



Encountering God
THROUGH PRAYER

September 29th. through October 4th. 2019

Psalm 42:1-5

1 As the deer pants for the water brooks, So my soul pants for You, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; When shall I come and appear before God? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, While they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" 4 These things I remember and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God, With the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival. 5 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him For the help of His presence.

Psalm 42:6-11

6 O my God, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore I remember You from the land of the Jordan And the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

7 Deep calls to deep at the sound of Your waterfalls; All Your breakers and Your waves have rolled over me.

8 The Lord will command His lovingkindness in the daytime; And His song will be with me in the night, A prayer to the God of my life.

9 I will say to God my rock, "Why have You forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?"

10 As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, While they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

11 Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God.

The Condition

- Psalm 42 & 43 were most likely one psalm originally, consisting of three stanzas all ending with the same refrain... *“Why are you in despair, oh my soul?”* (42:5, 11, 43:5).
- The word “despair” means to melt away, to languish, to change form = To completely lose oneself.
 - vs. 1-2 describes this condition as “thirsting and panting for the living God”.
 - ▶ Experiencing thirst in the desert is to experience unescapable agony.
 - ▶ Dehydration of this sort changes how you relate to water. It becomes a distant memory. Something that seems out of reach or impossible.
- Notice that there isn't any real mention of sin or tragedy that's the cause.
 - cf. Moses in Numbers 11 and Elijah in 1 Kings 19. This means we can feel that God is far away for any number of reasons or no reason at all.

The Causes

- His habits of worship and fellowship had been disrupted.
 - 42:4 says he “remembered” joyful and thank-filled fellowship with other worshipers as they observed God’s festivals.
 - There’s an undeniable connection between how real God seems to us and the intimacy we experience with other christians (cf. Acts 8:39 and Acts 2:42-47).
 - ▶ Warning... This isn’t something that can be manufactured through social interaction.
 - ▶ Only spiritual fellowship in God’s Spirit results in meaningful socialization (awe), radical transformation and sacrificial service.
- External environment is something else that can make God seem unreal.
 - 42:10... If the only thing we hear all day is that we’re crazy we’ll most likely start to believe at some point that we are in fact crazy.

The Cures

1. Can't reduce the solution or the problem to be simply spiritual.
 - 42:3 says his tears have been his food day and night which implies two things. He's not eating and he's not sleeping... sounds like depression.
 - We have to remember we are physical, emotional and spiritual which means all these things need to be treated (note 1 Kings 19:4-8).
2. We have to pray even when we don't feel like it. This psalm is written by someone who senses that God is distant yet is praying anyways.
3. We have to evaluate and challenge ourselves about our hopes.
 - Each stanza ends with examining himself "why are you feeling this?" And, talking to himself "trust in the Lord!".
 - He's not talking to himself about his feelings (buck-up) rather the reason for his feelings.
4. We have to find comfort in the loving promises of God. Only happens by believing them.