness, His loyal love for His people.

Here is something beautiful about the shape of this psalm.

- It starts with God's grace in the past and ends with God's steadfast love in the present.
- The circumstances between those two confessions are dreadful.
- And in between, the people keep turning to the same God.
- Their final argument is His character.

IMP: And yet the psalm ends without telling us what happened next.

- We aren't given the account of a rescue.
- We aren't told how long they waited or whether they saw the deliverance they requested.
- We're left hearing their prayer.

That's part of this psalm's wisdom. Why? Because we are all living in the middle of lives whose (temporal) endings we can't see.

Fifth: And This is Where the Gospel Meets Us

It meets us in Jesus Christ, who entered a world of sorrow and endured rejection, injustice, and death. From the cross He cried, *"My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34).*

His suffering was unique. He bore sin as our Savior in a way none of us ever could. Yet because He suffered, He's no stranger to the anguish of those who cry out to God.

The Father didn't spare His Son the cross. Through that cross He accomplished our redemption. And by raising Jesus from the dead, God declared that suffering and death are defeated.

APP: So, when we can't draw a straight line from every painful circumstance to a specific good that we can identify today, we can look to the crucified and risen Jesus and know that God's love has been revealed decisively.

That's why Paul can take the lament of Psalm 44 into Romans 8 and say,

"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39).

The Lord's steadfast love is more than a comforting possibility. In Christ it is our secure hope.

IMP: I think that's one of the most intriguing, if not the most important, things about this psalm. Paul uses this *Son of Korah psalm*, children of rebellion, to point to God's everlasting love in Jesus. He's almost saying, *"If God loved them, He loves you. If God was faithful to them, He will be faithful to you."* That's the importance of memory again, and Paul uses it to assure us of God's everlasting love and eternal faithfulness.

Conclusion: What does this all mean? It means God hears you praying in your heartache.

But I don't want us to leave Psalm 44 with a neat answer that the psalm itself never gives. Some of you have questions that have followed you for years. You've prayed, and the circumstances haven't changed. You've tried to understand, and you still don't. I won't tell you that a few sentences can remove that weight.

But I do want you to see what the sons of Korah have given us. They've given us a song for the days when we can't make sense of our suffering.

- Remember what God has done.
- Tell Him what hurts.
- Keep praying when answers don't come.
- Appeal to His steadfast love.

These aren't four ways to earn His attention. They're four ways to keep turning toward the God who has already set His love upon His people.

And because of Jesus, we know that our story is larger than the sorrow we can see today.

He has promised us an inheritance *"imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you" (1 Pt 1:4)*. That promise doesn't make today's tears imaginary. It tells us that they won't last forever.

IMP:

1 - Maybe you can sing with confidence this morning. Then sing for someone who can barely find the words.

2 - Maybe you're the one who is struggling. You don't have to pretend. Bring your grief, your confusion, and your unanswered questions to the Lord.

The psalm ends with a prayer, and you can pray it too: *"Rise up; come to our help! Redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love!"*

And when God seems silent, remember this. The cross shows how deeply He loves us, and the empty tomb shows that His love will have the last word in your life.



Observation: What Does the Text Say?

1. Read Psalm 44:1–8. What do the people say they’ve heard from their fathers, and who receives the credit for Israel’s victories?
2. In vs 4–8, what do the worshipers say about their king, their weapons, and the source of their confidence?
3. How does the language change in vs 9–16? Identify the losses, humiliations, and feelings the people describe.
4. According to vs 17–22, what do the people say they haven’t done, even though they’re suffering?
5. What requests do you find in vs 23–26, and what reason do the people give God for answering their prayer?

Interpretation: What Does the Text Mean?

6. Why do you think the psalm begins by remembering God’s past faithfulness before describing the people’s present suffering?
7. The worshipers say God has rejected them (v 9). How should we understand that language as an expression of lament rather than a complete explanation of God’s purposes?
8. What’s the significance of the people’s claim that they haven’t forgotten God or broken His covenant (vs 17–21)? What assumption about suffering does this challenge?
9. Verse 22 says, “Yet for your sake we are killed all the day long.” What does this reveal about the relationship between faithfulness to God and suffering?
10. Why is it significant that Psalm 44 ends with a plea for redemption grounded in God’s steadfast love (v 26), without telling us how the situation was resolved?

Correlation: Where Else in the Bible Do We See This?

11. Read Job 1:8–12 and 2:9–10. How does Job’s experience help us understand why we should be cautious about explaining another person’s suffering?
12. Read John 9:1–3. How does Jesus challenge the disciples’ assumption about the cause of the man’s blindness?
13. Compare Psalm 44:23 with Psalm 121:3–4. How can the Bible teach that God never sleeps while also giving His people the words “Awake! Why are you sleeping, O Lord?”

14. Read Mark 15:34 and Hebrews 4:14–16. How does Jesus' suffering help us bring our grief and questions honestly to God?
15. Read Romans 8:35–39, especially Paul's quotation of Psalm 44:22 in v 36. What does Paul promise believers in the midst of suffering, and what doesn't he promise?

Application: How Does God's Grace Conform Us to the Image of Jesus?

16. When your circumstances seem to contradict what you know about God, what truths about His past faithfulness help steady your heart?
17. Is there a grief, disappointment, or unanswered question you've found difficult to express to God? What would honest prayer look like for you?
18. How can our Community Group make room for someone who's hurting without rushing to explain their suffering or expecting them to recover quickly?
19. Where are you being asked to remain faithful even though you don't know how a difficult situation will turn out? What might faithfulness look like this week?
20. How does the assurance that nothing can separate us from God's love in Christ (Romans 8:38–39) change the way you face suffering or walk alongside someone else who's suffering?