



Psalm 42: Finding Peace and Hope in Troubled Times Now

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Psalm 42 begins a new section that contain psalms that were written by individuals other than David. In this case, the introduction states that the author may have been a son, or sons, of Korah. Even though the author may not be David, the psalms are still inspired, and the message is still very relevant today.

A good example of how current the writings of these psalms are can be seen In the first two verses of Psalm 42, “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?” Nothing better pictures a person’s need for God than the word “thirst”. When a person is busy working, he, or she, often ignore such things as time, or lunch, or appointments. But, once that person realizes that he/she is thirsty, then that need will not go away until it has been satisfied. The process of becoming thirsty may be gradual, and the person may not realize that it is happening; but once it is there, it must be faced.

A person’s spiritual need for Jesus Christ often works the same way. For a long time, everything seems to be going just right in life. Immediate goals are established and met. It may be a college education and a job. It may be a family, a trip, belonging to that special organization, the respect of peers, etc. God, and Jesus Christ, are just passing thoughts.



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However, as time goes on, that person begins to feel some kind of “lack” that just won’t go away. Questions begin to pop up.

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“I don’t know what I want to do with my life”.

These are all indications of spiritual thirst. When that time arrives, the only answer to satisfy that demand is to turn to Jesus Christ and the Good News that there IS forgiveness, there IS the promise of eternal life, and there is purpose and meaning to life. “As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God”. The psalmist’s words were true then and they are true now.

Verses 3-4 indicate a man dealing with deep distress. From the context, the Psalmist may have been in one of the groups that were taken into exile into Babylon. “My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all day long, “Where is your God?” 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.”

It is so easy to take something for granted until it is gone. For centuries, the Temple of God was located in Jerusalem. Everyday, people could look and see the physical proof that God’s presence was with them. Yet, the people quickly forgot the honor that God had bestowed upon them, and turned to idolatry and sin. God repeatedly warned them through the prophets, but the nation had ignored those words. At the very end, they clamored at the doors to the Temple for God to save them, but it was too late. If only they had listened and obeyed.

In spite of his grief, the Psalmist was still a man that had a strong faith. “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.” It is easy to see the inner conflict that he was feeling. In Romans, Paul described his own inner struggle between the earthly name and the spiritual nature.

When any Christian faces a crisis of any sort, the conflict between the two natures become apparent. On one side is despair and questioning of why this is happening while on the other side is faith and knowledge that God is in control. In the case of Israel and Judah, they brought God's judgment down upon themselves.

The same can happen to an individual Christian that strays, or just loses his/her commitment. "It's just not important anymore." But that won't do. There is no "time out" or "king's x" in serving the Lord. There is no retirement or "I've already done my part" in this life. A person serves God or sin, and there will be a reckoning one day.

In verses 9-10, the Psalmist wrote, "I will say to God my rock, "Why have You forgotten me?"

Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, while they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" In troubled times, it may seem that God has forgotten. "Where are you?", "Why me?"

Then, in the final two verses of the psalm, he wrote, "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." Again, it seems like the writer is arguing with himself. The worldly side questions the trials of life and wants to place the blame at the feet of God, but the spiritual nature helps him see that God is the ONLY answer.



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It is significant that in that inner argument, the spiritual nature of the writer overcomes the doubts. What better lesson for us today! Trials and tragedy will happen because they are part of life. The worldly side will always fight against the authority and [*help of God*](#) but, when that happens, the voice of faith and love also speak up - "Trust in God, He will be your rock and salvation." With the voice of faith speaking in our hearts, we may be wounded at times; but we will never be defeated.

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