

Psalm 44 "Awake Lord! Why do you sleep?"

Read Psalm 44

In vs. 1-8 The Psalmist reflects from the nation's history on what they know about the character and activity of God. In vs. 9-22 the psalmist speaks of the agony of their current circumstances. There is a profound disconnect between what they know of God and their circumstances.

1. Has there been a time in your life where you have experienced a disconnect between what you know of God and your circumstances? Describe it.

This is a personal reflection question – no right or wrong answers. However it is a question that invites a level of vulnerability. If you as a leader are prepared to reflect on it first you will invite others to do the same.

2. What deep movements or currents flowed through your heart at that time? Did you pray them through, pray them out? If not – what kept you from doing so? If you did what was the result?

...directions above are helpful in this question as well.

In vs. 23 the psalmist turns from processing the deep currents of the heart to petition. Awake Lord... redeem us for the sake of your steadfast love. We might desire that the psalmist would have lingered on this note of hope for longer but it does point us to a place we can linger – another time where the people of God cried out for God to wake up when there was a disconnect between their vision of God and their circumstances.

Read Mark 4:35-41; Jonah 1

3. What are the similarities and differences between the story in Mark and the story of Jonah?

Both in a storm – raging wind and churning seas.

Boat is about to break apart

Both Jonah and Jesus are asleep.

Both are roused by the others with the fear – we are perishing.

In both there is the miraculous intervention of God to calm the seas.

In both the onlookers are more afraid in the calm than in the storm

In both the onlookers are led to worship and praise the living God.

The only difference is the means by which God calms the storm and stills the seas – in one it is by a word – in the other it is through Jonah being thrown into the sea

Read Matthew 12:38-41

4. Reflecting on your comparison of the story of Jonah and the story of Jesus from Mark 4, where is Jesus desiring us to turn our attention?

To avoid this simply being an answer of – to his death and resurrection – look to some of the specifics.

The invited response being repentance and faith.

The questions this raises for the observers in each – who is this that the wind and the waves obey him? Etc...

The means by which God brings about deliverance is by substitutionary atonement – he is thrown into the storm instead of us – he is thrown into the storm of sin, death, hell, eternal judgement against evil

Read Romans 8:31-39

5. Paul quotes from psalm 44. How can reflecting upon the death and resurrection of Jesus in the midst of the disconnect (between what we know of God and our circumstances) enable us to weather those circumstances without sinking or crumbling?

The presence of the storm can't mean he doesn't love us, can't mean he doesn't care, can't mean we are being punished for our sins – for there is Jesus - the innocent one – the beloved of the Father – in the eye of the storm for us.

He takes on the storm of sin, of death, of hell for us – by his resurrection he calms those storms for us – the storms that can really break us – really destroy us – really sink us – in the face of that it relativizes every other storm.

He took that storm so that we by faith would never be separated from the love of God – and so we can know that nothing we are facing now or have faced can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.