

Dr. Bruce Waltke, Psalms, Communal Lament, Psalm 44 , Session 17, 6-min. Video Overview

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You know, let's talk about one of the hardest things in life. Suffering that just makes no sense. The kind of thing that hits you out of nowhere and makes you question everything.

It's a problem we all face, right? But there's this ancient guide, kind of like a flight manual for the soul, that gives us a surprisingly real way to get through it. Okay, let's get into it. Yeah, one minute you're just cruising, everything seems clear, and then BAM, you're completely socked in.

The theologian Dr. Bruce Waltke uses this amazing analogy of a pilot who suddenly flies right into a thick, disorienting cloud. And when you're in that cloud of suffering, you lose all your reference points. The things you used to rely on to make sense of the world, they're just gone.

It feels like your own senses are betraying you. Why is this happening? Where did God go? It just doesn't add up anymore. Now for a pilot, that moment of total disorientation is terrifying.

It's where panic can take over and send the plane into a fatal spin. And for a person of faith, the danger is exactly the same. When we lose that rational, visual contact with God's plan, that's when our faith is most at risk of spinning out of control.

So what are you supposed to do? Well, a good pilot doesn't trust their feelings in the cloud; they trust their instruments. And this is exactly where Psalm 44 comes in. It's not just some old, dusty poem; it's an ancient instrument panel designed for this exact situation.

The psalmist gives us a set of reliable, time-tested truths- our instruments- that we can lock on to when our feelings and our circumstances are just screaming that we're going down. It's a manual for flying by faith when sight has totally failed you. And check this out.

This isn't some chaotic, panicked cry for help. Just look at the structure here. It moves so deliberately from praise, to lament, to protest, and finally to petition.

You can see the lines decreasing in a pattern. This is a controlled, thoughtful, totally coherent response to absolute chaos. Even in their anguish, the writer is thinking clearly.

So what are these instruments? What are the reliable readings on this ancient panel that can keep us steady in the cloud? Let's break down the four essential truths Psalm 44 gives us to fly by. The very first instrument the psalmist checks is history. It's brilliant, really.

Before they even get to what's happening to them right now, they spend the first eight verses just looking back. They remember all the powerful things God has done in the past. There it is.

That's the reading on the first page. It's a direct appeal to God's proven track record. The psalmist is basically saying, "We remember you."

We know what you've done. They're reminding themselves and God that his faithfulness isn't some abstract theory. It's historical fact.

And this is absolutely crucial. Grounding yourself in what God has already done gives you the stability you need to face what's happening now. It is literally the first step to leveling the plane and getting out of that initial panic.

Okay, let's look at the next instrument, and I'll be honest. This one can be a tough pill to swallow. It's sovereignty.

The psalmist doesn't blame bad luck or their enemies or fate. Nope. They turn right to God.

I mean, just listen to how raw that is. But now you have rejected us. All through this lament, the psalmist says, you did this, you did that.

They never, for one second, doubt that God is the one ultimately in control of their situation, even though it's incredibly painful to say. Now that might sound like just blaming God, but it's actually the opposite. It's a profound statement of faith.

If God is in control, even of this awful suffering, it means the plane hasn't just randomly spun out of control. There's a pilot. And that right there is an anchor in the storm.

It keeps you from that faith-destroying spin. The third instrument is example. And here the psalmist makes a really bold protest.

They basically claim that this suffering isn't some kind of punishment for something they did wrong. They're innocent. They straight up declare their faithfulness.

And this isn't them being arrogant or self-righteous. It's a crucial part of their argument. By highlighting the unjust nature of what's happening, they're connecting their story to this long, long history of righteous people who have suffered for no good reason.

And you know what? There's an incredible comfort in that. It totally reframes the pain. Your suffering isn't a sign that you've been abandoned or that you failed.

No, it means you're now in the honored company of the faithful, of the saints, and even of Christ himself, who walked this exact same path. So, we've checked the instruments, history, sovereignty, and example. But it's how this psalm ends, or more accurately, how it doesn't end, that holds maybe its most profound and challenging lesson for us.

I mean, after all this raw honesty, this structured, desperate prayer, what happens? Surely God answers, right? The clouds part, the sun shines through, and the pilot lands the plane safely. That's what we'd expect. That's the story we want.

But look at this. The psalmist doesn't give us that neat little bow at the end. There's no voice from heaven.

There's no sudden rescue. The crisis is just left hanging there, totally unresolved. And this is the whole point.

The instrument panel isn't an eject button. It's not designed to get you out of the storm. It's designed to help you fly through it.

The kind of faith we see here gives you the tools for endurance, the instruments to keep flying straight and level while you're still very much in the middle of the cloud. So the psalm ends with this final, desperate plea. And this plea becomes the very last instrument on our panel.

After appealing to God's history, His sovereignty, and their own innocence, there's only one thing left to hold on to. The final appeal isn't based on fairness or justice or what they think they deserve. It's based entirely on the fundamental character of God Himself, His unfailing love.

And that's the last gauge to check. When every other instrument on the panel is shaking, and nothing else makes sense, the simple bedrock truth of God's love is the one thing that holds steady. You see, Psalm 44 teaches us that sometimes faith isn't about finding all the answers or even about breaking out of the cloud.

It's about knowing which instruments you can trust to fly straight through it. So the question for all of us is: when you're flying blind, what truths do you hold on to?