



Psalm 42

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To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of the Sons of Korah.

- 1 As the deer pants for the water brooks,
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 continually say to me,
“Where is your God?”
- 4 When I remember these things,
I pour out my soul within me.
For I used to go with the multitude;
I went with them to the house of God,
With the voice of joy and praise,
With a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.
- 5 Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God, for I shall yet praise Him
For the help of His countenance.
- 6 O my God, my soul is cast down within me;
Therefore I will remember You from the land of the Jordan,
And from the heights of Hermon,
From the Hill Mizar.
- 7 Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls;
All Your waves and billows have gone over me.
- 8 The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime,
And in the night His song shall be with me—
A prayer to the God of my life.
- 9 I will 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 breaking of my bones,
My enemies reproach me,
While they say to me all day long,
“Where is your God?”
- 11 Why are you cast down, O my soul?
And why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God;
For I shall yet praise Him,
The help of my countenance and my God.

Main idea: God’s face is the only help for the believer’s face when we long for Him and His presence.

Introduction: How badly do you miss your opportunities to meet with God, and what is it that you miss, when you are missing them?

1. Missing God Himself, v1–3

- Hunger and thirst as marks of spiritual health. We are satisfied with Him, not with our experience of Him thus far.
- The longer we go, the harder it should become. “When,” (v2b)
- The “face” of God (v2b) comes literally true in Jesus Christ, and should be our great longing (cf. Ac 3:20–21, 1Thess 1:10; 2Cor 4:6).
- The presence of God means much to us, because the honor of God is at stake in it, v3

2. The Cure for Soul-Trouble, v4–11

- A soul that is never troubled in this world is not functioning like that of a Christian, v4, 9 (cf. Jn 12:27, Ps 22:1, Mt 27:36, Mk 15:34)
- A soul that does not have an answer for its trouble is not functioning like that of a Christian, v5
- God’s face (v5d) is the help for the believer’s face (v11e)
- “Hoping” in God (v5c) is not just an emotion, but an action (v6–10): prayer (v6–7, 9) and meditation upon God’s Word (v5, 8, 11)
 - Don’t just talk to your soul (which can’t do anything about itself). Talk to God (Who can do something about it) about your soul.
 - Reminding yourself of God (v6b, 5c, 11c) is His means of giving you the favor of His face.
 - We are responsible for right feelings (v5a, 11a), but we are unable to produce them from ourselves.
 - God, however, is abundantly capable. This takes the difficulties of v6b–7b and uses them to fuel the confidence of v8. It is the mountain-and-river-making, almighty God Who has made Himself our covenant God (Yahweh) Who commands His covenant love day (v8a) and night (v8b). He’s already sustaining your life in that love, even while you pray (v8c). It is a theological and historical fact that He has determined in this love to exercise His power to bring us at last to praise Him forever (v5c, 11d).

Conclusion: Our greatest trouble is always when we miss God Himself (or, perhaps, when we don’t miss God Himself the way that we should miss God Himself). But God Himself is the solution to our trouble, and He gives us prayer and His Word by which to look to Him for help.

(The following is a machine-generated transcription. Please be aware of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording referenced above)

Psalms 42. These are God's words to the chief musician.

The contemplation of the sons of Korra As the deer pants for the waterbrooks. So pants my soul for you. O God. My soul, thirsts for God for the living. God. When shall I come and appear before God my tears have been my food day and night While they continually say to me.

Where is your God? When I remember these things. I pour out my soul within me for, I used to go with the multitude. I went with them to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise with a multitude that kept a pilgrim. Feast, Why are you cast down?

Oh my soul. Why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God for I shall yet. Praise him for the help of his countenance. Oh my god. My soul is cast down within me. Therefore, I will remember you from the land of the Jordan. And from the heights of Hermon from the hill Mitzar, deep calls unto deep at the noise of your waterfalls, all your waves and billows have gone over me.

You always will command his loving kindness in the daytime. And in the night, his songs shall be with me a prayer to the God of my life. 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 with a breaking of my bones.

My enemies reproach me while they say to me all day long. Where is your God? Why are you cast down on my soul? And why are you disquieted within me Hope in God for I shall yet. Praise him. The help of my countenance, and my God, So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent word.

One of the things that quickly faces us in. This Psalm is the intensity with which the psalmist and we actually don't know who that is. It would be more literal in the superscript to say to the chief musician. A contemplation for the sons of Korra and actually most faithful Bible expositors up until the last hundred years or so.

And I don't really consult with that many from the last hundred years or so believed, that it was actually a Psalm of David, there's several of these that are for the sons of Korra and the preposition means for It, can mean with respect to or concerning But there's one later that is almost identical and it's superscript, except for it includes a Psalm of He-Man the Ezrahite in between, to the chief musician and mascal for the sons of Korra.

So, Most most faithful expositors think it's Davidic. We don't need to know necessarily if it's David or this He-Man, or one of the sons of Korra in order to be convicted by the greatness of the thirst in verses 1 and 2 as the deer pants for the water brooks.

You know, dear are not camel. They cannot go a long time without drinking So pants. My soul for you. O God. My soul, thirsts for God for the living God. And That brings up the question. How badly Do you miss your opportunities to meet with God, If you go a while without really knowing and dwelling upon the presence of God and note, this isn't just public worship.

Although he remembers public worship in verse 4 and that intensifies, the longing and the thirsting in verses 1 and 2 and the grief. In in verse 3, it's, it's got himself that he misses If you if you go a bunch of your day without without knowing the presence of God, the favor of God towards you in in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

Or in this almost's case in the, in the ways, by which the Lord was making himself known to to his Old Testament. People. If if you go a while, Do you miss it? Do you get thirsty. If you go without water for a while you get thirsty, If I go without water for a while I get thirsty, I get tired, I get a headache.

I have to stay hydrated If you go without God for a while do you get thirsty for him And when you miss those opportunities, you know, something interrupts or preempts and you miss your private worship in the morning or you're unable to have family worship at the time that you usually have it.

And as has to be put back further, Not only do you miss it but is it him that you're missing in it or are our times with him in his word and in prayer, so routine to us that we're missing the reading or missing the instruction or were or were missing unburdening ourselves?

Not that any of those things are wrong. Those are means by which he meets with us, But the greatness of whether it's the the personal worship or the family worshiper, but the public worship is God himself and meeting with him himself and having renewed our experience of his favor which is expressed in the Psalm in terms of his face.

You remember that, especially twice the, the blessing that God puts on his people and numbers chapter six, which we heard as a Benediction, just this last Lord's Day mentions, the face of God, the smile of God, the favor of God by using his the language of his face. You know, this is something that some people who start to assimilate reformed doctrine or pieces of reformed doctrine about worship can fall into, We know all the components and we know you what God often uses those components for and we forget that God himself is the point of the worship.

And that's so that's so sad. And one of the ways that we can discover that we are missing him in the worship is if we fail to miss him when we don't worship, If you're not missing him when you don't worship, That may mean that you're not knowing him and enjoying him in the worship.

Sorry we're using the word missing couple of different ways. So in this Psalm you have and we already kind of the introduction bled into the first main point, the first three verses that it is. God himself that the Psalmist is missing and then this is the great trouble of his soul and then verses four through 11.

The cure for soul trouble is God himself, and will will hear a little bit there. What we are to do about that in verses 4 through 11. So first then missing God himself hunger and thirst are marks of of spiritual health. Not only do we have that in verses one and two, but we even prayed from that, Beatitude asking the Lord to fulfill it to us.

That blessed, is he who hungers? And thirsts, after righteousness, for he will be filled The the healthy believer in this life is not marked by being satisfied with his experiences of God thus far. He finds God himself satisfying but he feels himself not to have delighted in and loved and enjoyed God yet like he ought to.

So we find God satisfying but our being satisfied by him actually makes us long for more experience of him long for that experience of him that we were created for and especially redeemed for that. We will have in glory. There's there's this forward looking desire for for the face of God and the longer we go.

Without experiencing him the longer, we go without him the harder. It should. It should become for the believer. It should be alarming to us, if our not spending time with God, actually results in our feeling more and more, okay? Without spending time with God, Notice the word win. When, shall I come and appear before God?

The the idea in the end of verse 2, there is that it's the length of time that he hasn't been able to come before God's face. And there's a translation question there, when, shall I come before the face of God? And that's actually it's the same exact letters in the Hebrew different vowel points and the bowel points are from hundreds of years after Jesus.

But when you have the Greek translation of the Old Testament from several hundred years before Jesus that one translated this particular verb in a way that would translate into English. When shall I come before the face of God He's longing not for him to appear before God so much as for God to show his face as it were to shine his face upon him.

But this when language it tells us something about how a healthy believing soul functions that when you're unhealthy and you go a long time between private worships or family, worships or public, worships are just the the knowledge and appreciation of God's presence to you in in your day-to-day. When you're unhealthy, you become more and more.

Okay, without it. Sadly that's something that happened in a lot of the church in in 2020 and that's that should be alarming to us and make us to cry out to God, to restore health, and spiritual life, to his church that going without worship would would make us long more for him.

What a marvelous thing about this wind, shall? I come to the face of God or when shall I come and see the face of God and then in in verse 5 that we want the help of his face, his countenance and that and then the play on words between that and verse 11 that the help of our face is in verse 11.

The help of our face is God himself and then you take verse 5 with that. It's it's his face that helps us. All of this is as wonderful when you think about number six, but then you get into the New Testament and the invisible. God actually makes a face for himself and we know that we are going to see the face of him who is God.

Now he had to take humanity upon, he had to become a man in order to have a face but the Bible still says that we're bought with the blood of God, right? He had to become a man in order to have blood. He's still one divine person with those two complete and distinct natures.

So we actually are going to see the face of God, the Son, the second person of the Trinity because he made a face for himself and he will smile upon us. And we will see all of the love and favor and fellowship of the Triune God in the face of Jesus Christ and desiring to see his face is something that the Holy Spirit produces in us when he removes the veil from our hearts Second Corinthians 4-6 week.

Quoted often that he is the one who makes the light of the knowledge of the glory of God to shine in our hearts, in the face of Jesus Christ. This is one of the reasons why it was so alarming to me and my former denomination, when we would be examining candidates for the ministry and they would take an exception to the larger catechism on pictures of Jesus.

And they would say, well, it's instructive or, or, you know, it's not really God because it's as human nature, But he's a divine person, You know, it's an early church, heresy to divide him into two persons. But even more than that, His face is all of the face of God that we will ever see.

And Psalms like, Psalm 42 are making us long for the return of Jesus Christ. This is something that belongs to the essence of the Christian heart and the Christian mind is to want the return of Jesus to see his face. And to not accept substitutes for the face that God has taken for himself that that we will look upon.

And so recently, even a couple of times in in our own preaching and teaching in Acts three versus 20 and 21. And just this past Lord's Day morning, sermon and the expectation, the desire that Jesus whom heaven must receive for a little while would return. And that we're eager to to see everyone who God is, saving come to repentance and faith, because then Jesus will return.

Then the, how long question from Revelation 6. And the fifth seal will be, will be fulfilled. And the number of the brethren will be completed And then first Thessalonians 1:10 and how one of the things that God had done in the New Testament believers that. So encouraged the Apostle that the Holy Spirit had actually was actually doing this.

Work in them is that they were expecting and desiring the return of Jesus Christ. I have run into in among people who call themselves reformed, especially who identify themselves as postmillennial or reconstructionist. Not all post-millennialists are like this but they will mock this excitement for and eagerness for the return of Jesus.

And they'll say well, that just, you know, that that's just a kind of this fairy tale expectation, that Christians use to distract themselves from being obedient to the here and now, But it's the face of Jesus and it's the love of God. Who has the face of Jesus that motivates all true Christian, obedience and activity.

And we have an Acts 3 and we have in first Thessalonians 1 and we have so many other places where wanting to see him wanting his return. Eagerness for that day is at the heart of the way, believers, think, and feel. And to an extent, the longer we go without seeing his actual face.

The more we should desire the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we miss God, himself and his worship. And then in the last last part of this section, verse 3, my tears have been my food day and night and he's gonna comfort himself about the loving. Kindness of God, being commanded to him day and night in verse 8.

But my fears have been my tears. Have been my food day and night, while they continually say to me, where is your God? And you have that that repeated while they verse 10, while they say to me all day long, where is your God? And that taunt is kind of like, if God loves you so much, then why doesn't he take better care of you?

Why aren't your circumstances better than they are? Satan did this to the Lord? Jesus twice? Didn't he? First in his temptation, in the wilderness? If you are the Son of God, tell these tends to become bread. Yeah, where is your father? Now, Look at how hungry you are out here in the wilderness.

And perhaps Psalm 42 was one of those portions of every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, that our Lord was enjoying and, and not was able to defeat that temptation and, and be righteous in the face of it. But they also said his cross, didn't they let God save him if he delights in him?

Well, one of the reasons why we want the presence of God and we want the enjoyment of God is, He has invested His honor in in blessing us and he himself is his greatest blessing It bothers us. When others think that being a Christian is not all its cracked up to me and it should bother us because they are insulting the goodness of our God And that's what's happening in verse 3, one of the main reasons why his not not being able to see the favor of God and enjoy the presence of God in his life.

Bothers him so much. Is that God is beginning insulted by others for for his own personal circumstances and grief. The honor of God is is the great and primary thing for us. We want him to be glorified And since he has decided to glorify himself by making us know Him and have this relationship with him.

Then we want him to get that part of His glory. It's It's not purely selfish or self-interested to want to enjoy the presence of God. It also magnifies him when when he delivers his people out of their troubles and he brings us into the enjoyment of His presence. So the Psalmist is missing.

God himself in verses 1 through 3 and one of the things are the main thing that we find in verses 4 through 11. Then is that the cure for this great? Troubling of his soul is the God. Whom he is missing verse 4 is extremely it, intensifies, the pain.

And the difficulty that we hear about in the first three verses, when I remember these things, I pour out my soul within me for, I used to go with the multitude. I went with them to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.

And then verse 9, I will say to God my rock. Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning? Grieving? Because of the oppression of the enemy And it's important to note that for both of these statements, the verse 4 statement and the verse 9 statement we hear, Jesus say similar things and that's very liberating because we're going to be addressing our own souls or learning from verse 5 and verse 11.

And then again next week, Lord willing at the end of Psalm 43 we're going to be learning to address our own souls. Why are you cast down on my soul? That it's wrong to despair. The and that we are to correct ourselves from God's Word when when we despair.

But here It is right to be troubled, you know, John 12. Verse 27, he says now my soul is troubled and what shall I say? Father deliver me from this hour. No. But for this purpose for, you know, for for this purpose I came into the world. It was for that hour.

And so the soul that has never troubled is never functioning like that of a Christian because In this world, there is trouble and our souls ought to be troubled. And we could take other examples of Jesus agonizing or grieving, or being troubled. And then, in verse 9, why have you forgotten me?

It almost sounds like a false accusation. But in our experience of God and we cannot say with Jesus in Psalm 22, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Because he will never leave us a sir forsake us. But there are times when he withdraws from us the sense of his fatherly countenance.

There are times when he does things in our lives that are painful. And we have to remember Hebrews chapter 12, that he's doing that, because we're legitimate children And he does whatever is good for us. Whatever is gonna produce the peaceful fruit of righteousness, whatever is going to produce the holiness without which we would not see the Lord.

And so to cry out to him, why are you doing this? Is if if we're expressing to him our neediness and our pain as opposed to questioning his wisdom, There's a difference. Isn't there between asking a question, why? Lord and questioning and parents have learned to tell the difference from our children.

It should be okay for your children to ask a question especially after they have said yes, ma'am or yes sir and and gone. And started at least or even done, whatever was asked of them that that you know, conditions the heart to be submissive and and so forth but it's it's okay to ask questions to want to understand more.

There's a difference between that and when you receive when you receive the command, or when you give you the command to your child immediately, they say why. Well, that's not asking a question that's questioning, And there's a difference in in how we think and respond to God as well.

So I saw that has never troubled in this world is not functioning like the perfect righteous soul of Jesus, functioned and there are things in this world that we ought to be troubled by and grieved by most of all, as we've heard several times, although, that doesn't come out so much in this.

Psalm but several times most of all troubled by our own remaining sin, If we're not troubled by that, then we are dysfunctional unhealthy at best and should not have good reason to consider ourselves convert it But God's face. And we already looked at that the end of verse 5 and the end of verse 11 is the help for the believer's face.

And so, he says to himself. Why are you cast down? Oh my soul. Why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God for I sell yet, praise Him for the help of his countenance and thankfully that command that he gives himself in verse 5, he goes on to obey immediately under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in verses 6 through 11, which is very helpful for us.

Because it's not it's not terribly helpful to just tell yourself. All right. Self. Hoping God, Let's hope and as if like hope is this emotion that we can manufacture by the force of our. Will it reminds me? And and of a skit Maybe I shouldn't say that because the kids the comedian who did the skit does not always the best.

As I found out said by sad experience, clicking related videos, but he does a skit in which he's a psychologist. And his thing is you just tells you to stop it and the woman comes in and she's afraid of being buried alive in a box and he says, well that's stupid.

Stop it. And anyway, the the idea is that if all this said was hope in God, that would be accurate, but we might be left with the mistake and idea that we just stop being hopeless, self, Okay? Like that's how it works But it's not how it works. He spends the rest of the Psalm praying to God and preaching to himself as he as he is praying to God.

And so even as He breaches to himself, the fact that that preaching is mixed with praying says, I'm hoping that God is going to use his word to stir up, my hope in him. And I hope that God is going to answer my praying by stirring up, my, my hope in him.

Therefore, hoping in God is not just an emotion, it's not just something, we tell ourselves to do, but he's given us means by which He works. So, that praying is an action of hoping in God, And using his word is an action of hoping in God. And so You don't, you know, whatever, let go and let God may rightly mean, and there are some things that it rightly means.

It does not mean do nothing. It is not letting go and letting God to give up praying, It is not letting go and letting God to give up studying His Word and thinking upon his word No letting God or hoping in God means you pray, and you study His word because those are means that He uses.

And if your hope is in him, then you're going to use. The means of the one in whom you hope So. Don't just talk to your soul which can't do anything about itself, talk to God. Who can do something about it about your soul. And so he says, why are you cast down?

Oh, my soul is talking to his soul in in verse 5 and then verse 6. He says, oh my god, my soul is cast down in verse 6. You see the difference? It's not. Don't just talk to yourself because your soul. Can't do anything about itself. But God can do something about the condition of your soul.

Can't he? Yeah this is you know whatever sin. Here's struggling with One of the great mistakes is just to tell yourself, stop it. And why? Oh, my soul. Are you jealous or covetous or proud or slothful or lustful or greedy or hateful or you're right about all those things But you can't undo any of those things.

You're soul. Can't change itself. Tell God. Oh God, my soul is greedy. Oh God, my soul is proud. And so forth. Talk to him. Who can do something about it, and who will do something about it. Reminding yourself about God, is one of the means by which he gives you the favor of his face.

And so says, oh my god, my soul is cast down within me. Therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan and and so forth. We're responsible to have right feelings but we're unable to produce them for ourselves. However, God is perfectly capable And the psalmist. Does this wonderful thing in versus six through eight, where he takes where he is, He's not able right now to attend the public worship.

That's part of the problem in verse 4 and it's because he is at the mouth of the Jordan up in the Hermans, from the height, the phrase, heights of Herman. There in verse 6 is actually a plural of the word Herman because it's talking about kind of a mountain range.

Mitzar means the little one apparently they had in the, in the mountain range of the Herman's, there would be peaks, and one of them was called the little one, but where he was the Jordan was not this. This nice peaceful comparatively river that he was used to in the south up in the mountains where he was right now.

The, the Jordan was swollen with the snow from from the Hermann Heights and it falling in waterfalls and and it was deep and crashing. And And so he turns all of that and he says, those are your waterfalls Deep calls them to deep at the noise noise of your waterfalls.

All your waves and pillows have gone over me. And as he sees the power of God in creation, It's one of the nice things, right? For a Christian who visits mountains or or a raging river, that he's seeing the power of his God and the fact that it's God's power.

That's on display. In those things reminds him that God providence is ruling everything in his life. And so he says Yahweh and for the first time in the song, the only time in the Psalm, He uses the covenant name of God will command his cousin his covenant love And so his the covenant God will command.

His covenant. Love in the daytime. In the night, his song shall be with me a prayer to the God of my life. And there seems to be a sense in verse 8 that he knows he's writing under inspiration of the Holy Spirit. And that the one who is giving him these words to sing is giving him this prayer.

And so, he's got the Almighty. God is the one who has given him something to sing, and to pray to be right there with him alongside those tears. So the tears are the food day and night verse 3, but Yahweh will command His loving kindness in the daytime. And in the night, his song shall be shall be with me.

And so the power of God that He has seen in the creation, reminds him that it is this Almighty God, who has brought him into relationship with himself And that relationship and the purpose of that relationship that we would praise him. Hope in God, verse 5 for I shall yet praise him hope in God verse 11 for I shall yet.

Praise Him. It is a theological and historical fact that God has determined in his covenant, love to bring all of his Almighty power to bear until at last, we are praising Him forever and ever. So our greatest trouble or always to be when we are missing. God himself. But God, Himself is the solution to our trouble.

And He's given us means by which, to seek Him. You know, you're sometimes you say, well, I read my Bible and I pray and I don't get anything out of it. I don't feel this presence. So the temptation is to say, well then I guess I'll read give up reading my Bible and praying, Well, who can give you the presence of God, but God, and if reading his word and praying are, the means by which He gives himself to you, then when you're getting nothing out of it, the actual solution is to lift your heart to Him.

While you do more of it until he gives himself to you, take heaven by violence as as the Lord Jesus describes, it wrestle cling until he gives you the blessing only from him. Can it come? And he's given us means by which to cling to him imagine. So let us with that wonderful part of his word having prepared us come before him tonight in prayer.