

“Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?”

The psalmist sings this refrain twice in Psalm 42 and then once again in Psalm 43.

Some believe that Psalm 42 and 43 were originally one poem describing the despair of one who had been ripped from a home, taken into exile, and now praying to hold on to faith and hope in a strange land.

“Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you disquieted within me?”

“Down in the dumps” is the way Eugene Peterson translates this phrase in his contemporary English in “The Message.” Other translations use words like “distressed” or “disturbed” or “depressed.”

Disquieted is the word for us, though, as we come to this day, this place, this table – to remember our own mortality, as Joel said, “...with fasting, with weeping, with mourning...”

When the news comes that someone we love has died, whether it’s by phone or by a doctor in the waiting room or simply seeing the last breath, there is a moment, brief but brilliant in its intensity, that separates itself from all time.

It forces a deep breath upon us – a shock to our system, a reality rupturing experience that changes our world.

For in that eternal moment, we feel the echo of grief that will reverberate forever and a day – face to face with the uncertainty of our own remaining days – a disquieting of the soul.

Our life seems to wobble and weave along because we cannot control events or circumstances; we can’t escape the anxieties and ambiguities of human hurt and pain.

We come to this day, all of us to confess our membership in the order of disquieted souls as we are smudged with the mark of our mortality.

But listen again to the psalmist, one phrase: “deep calls to deep” as the flood of tears flow over your life. “Deep calls to deep” as we keep watch together through the dark night of the soul, as Joel said, “(we) return to the Lord...” and we remember.

Deep calls to deep when we remember God’s care in those times our souls were distressed after we have wronged others and betrayed love.

Deep calls to deep when we remember God’s present Spirit in those times of difficulty and yet we made it through another day.

Deep calls to deep when we remember God’s grace and mercy in those times we lost the light of life and we were chilled and anxious.

Deep calls to deep with that deep-down joy that rises from the heart of life in those times when hands of help and hope have reached out and touched us.

Yes, we want to remember; we need to remember, we need to remember the bread of life broken for us that we may eat and filled with abundance of life; Christ’s blood poured out for us, the deep wounds of love suffered for us.

With ashes on foreheads, with humbled hearts and repentant spirits we remember and will never forget that our God is ever present and each day dawns with God’s promise that nowhere are we outside the circle of divine care.

TO GOD BE THE GLORY.