

“Psalms: Week 5”

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 2, 2025 -CASEY HEARN



Summary - “Psalms: Praise and Worship”

Most of us, if being honest, will admit that we have an internal conversation or dialogue taking place within our minds on a regular basis. Perhaps an easier way to put this is to say that most of us talk to ourselves regularly. As we approach Psalm 42 this week, we see that the writer here gives us guidance on not only how to talk to ourselves, but how to preach to and confront ourselves when needed, and also where our ultimate hope lies within it all. We see emotion pour forth from this Psalm in a way that we can all understand. The writer fluctuates back and forth through spells of dark and depressing thoughts to statements of reminding himself of the need to reset his hope in the God of his salvation. We as people understand these cycles of spiritual highs and lows. As born-again believers in Christ, we cling to our past deliverance in Christ. We set our eyes on things above and the future grace of heaven. But, we are still living in the days that God has numbered, and purposed, and often some of these days bring challenges that are very hard - confusing - defeating - disturbing - and our souls wrestle. You see, we live in this space between past deliverance and future eternal grace, praise God - but, with regular need for present rescue. There will be seasons of lamenting and moments in our walks in which our souls are cast down, in despair, disturbed, and in turmoil. Notice that Psalm 42 does not end with the psalmist being delivered from his circumstances. We are not told that his situation has changed in any way. He still struggled and had questions all the way to the end of the Psalm. What we learn is that even when circumstances persist, ultimately our greatest need is God's presence. We delight in his presence, we delight in the truth of His Word. This helps us to fight dark, consuming, oppressive things that make our soul despondent. This is why we must be committed to be in God's word regularly. We must preach it to ourselves. We must be committed to self-confrontation when we see ourselves, our sin, our troubles, our worries, our sadness, up against the truth of God's word; when we see our lives compared to the glory, perfection, and righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is in Christ, and Christ alone, that our hope lies. The living God hydrates our souls and there is no substitute.

Scripture - Psalm 42 - “Why Are You Cast Down, O My Soul?”

As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul 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 the day long, “Where is your God?” 4 These things I remember, as I pour out my soul: how I would go with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of praise, a multitude keeping festival. 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God. 6 My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. 7 Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. 8 By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. 9 I say to God, my rock: “Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?” 10 As with a deadly wound in my bones, my adversaries taunt me, while they say to me all the day long, “Where is your God?” 11 Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

2 Kings 18:9-19:37; Psalm 1, [Psalm 42](#); Psalm 46; Romans 8:31-39;

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions..

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

We live in the space between past deliverance and future eternal grace, with need for present rescue. Sometimes the circumstances are so difficult that we feel as if we are drowning in our current distress. This is where the Psalmist finds himself in Psalm 42.

Spiritual thirst can only be quenched by the living God (vs 1). When you think of this deer in verse 1, this is not a peaceful painting of a deer drinking water by a beautiful stream. No! That is not the image. The deer is likely pursued by a predator or maybe there is a severe drought. So, he is panting - parched! He is looking for any puddle or bit of water he can find to quench his thirst. If you are panting and parched, dehydrated, your mouth is dry, burning - your lips are cracked - it is difficult to swallow and uncomfortable to speak. In the same way, the psalmist says his soul pants for God. The soul is parched, dehydrated, dry, burning, cracked - finds circumstances difficult to swallow and it is hard to speak positive thoughts and emotions. There is desperation here.

There is no substitute for personally being before the living God in solitude, deep prayer, soaking in His Word, listening to Him - hydrating your soul. You have to fight for that time, schedule it, get up early for it, move things on your calendar and prioritize it. (vs. 2)

Verse three says, "my tears have been my food day and night." The tears indicate the grief that is felt here over the distance between him and God. Then, there are people issuing discouragement, "Where is your God?" He is being taunted that God is seemingly not coming to his rescue. Just as the deer earlier may have been pursued by a predator, the psalmist is pursued by adversaries that taunt him.

In verse four he is remembering joyful times of worship that are so distant right now. If you are in a place like that, please tell someone. Ask for help. Don't stay there. Don't "fake it till you make it." That is horrible advice. You can't pretend to be something that you are not and think that you will eventually achieve it. Your soul pants for the living God and you can't fake that. Your circumstances might not change right away, if ever, but remember that your soul is longing for God, not just deliverance from circumstances.

In verse five we see the self-talk of preaching God's truth to ourselves. A depressed spirit is often restless. You are worn out, weary, but cannot sleep well. That kind of restlessness and hiding from the next day is not shelter and refuge. It is misery. The soul is disturbed, in despair, turmoil - the KJV uses the term "disquieted" within me.

But, praise God for the second half of verse 5, "Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him, For the help of His presence." The psalmist is preaching to his soul that he will again praise God. He demands his soul for an answer! He basically says, "Hey soul....hey self....You need to get it together! There is a valid reason for hope!"

Key Thoughts

In verse six the Psalmist acknowledges to God that his soul is in fact in despair. He gives us these images of peaks of Hermon and Mount Mizar, in a sense saying, God I will remember you in the high and low places.

Verse seven gives a description of how the Psalmist is feeling in the term "Deep Calls to Deep". Often the depth of external circumstance collides with the depth of internal anguish.

Verse eight goes on to say that the Lord commands His lovingkindness (steadfast love) in the daytime and His song presides over the night. The psalmist finds himself in a place that is so deep and so dark that it calls out for the depths of God. He says, I am in deep! But, God, your depths are the only answer. I am in depths that (notice this) are under your waterfalls, your breakers, and your waves.

"Nothing happens on earth that doesn't pass through the filter of God's sovereign plans and His desire to give us the very best, which is Himself." ~ Louie Giglio

These circumstances (waterfalls, breakers, and waves) have sifted through God's sovereign hands and he is in deep. But, there is a sovereign plan and a desire that our attention would be turned to God in the midst of it all, that we would receive the very best, which is God Himself.

The living God of verse 2 is revealed in verse 8 as The Lord (Yahweh). That is the name that is invoked, the God of life! The great, "I AM." His name means "to be" - it is presence. He is present with you at any depth.

Verses nine through ten show how we can walk through the deep anguish of our souls, trusting that God is sovereign and in control, but still able to ask questions of God in the process. It was because he regarded God as his rock that he can issue such an honest question as, "Why have you forgotten me?" I see you are sustaining me, but the battle is still going. I am still being oppressed. God is not surprised or disappointed with questions that come from a heart that trusts Him.

Verse eleven finishes with him preaching to his soul once again, and though his circumstances do not seem to have changed, his perception has, which brings him finding his ultimate hope in God and praising Him for salvation.

"The battle against despondency is a battle to believe the promises of God. And that belief in God's future grace comes by hearing the word. And so preaching to ourselves the word of God is at the heart of the battle." ~ John Piper

All over the Psalms we see references to taking refuge in God. Psalm 46 gives the direct statement that "God is our refuge." The living God is our refuge! There is no shelter like our God. We must remember in seasons where our souls are downcast, that God is with us in the fire, with us as a shelter, with us in the storm, leading us through fierce battles. Where else would we go, but with the Lord of Hosts?

Reflect & Respond

Would you say that you regularly talk to yourself throughout the day? In reality, we probably talk to ourselves more than anyone else talks to us throughout a given day. What we speak to our own souls matters. Is what you are communicating to yourself rooted in truth or not? Do you find that you're regularly preaching the truth of God's word to your own soul, OR do you spend more time justifying and defending your own thoughts, even when they are wrong or sinful? Do you tear yourself down with negativity, OR are you building yourself up in God's truths? Are you preaching your own prideful and sin filled thoughts to yourself OR are you allowing God's word to shape your everyday truth and conversation with your own soul?

Have you ever been through a season spiritually where your soul was parched and desperate for hydration? What did this look like? Who or what did you turn to? How did you eventually quench your spiritual thirst? (Psalm 42:1-4)

When your soul is "downcast" or in "turmoil" do you find that you quickly run to God and His word? Are you quick to turn to Him or do you attempt to handle things on your own? (Psalm 42:5-6)

How do you typically handle the seasons when "deep calls to deep" and you feel as if you are under the breakers and waves of the Lord? What questions do you ask of God? Do you ask questions of God? Are you more tempted to trust God or blame God in these moments? (Psalm 42:7-10)

What would increase your trust in God, even when your soul is cast down and you are walking through the depths of a hard season? What can you do to regularly maintain hope in the God of your salvation and to trust Him as a place of refuge in your life, regardless of your circumstances? (Psalm 42:5 & 11)

We live in a prideful, selfish, and sinfilled culture that regularly tells us we need to be our own saviors when we find ourselves in seasons of turmoil, despair, and hardship. We hear things such as "pull yourself up by your bootstraps", "stand up on your own two feet", "dig deep", or "you can do this if you just look within yourself". This is not at all what we find in the Psalms. The Psalms point us always to God as a place of hope, our refuge, our strong tower, our strength, and our fortress, not to ourselves. We sang the song "Lord of Hosts (Psalm 46)" by Shane and Shane at the end of service. Take the time this week to listen to this song (see link below) in worship, but also what Old Testament account is most believed to have inspired Psalm 46. As you listen and worship, remember that your hope lies in the Lord of Hosts, in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y2y1E7_Rqmo

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We know that for some, Psalm 42 and this week's sermon may be sitting very heavy on your heart. We want to encourage you to ask the hard questions of God, to preach His word to your own soul, and to ultimately rejoice in the hope of Jesus and His salvation. We also know that this is sometimes easier said than done and that sometimes we need others to do this with. If you have been walking through a hard season of turmoil, despair, confusion, or despondence, and need additional help, support, guidance, encouragement, accountability, or counsel, please know that our pastors, elders, and staff are here to walk with you, encourage you, and point you to the hope of Christ and His word. As we all walk through the fires, storms, and battles of life, let's pursue the refuge and the strength of the Lord together. Again, we as pastors, elders, and staff are here for you if you need to talk. Please do not hesitate to reach out.

