

KINGTON BAPTIST CHURCH

ONLINE NOTICE BOARD - 44

Do you ever talk to yourself? It's not that uncommon. Some say that talking to oneself is the first sign of madness. But others, with more wisdom, realise that it's a sure sign of sanity. Not because it's going to be the most sensible conversation you'll have! Nor because you'll be talking to someone who always agrees with you! But because holding a conversation with ourselves may help us to better understand why we may feel as we do – especially if we're feeling low or depressed. This is exactly why the person who wrote Psalms 42 and 43 found he was talking with himself.

Here was a man who felt isolated and lonely. The loneliness made him feel depressed and overwhelmed. Listen as he complains about his state of mind: *All the time my eyes are full of tears... my enemies plague me constantly... my heart is breaking... why am I so depressed? Why so sad? ... I'm so discouraged... surging waves sweep over me.*

He asks himself why he is so 'cast down'. By talking to himself he opened a way out of his despair. Of course he knew very well the circumstances that made him feel as he did. When we feel 'cast down' we also may know why we feel like that; what it is that has 'got to us'. He is not questioning what made him feel as he did; he is questioning **why** he feels like this. He is asking himself this question because within himself he knows that he has no need to feel like this. He knows well enough what to think about God – about his faithfulness, his love, his compassion and kindness. For the very next thing he says to himself is not a question but an answer – indeed **the** answer to his whole problem. He gives himself some good advice: *Put your trust in God!* Then what follows in these Psalms is a surge of hope: *I will again give him praise who is my help and my God.*

It's helpful if we listen to this man's inner conversation carefully. When we do listen to him two golden truths come to light about this man: this man's honesty and his realism. That's a good word – *realism*. My dictionary tells me it means 'the attitude of accepting a situation as it is and dealing with it accordingly'. That is just what this man does. He knows he has no need to feel like this. But he knows that he does feel like this! He knows from his past experiences that God is faithful and cares infinitely about us. But he also knows that he himself is weak, frail and human.

This man has a thorough understanding of his problems; they are constantly in his mind; they overwhelm his feelings and emotions. He also has a deep knowledge of God. So deep and true that he knows that God in his wisdom may allow us to pass through the deep waters, through the valley of deep darkness. Not that this man knows **why** God allows these things. Just that he knows that God does allow such experiences to come our way. He also knows this is not the end of the journey: *Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you are with me ... and I will dwell in the house of the Lord for ever!*