

As the Deer

Psalm 42

Introduction

1. The Psalms are a unique part of scripture considering their poetic nature.
2. They are no less part of God's inspired instruction than anything else. (cf. Romans 15:4)
 - a. **"Contemplation"** – *Maschil* – translated **"understanding"** in Psalm 47:7
 - i. *maškiyl* – "m" (prefix) and "aškiyl," discern, instruct.
 - ii. All Psalms contain instruction, and there are several labeled as "Maschils," such as Psalm 42.
 - b. We can be greatly instructed by these inspired songs.
3. Psalm 42 seems especially to be of great help in our times. (COVID-19)
 - I. Psalm 42 – Thirsting for God in Distress
 - A. Longing to Appear Before God (vv. 1-3)
 - a. **Pants** – "is not merely a quiet languishing, but a strong, audible thirsting or panting for water, caused by prevailing drought" (Keil & Delitzsch)
 - i. Cf. Psalm 63:1 – where there is no water.
 - ii. Intense longing for God expressed by the sounds a parched animal makes.
 - b. (v. 2) – not able to appear before God.
 - i. Exodus 23:17; 34:23 – three appearances of the Israelites in the sanctuary at feasts commanded by God.
 - ii. Evidently kept from his normal appearance.
 - c. (v. 3) – obviously affected him greatly.
 - i. Added turmoil – mockers in the foreign land.
 - B. Remembrance of Appearing Before God (vv. 4-5)
 - a. (v. 4) – remembering how good it was before.
 - i. Pour out my soul – 1 Samuel 1:15; Job 30:16 – language of intense sorrow and pain.
 - ii. These are good memories, but not present realities – which is what he longs for.
 - b. (v. 5) – encouragement to self – don't be so discouraged and disturbed, but trust in God.
 - i. Hope, not despair!
 - ii. Help of His countenance – even though he is not before God in the sanctuary, God is there to help.
 - iii. Psalm 139:7-10 – there isn't a place we go where God cannot be called upon and found.
 - C. Hope in God for a Better Day (vv. 6-8)
 - a. (v. 6) – while he is far away, he can still remember God, and call on Him.
 - i. **Land of the Jordan, heights of Hermon** – furthestmost extent of the Jordan river where the Hermon mountain range is found. (Well north of Jerusalem – the place of worship) (Hill of Mizar unknown)

- b. **(v. 7)** – The adversity and distress is intense.
 - i. **Tempestuous waters** – a figure of turmoil
 - ii. **Deep calls unto deep** – like the waves are calling to each other to come crashing down on him.
 - c. **(v. 8)** – part of his **“hope in God” (v. 5)**, looking forward with confidence to the day when time of affliction will pass, and the lovingkindness of God will follow.
 - i. Then he will sing and pray to God concerning this deliverance, and His overwhelming lovingkindness.
- D. Casting Cares Upon God, His Rock **(vv. 9-11)**
- a. With the hope in God for a better day expressed, he turns to God while still in turmoil to cast his cares upon Him.
 - b. God is his rock – **Psalm 18:2-3** – He is firm, solid, constant and true – our strength in weakness.
 - c. **(v. 11) (cf. v. 5)** – a reminder again to not be swallowed up with sorrow, but wait on the Lord, and put your trust in Him.

II. Application

A. Cultivate a Thirst for God

- a. Do we long for God as the psalmist? – **Psalm 42:1-3**
 - i. The “present distress” will manifest such thirst, or the lack thereof.
 - ii. **Hebrews 10:25** – those who have made a habit of forsaking the assembly have no change.
 - iii. **Psalm 122:1** – Those who were excited to go to worship are now longing for the time of return.
- b. God calls us to be thirsty – **Matthew 5:6**
 - i. Their thirst is expressed in action – **Matthew 6:33** – prioritizing.
 - ii. **1 Peter 2:1-3** – those who have tasted that God is gracious want more.
- c. This thirst must be nurtured:
 - i. It can be lost if we don’t feed it – **Hebrews 6:4-8**
 - 1. **Hebrews 5:12-14** – they had not been exercising their senses by reason of use.
 - 2. The regressed into a state of immaturity and malnutrition.
 - 3. We must not leave our first love – **Revelation 2:4**
 - ii. We can intensify our thirst by recalling what we no longer have:
 - 1. **Psalm 42:4** – he USED to go but can’t anymore.
 - 2. TIMES OF SORROW AND LOSS HELP US APPRECIATE THE TIMES OF JOY AND PLENTY.
 - 3. REMEMBER THE GOOD NOW, AND WHEN IT RETURNS, REMEMBER THE BAD.

B. Do Not Lose Heart

- a. We cannot allow times of adversity to discourage us:
 - i. The psalmist was telling himself to snap out of it – **Psalm 42:5, 11**

- ii. **2 Corinthians 4:16-18** – we must not lose heart but look to the unseen. (What is working in us, and what we are promised.)
- b. We must remember God is still within our reach:
 - i. The psalmist realized distance made no difference in regard to his remembrance of God, and ability to call on Him – **Psalm 42:6, 9**
 - ii. God has made Himself available – **Acts 17:26-27** – He is not far from us.
 - 1. **Deuteronomy 30:11-14** (Moses regarding the choice of blessing or cursing) – the word is near us, and we should not forsake it.
 - iii. We can turn to God for comfort – **2 Corinthians 1:3-4**
 - 1. Comfort in His word – **Romans 15:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:18**
- c. We must know that any adversity is but for a moment:
 - i. **James 4:14** – our life is a vapor.
 - 1. Warns us about the need to prioritize lest our life is wasted.
 - 2. Shows us that the sorrows of life are temporary too.
 - ii. The psalmist understood a better day was coming – **Psalm 42:8**
 - iii. Even if the adversity swallows the rest of our life, it will end when it is swallowed by eternal day – **Revelation 7:14-17** – when we come out of tribulation, we will serve God eternally, and we will have no tears.
- C. Be Fervent in Prayer
 - a. The psalmist, having realized distance cannot truly keep him from God, turned his troubles over to God in prayer – **Psalm 42:9-10**
 - b. Realize the power of prayer – **James 5:16-18**
 - i. It avails much.
 - ii. **(vv. 17-18)** – Elijah stopped the rain and started the rain.
 - iii. **Cf. 1 John 5:14-15** – when we pray according to His will.
 - c. Realize the mobility of prayer – **Daniel 6:10** – Daniel prayed to God even while in captivity under the Medo-Persian empire.
 - i. Opened windows toward Jerusalem – but not IN Jerusalem.
 - ii. **“before his God”** – we are always before God.
 - iii. **1 Timothy 2:1, 8** – prayer is boundless for the child of God.
 - iv. No matter where we are, the prayers of the faithful ascend to the throne of God – **Revelation 5:8**
 - d. Acknowledge that God cares for you – **1 Peter 5:6-7**
 - i. God is mindful of man – **Psalm 8:3-5**
 - ii. As Jesus said – **Matthew 10:29-31**
 - e. Pray without ceasing – **1 Thessalonians 5:17** – with these things understood, BE CONSTANT IN PRAYER – DON’T NEGLECT IT!
 - f. Be anxious for nothing – **Philippians 4:6-7**
 - i. The psalmist was casting his care upon God – **Psalm 42:9-10**

- ii. Knowing God is in control, and has been petitioned by us, His children, grants a peace which surpasses understanding.
- iii. When we've given it to God we need not worry – **Matthew 6:27** – worrying doesn't help.

D. Why are you cast down and disquieted? – **Psalm 42:11** – Hope in God!

Conclusion

1. While we are unable to worship congregationally as we usually do, we need not lose heart.
2. We must gain instruction from this Psalm, and gain courage by hoping in God, and turning to Him.