MEDITATION 21, Psalms 41-43: "Hope in God"

"All my enemies whisper together against me, imagining the worst for me." 41:8
"Crushing my bones, my foes revile me, taunting me always with, 'Where is your God?'" 42:11
"Vindicate me, O God, champion my cause against faithless people; rescue me from the treacherous, dishonest man...Have hope in God; I will yet praise Him, my ever-present help, my God." 43:1, 5b

As a new missionary in Japan my Japanese co-worker told me there was a Japanese proverb that said "Every man has 12 friends and 12 enemies. They are the same 12 people." After saying that proverb to me my friend kind of shook himself and said "But we must be more positive!" Thousands of years before I heard that proverb from my Japanese co-worker an ancient Hebrew Psalmist wrote something similarly gloomy. Perhaps taken aback by some unhappy human relationships such as that Japanese proverb speaks about.

It is a sad reality of life that sometimes we come under attack by enemies and are betrayed by our friends. The Psalmists certainly came under some kind of attack – it appears people were even placing bets on how long their family names and reputations would survive! It was a really bad time yet like my Japanese friend the Psalmists struggled for a more positive viewpoint and refused to gave up on God. They confessed their personal sinfulness to God and placed their lives into His hands. The LORD must have done something good for them because in the end they rejoiced in God and gave praise to His name.

Because the writers of these Psalms did not allow despair to overcome them neither their words nor their names have perished from the face of the earth; their family name – Korath – is still remembered and in our own time some words they wrote became one of the most beautiful praise songs of the 20th century: "As the Deer Panteth for the Water."

Prayer: "Lord, my trust and hope is in you. Save me from my sin and from my enemies. Defend my name and my reputation from those who come against me. Amen."