

Hope-filled Worship

Psalm 43

Key Points:

- David worships God on the good days AND the bad days. David worships God when he's got (obvious) reasons to be thankful and when he hasn't. Worship isn't dependant on our circumstances or experiences. It's deeper than that.
- Psalm 43 reveals David's questioning of his circumstances (v.2, 5), and sheds light on his negative experiences of life and faith (v.1,2), but concludes with his worship of God (v.4, 5).
- David's hope and worship are **choices** - 'I **will**' (v.5). Hope and worship don't *just* happen, they are heart choices to make. And hope precedes worship. Our Christian hope is in a person, Jesus, not circumstance or experience. We have ups and downs, seasons of joy and sadness, highs and lows - God never changes. If our worship begins with hope in God - who He is, what He's like, His goodness, kindness, love, power etc. then we ALWAYS have something to thank Him for whatever else is going on.
- Worship is such a huge word - praying, singing, making God-honouring decisions, being brave, kind and loving, taking risks for God - but it comes back to putting God first in our hearts.

Questions:

1. What's your favourite way to worship God? If it's through a particular worship song - which song and why? Are some ways 'better' than others for you? Is this right?
2. When do you find it hard to worship God? Why is it hard at church/at work/at home/by yourself?
3. Read Psalm 43:1-2. Have you ever felt like David describes here (i.e. in need of rescue, isolated, abandoned, oppressed)? Thinking practically, what might *choosing* to worship look like in the midst of those situations?
4. '*There I will go to the altar of God*' (v.4) - How does worship relate to being in God's presence? How might this encourage us to worship despite our circumstances?
5. Go round the group and take it in turns to name a characteristic of God (a reason to worship Him) until you run out of ideas (you can always look in the bible!). Are there any that hold special meaning for you, or that are particularly challenging?
6. Start Praying. Be bold and pray with power. Make some time to listen.
God, you are so good, so loving and beyond all comparison. We choose to worship you now, pressing pause on everything else and giving our hearts to you again. Please meet us through our worship, and draw us close to you. In Jesus' powerful name, amen.
7. Start doing. Commit to a step and live it out this week. Set a time each day to stop whatever you're doing at that moment and give thanks to God for who He is. Alternatively, you could pair up with someone and agree to text/call them with encouragements to worship God for some aspect of His character. Be creative!!