

- ***READ Psalm 42:1,2*** When was the last time that you were truly thirsty? I'm not talking about you being comfortable in your air conditioned home and simply wanting something to drink. I'm talking about truly being parched to the point where your mouth, tongue, and throat are getting dry. I can think back to my high school days of conditioning for football and soccer and remember those times where just a little sip of water would bring great relief, and there was nothing else in the whole world you wanted more than that simply drink of water. Maybe you have similar memories.
- Here in this text of **Psalm 42**, I believe we have someone in that situation, but there is not a literal thirsting for water...but there is a spiritual thirsting for God. This 42nd Psalm is attributed to the sons of Korah. That name should ring a bell because it was Korah, the Levite, who was guilty of leading a rebellion against Moses during the Exodus in **Number 16**. Though Korah and those rebelling along side him were killed, his sons remained (**Numbers 26:9-11**), and it is thought as a possibility that they were so grateful for God's mercy for sparing them that they dedicated themselves to the worshipful praising of God. (**II Chronicles 20:19**) They are seen as authors of Psalms throughout the Psalter.
- This psalm is believed by many commentators and scholars to actually have been one single psalm combined with **Psalm 43**. Some of the earliest manuscripts actually do have these two psalms combined into one. A couple of evidences that further support this thought is the fact that **Psalm 43** does not have a heading which makes it one of only two in book two of the Psalter to not have a heading. Additionally, the messages of the two psalms line up very well along with the fact that the exact same verse is found in both psalms and allows the two psalms combined to have three clear divisions in **42:1-5; 42:6-11; & 43:1-5**.
- Though authored by the sons of Korah, there are many who believe this song to be tied into David's fleeing from his son Absalom as is recorded in **II Samuel 16**. Others believe this was a psalm written during the exile of the children of Israel in captivity. Though we cannot know for certain, I believe we will see some of the reasoning behind these believes in the details of these two psalms. Let's begin by reading these two psalms together, we'll then break down the details of the psalms, and finish up by trying to see ourselves in these psalms in order to be encouraged by its message. **Psalm 42** is identified as a Maskil, and it is believed psalms written as such were meant to be used for wise instruction by the reader. There is certainly much to learn and be reminded of from these texts we are considering this morning.

I. Breaking Down These Psalms:

A. The Psalmist finds himself dejected.

1. The mood of these Psalms is readily identified by the repetition of the same verse three times. **Psalm 42:5,11; 43:5** all state, *"Why my soul, are you dejected? Why are you in such turmoil?"* The word dejected brings out the idea of someone who is strongly reduced in his spirited, despairing, cast down, humbled, and even depressed. (**42:6**) We might think that those who find themselves in such circumstances must surely be spiritual lightweights, but let's consider that there are many spiritual giants through Scripture who found themselves in the depths of despair. Men like Moses (**Numbers 11:15**) and Elijah (**I Kings 19:4**) were so low in their spirits at times that they asked God to simply take their lives. We don't necessarily see the subject of these psalms wanting to die, but he clearly admits his depression. (**42:6**) But why?
2. Reasons for the Psalmist's dejected emotions.
 - a) **Lack of ability to be in the house of God. (42:4)** If this subject is in fact David then we can certainly under the pain he must be feeling in not being able to go into the house of God. Now, the temple was not yet constructed, so the idea might be more of simply not being able to be in the presence of God. This is a possibility, as well. Or it could be that these psalms were written during the time of captivity, and these are the longings of an exile for the worship that took place in the temple. Whatever the origin of these psalms, we can clearly see an individual who feels as if he is far away from God's presence.
 - b) **Thought that God had forgotten him. (42:3,9,10; 43:2)** Compounding these issues are the statements that seem to indicate possible feelings that God has abandoned the subject all

together. It is not uncommon to find those in the depths of despair feeling as if they have been abandoned by their God, and we see these feelings expressed in these psalms. **42:9**, *"I will say to God, my rock, "Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about in sorrow because of my enemies oppression?"*" & **43:2**, *"For you are the God of my refuge. Why have you rejected me? Why must I go about in sorrow because of my enemies oppression?"*, describe these thoughts most clearly. When a sense of God's presence is missing in the midst of trials and pains, it should not surprise us when the troubled feel as if God has forgotten them all together and is unaware of their strife.

- c) **The presence of adversaries. (42:10; 43:1)** It seems very obvious that the subject of these psalms is suffering at the hands of an unidentified enemy. **42:10** and **43:1** both speak of his adversaries, an unfaithful nation, and the deceitful and unjust person who are standing against him. These enemies are enflaming the feelings of despair by taunting the subject and asking all day long, *"Where is your God?"* This question has been asked before in this psalm, but it is this question coming from his enemies that truly feels as if his bones are being crushed. Surely we can see from these highlighted sections why it is that the subject finds himself so dejected at this point in his life, and it only leads to what we want to consider next.

B. The Psalmist longs to be present before the Lord.

1. As we have already mentioned, the subject of this psalm has a great desire to be in the house of God, on His holy mountain, in His dwelling place, and at God's altar. This person sees the situation that he is currently engulfed in and desires so greatly to escape into the presence of the Lord for relief. Again, consider the first two verses of **Psalm 42**, *"As a deer longs for the flowing streams, so I long for you, God. I thirst for God, the living God. When can I come and appear before God?"*
2. Yet sadly, the subject realizes that he does not have the sustaining waters of God available before him, so he has only his broken hearted tears to sustain him day and night wherever it is that he finds himself. The geographical markers of Jordan, Mount Hermon, and Mount Mizar would put the subject somewhere in the northern regions of Israel if they are to be taken literally. If God's presence was found in Jerusalem then certainly this person longed to return to that place of worship and divine presence. And yet, that isn't the subjects current circumstance, so what is he to do?

C. The Psalmist seeks to comfort himself through hope in and praise of God.

1. The repeated two questions in **42:5,11; 43:5** are also answered in the same way, and it is almost as if the subject rebukes himself for allowing such downtrodden feelings to exist. Notice what is also repeated three times. *"Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God."* It is almost as if I can see the subject recounting his current tribulations and then rebuking himself with a strong *"Why are you letting yourself be this way!?"*
2. These psalms of self-reflection in the depths of sorrow also include these words of self-correction. *"Don't be dejected and sinking in turmoil! Pick yourself up by God's grace and hope in Him!"* seem to clearly be the internal response of this person. It is almost as if the subject is having to remind himself of Who it is that he serves, and we can even see that in passing at points throughout these psalms.
3. Notice the interspersed portions of confidence in God. *"Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your billows have swept over me. The Lord will send his faithful love by day; his song will be with me in the night— a prayer to the God of my life." (Psalm 42:7,8)* *"Send Your light and Your truth, let them lead me. Let them bring me to Your holy mountain, to Your dwelling place. Then I will come to the altar of God, to God, my greatest joy. I will praise you with the lyre, God, my God." (Psalm 43:3,4)* When it comes to the bottom line understanding of this Psalm, it seems to be a pronouncement of the subjects troubles followed by a reminder that His God is the one whom must be hoped in and praised even in the most difficult of situations. If the subject needed to remind himself of those three times in a short section of Scripture, then maybe that will clue us into our need to continually do the same throughout our own lives.

II. Seeing Ourselves In These Psalms:

A. We currently find ourselves dejected.

1. I can cite no legitimate poll but simply by anecdotal evidence, I have found that a large percentage of Bible believing individuals would call the Psalter their favorite section of the entire Bible. Why is this the case? I would offer up the reasoning that this is because of the ability that is present for us to be able to put ourselves right there in the shoes of the authors of so many of these psalms. So many of them describe situations, feelings, struggles, etc that we are all far too familiar with, and the feeling of being dejected is one that we can certainly empathize with...even at this very point of our lives.
2. Honestly ask yourself this question... *"Have I found myself dejected to some degree over the last few months? Have I had thoughts and feelings of despair, reduced spirit, and or depression that has been brought on by my current circumstances?"* If I'm being honest with you...I have to answer yes to these questions, and many of the reasons I have felt this way line up with what we have seen in this text.
3. Just as the normal routine of leading the procession of worship to the house of God had been disrupted for the subject of these psalms...so has our normal routine of worship been disrupted. Yes, we are most appreciative for the ways in which we have stayed connected through technology. However, it just hasn't been the norm and what we need. We need the presence of one another as we all strive to serve God. Our routine of worshiping together and enjoying the fruits of fellowship has been disrupted. Have you felt the impact of not being among your brethren? I know I have, and it has impacted me in a strongly negative way.
4. While I have not personally gotten to the point where I have questioned the presence of God in my life or in this world...I have had to acknowledge the presence of many enemies who seek to hinder the will and work of God. This has especially been true over the past few weeks in regards to the injustices that have taken place and put in the public spotlight. Instead of people rallying around love and unity, there have been many who seek to further divide our society by further words and actions that only harm and hinder healing. Even just over the past couple of days we have seen horrible acts of violence that only pours salt in the wounds that are currently wide open. Are you hurt and disturbed by what you see? Speaking only for myself...I sure am, and it causes my spirit to fall.

B. We currently find ourselves longing for God.

1. And yet...it also causes me to long all the more to experience the presence of God within my life. It causes me all the more to desire to be led by His light and His truth. You see, all matter has the propensity to return to its original state of being. Think of the water cycle. It begins in liquid form, but when it gets below the temperature of 32*...it becomes solid. But once that ice goes back above 32* it melts and if it continues heating up past 212*...it becomes vapor. However, once it gets back down below 212* it condensates and its molecules condense until once again it appears in liquid form.
2. You see my point? Matter has the propensity to return to its original form, and brothers and sisters... we, too, long to return to our original Former who is the God of heaven. We are but dust that has had a soul breathed into it by God, and we long our entire lives to return into the glorious presence of our great Creator. (See Paul's speech in Athens in **Acts 17:16-34**) However, there are those moments when the difficulties of life cause us to feel as if we can never regain that place in His presence. Though we long for God...we might feel as if He is nowhere to be found. Such is the wicked scheme and desires of the evil one. He wants us to feel like Moses and Elijah who thought they had no hope remaining in this life. He wants for us to be hopeless without God.

C. We can find comfort in this time of distress by hoping in and praising God.

1. It is at this point where we long for God and yet feel as if He cannot be found that we need to look at ourselves in the mirror and be reminded of the One whom we serve! We need to ask ourselves why it is that we are dejected and drowning in turmoil, and these are not rhetorical questions! They must be answered with the thought in mind that our God is the God who has continually His people in Scripture that He would never leave them nor forsake them so long as they trusted in Him and sought His ways in their lives.

2. We must actually trust that God's will through Jesus for us to seek, knock, and ask are actually His will! How silly of us to have God tell us to do something in Scripture, we fail to do those very things, and then we turn around and act like God simply isn't help us out! We ought to be a people who continually go to God and remind Him of what He has promised to do for us! Now, we aren't reminding Him in the understanding that He is suffering from divine dementia. No, we are acknowledging to Him that we have read His Word, we trust His Word, and we want to experience the blessings of His promises. We have hope in Him!
3. Then we must turn around and do something with this new revived vigor and energy in our spirits. We must praise and honor the name of God by speaking of His glories and sharing His will with all of those whom we can. Brothers and sisters, it is only through faith and hope in God than any of us are going to make it through this life without crashing and burning in absolute despair because I don't know if you've seen it or not...but our society is literally burning around us!
4. Yes, the evil one's influence is showing itself in full force, but we must not lose heart! *"We do not give up. Even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen. For what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal."* (II Corinthians 4:16-18) Good brethren, we do not see the presence of God all around us, but we ought to feel it to our very souls as we seek to put our full hope and assurance in Him and praise His name in word or deed, day by day. Just as the subject of this psalm questioned himself when he felt down and out, may we also continually question and remind ourselves that our God is the flowing stream to which we can always go to be refreshed and renewed.

Going back to my mentioning of matter returning to its original state, if I remember correctly from biology class, over half of the makeup of our body is water, and is it no wonder that we long for the God who is continually described through references to water? Here our God is described as a flowing stream and Jesus is described as the Living Water (**John 4:10-14**) that will help one to never thirst again. Brethren, if we find ourselves spiritual dehydrated and parched this morning, then I hope these thoughts in **the 42nd & 43rd Psalms** have caused us to be reminded of God's place as the refreshing waters that can sustain us throughout this difficult journey of life. May we earnestly seek His presence and allow it to greatly influence the state of our minds and the direction of our actions. May the words of these two verses be on our minds continually as we go throughout this week.

"Send Your light and Your truth; let them lead me. Let them bring me to Your holy mountain, to Your dwelling place. Then I will come to the altar of God, to God, my greatest joy. I will praise you with the lyre, God, my God." (Psalm 43:3,4)