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"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God." Psalm 42:1

Main Idea: I am like a thirsty deer searching and then find its much-needed water, that is how my soul longs for you. I earnestly seek your presence, my living Lord. I desperately want to meet with you. I am in great distress and have nothing but my tears for substance. Evil people torment me and make fun of me that I love and honor you. They see my troubles and point out that you are not real or have abandoned me. Yet, I pour out my all to you. I remember when things were good when you used me powerfully, but now I have nothing but troubles. I felt your protection and guidance, your presence infused me, now I feel I am alone, abandoned by you. Why am I depressed and feel vacant? Why do I feel you have left me to rot? I know to put my home in you to trust you with all my heart and strength, and I have done so. And, no matter how I feel, I will praise you and have faith in you! For you are my Savior and LORD! I feel like life has over swept me into the deep, and I am drowning; yet, you are the ocean that has me. You are like a powerful tall waterfall that has swept me aside. But I know you are alive is real and true. I will rejoice in you no matter what. For you are my firm foundation for life and all that there could be. Yet, I still feel you have forgotten me or you have your favorites and I am not one, or important enough to care. I am depressed, my energy is gone, and I am in terrible pain. My enemies tease and bully me, Yet, my home is with you no matter what! I will praise you will, all that I am even with all my pain and loss. You are my Savior and LORD!

Contexts and Background:

The Psalter is divided up into five Books that echo the Pentateuch: Book 1: Psalms 1-41, personal and beginnings; Book 2: 42-72, devotional and deliverance; Book 3: 73-89, liturgical and sanctuary; Book 4: 90-106, God's Reign and man's unrest; and Book 5: 107-150, Word of God and God's faithfulness. Psalm 42 starts Book 2, most of which are composed by the Sons of Korah. Psalm 42 and 43 are basically one Psalm divided in two as demonstrated by verses 42:5, 9, 11; 43:2-3, 5. This is a song of lament to draw people back to God's house that became a song of hope during the exile. For whatever reason, the psalmist is cut off from the Temple and his home and is deeply grieved as he feels distant from God and cries out and looks to Him as his only hope. Written by a priest who was exiled away from the Temple either by the Aram or Assyria or Babylon, while besieged by taunting abductors.

This Psalm showcases Jesus' final hours Matthew 26: 17- 46, *My soul is exceedingly sorrowful*. Jesus is so deeply grieved and draws on the lament language (Psalm 42:5-11; 43:5; 142:3-6; 143:3-4; Jonah 4:9; Matt. 27:46).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Sons of Korah*. The Kohathites were one of the main Levitical families in charge of the Tabernacle, then the Temple, called the "Gatekeepers" or "porters" and they made sure everything ran as it should (Num. 26:58; Lev. 2:5; 1 Chron. 9:17-19; 20:19; 24-26; Psalm 42; 44-49; 84-85, 87-88).

Verses 1-5: The Psalmist experiences a great spiritual drought even despair and depression being away from the Temple and unable to worship God as he knew (Jer. 14"1-6; Joel 1:20).

- *Deer pants*. A Jewish metaphor of a doe searching for water, then when they find it they are eager to drink. This is a powerful image of deep desire and need for God's presence and to commune with Him. Are we eager for our times with God?
- *Streams of water*. A metaphor for life and nourishment and a symbol for God's presence and "Divine Activity" (Isa. 12:3; Jer. 2:13; Ezek. 47:1-9; Zech. 14:8; John 4:1-26; 7:37-39; 8:24; 11:50-51; 19:19).
- *Soul pants*. Meaning intense yearning. As life for one's self as a living being made by Divine being given a Divine essence to humanity, "God's breath." Also, refers to consciences sometimes referred to as their spirit and their real self, created by God and bears His image, whereas our physical body is a temporary holding shell. The soul is metaphysical and not seen in the material world, which is what is in need of

redemption (Gen. 2: 7, 17-23; 1 Sam. 1:15; 1 Kings 19:4; Psalm 31:9; 42:4; Rom. 5:12; 1 Cor. 15:35-49; Phil. 3:20; Col. 3:4).

- *Soul thirsts*. To desire the true Truths of our Lord and grow in our sanctification. In order to quench that thirst, we must be willing to persevere and fight the fight of faith (Psalm 43:5).
- *Living God*. Meaning the fountain of Life. The contrast is the gods of the day, which were made by men out of wood or bronze that took peoples worship and adoration, while the One True Real God is living, not man-made, rather eternal and powerful, good and loving. Also, means that God is our source of happiness, not material things or desires.
- *Meet with / appear before God*. The psalmist is lonely for God because he is away from the Temple. Set before Christ when the duty of the law and the presenting of sacrifices made one feel distant when away from the Temple. Now, because of Christ, we have His redemptive work inside of us.
- *Where is your God?* The taunts of evil men can be harsh, only if we let them. If we see them as worthless words from meaningless people they will have little effect.
- *Things I remember*. The psalmist was suffering from depression and recalls the good he once had. He misses participating in worship singing the songs of Ascent (Psalm 120-134).
- *Protection*. This gives us the image of a God who cares for our wellbeing and thus leads and protects us. We are to seek His protection as we also seek to be wise and not sin. We fail when we do nothing or act in sin. When we do the things of God, we enjoy contentment; when we do not, we will be discouraged and depressed (Duet. 33:29; Psalm 5:8-12; 18:1-3; 23; 31:1-8; Prov. 30:5).
- *Mighty One*. A name for God, "to be strong" (Gen. 49:24; Deut. 10:17; Psa. 132:2, 5; Isa. 1:24, 49:26, 60:1.)
- *Festive throng / processions*. This is the procession led by the priests, similar in a Liturgical church, where the singers, musicians and all those involved in the service come into the door of the Temple to lead others to worship God (Psalm 68:24; 118:27).
- *My soul... downcast / cast down / troubled*. The mind and body are overwhelmed by one's situation. Meaning stirred up by suffering, both physical and or mental. The psalmist seeks God to bring him out of depression. He was once of conviction now of uncertainty. So, let us erase those fears, for which we have no need! This is a refrain here in the poetry (Psalm 6:3; 42:11; 42: 6, 11; 43:5; John 12:27; 14:1-4; 2 Cor. 5:21).
- *Hope in God*. Meaning commitment; our faith does not hesitate because we are trusting in and following Christ.

Verses 6-11: Even though the psalmist's situation has not changed, he switches his focus from the trouble to the Healer of souls, God.

- *I will remember*. Faith out reasons fear and hope out argues sorrow. The psalmist will not let his distance away or his depression keeps him from communion with God. This is his only way out of the barricade of the darkness (Psalm 77).
- *Jordan*. An essential river in Israel and an image of spiritual nourishment. Where Jesus did a lot of his ministry and was baptized at.
- *Hermon*. Is the highest peak of a small mountain range on the border between Lebanon and Syria, that forms the north border of ancient Israel. It is 9,000 feet high, its southern slope goes into the Golan Heights (Jos. 11:17).

- *Mount Mizar*. This means little hill and is an unknown location, perhaps one of the foothills of Mt. Hermon. Or this means that Mt. Hermon is nothing compared to God's greatness (Psalm 43:3; 68:15).
- *Deep calls to deep*. Like the image of Jonah traveling in the deep ocean in a whale, the water is overwhelming, thus we must have something even larger and more profound to rescue us. God is bigger than our storms, His shelter stronger than our fears and anxiety. Deep problems require a deep faith (Psalm 107:25).
- *Roar of your waterfalls*. An image of trouble often used for depression. God's touch can and will overpower the fortifications of distress and depression (Psalm 18:4; 32:6; 46:2-3; 69:1-2; 114:3).
- *LORD directs*. When we fear God, we will fear nothing else! Allow God to search out the reasons and causes of our sorrows and depression, seek His council through His Word. Look to all He has done from life to redemption to blessings, even when we can see them well.
- *His steadfast / love*. Refers to the kindness of God's love, loving kindness, that He has for those are His children or at this time in covenant with Him. We are to realize His Holiness and Sovereignty over our lives and will to fully realize and take His promises (1 Cor. 13).
- *God of my life*. "El Chaiyai" a name for God, as He is the source of all life. He gives life, takes life (including eternal life), because it is His. So, have you realized where you belong?
- *God my Rock*. "El Sali," another Name of God, "my defender," my stronghold, and my protection from all attacks. Thus, there is no need for us to retaliate a wrong for a wrong or seek payback or revenge, He is our defender!
- *Forgotten me?* We may feel God has forgotten us, but He feels our grief and despair, and He will intervene in His perfect timing, even if it is in eternity.
- *Oppressed*. Normally referring to orphans and widows who had no kinship were on their own; there was no protection. They were the most helpless and oppressed of all people; they had no one. Here is the oppression we do to ourselves.
- *Foes taunt me*. We are to listen to God, not to fools and naysayers!
- *I will yet praise him*. Our ultimate Hope is in God, not our desires or situation. Praise Him no matter what. We must come to the place we wholeheartedly trust and rely on Him and even praise Him in the midst of our calamity.

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

When pain has your address, and you are exhausted to the point of collapse and can't go on further. Do not lose heart or the will to persevere in the faith. Know that you are still in God's hands! Ask yourself what I did to cause it, what can I do to prevent and resolve this. And remember, reach out with a passion to Christ.

Look at where you are at and in prayer and in the Word, seek where do you need to be in faith and call. Then, make the adjustments in your life to align your life up to the life you are called to. Give your mindset and will over to God's will. Do not allow the fears and circumstance of life strangle you away from you are meant to be. Look at where you are and where you need to be and what are the godly adjustment you need to make? How will it glorify God and adhere to His calling and precepts? Do what He wants you to do, not what the world wants, or your faulty desires wants. If you are thinking this will cost me too much or be too hard or never thought in those ways before, have no fear, if it is His will and found in His Word, you will be in no better place. Make the step in faith with your trust in our Lord and walk in that direction. This is all about making faith tangible and mobile. Knowing that God took us through the storms of life before, gives us the confidence of faith to know that He will do so again!

Despair will come upon us when we look upon God as far away. We will only see our plight and pain and never see or be able to take hold of the help that God may bring. We need to feel thirsty like the parched deer and eagerly come to God with gratitude and faith. As the deer searches for its substance, we do not need to look, He is always with us, His Word is at our grasp. We must seek Him first and foremost, not allow life's trivialities and setbacks take us away from what He has for us. For when we are in despair, all we will see is the despair, we must look up at God not the issues bring us the pain. Allow His touch to reach deep within us, allow His pull to bring us out. Look at all He has done and have the faith to know what He can do for you! Do not listen to your own discouraging talk or from others, think positive and be proactive.

Christian Life Principle: Dealing with discouragement can be tough. The key is to look to God, and not allow our thinking to overwhelm us with negativity. Because that will never bring us help or get us out of it. Rather, a good attitude and an unwavering faith are our only out from dark times. Do not feed on your feelings; rather, feed on the Word of God.

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions, see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. Are we eager for our times with God?
2. Have you ever felt that God has forgotten you? What does it mean that He feels our grief and despair, and He will intervene in His perfect timing?
3. What does it mean to you that God who cares for our wellbeing?
4. What do you need to do when depression starts to control you?
5. In order to quench that thirst of God's presence, we must be willing to do what?
6. If God is our source of true happiness and not material things or desires, why do most of us are fixated on stuff?
7. The taunts of evil men can be harsh if we let them. How can we better see them as worthless words from meaningless people?
8. How can we better enjoy the things of God with our contentment? How will this help us not be discouraged and depressed?
9. How does faith out reason fear and hope out argue sorrow?
10. God is bigger than our storms, His shelter stronger than our fears and anxiety. So how and why do deep problems require a deep faith?
11. How can God's touch overpower the fortifications of distress and depression?
12. What can you do to stop feeding your feelings and embrace a more active determined faith?