

Why Are You Cast Down, O My Soul?

Psalms 42

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THEN: THE TEXT OF PSALMS 42-43

PSALM 42

To the choirmaster. A Maskil of the Sons of Korah.

- 1 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.
 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.

PSALM 43

- 1 Vindicate me, O God, and defend my cause against an ungodly people,
 from the deceitful and unjust man deliver me!
- 2 For You are the God in whom I take refuge; why have You rejected me?
 Why do I go about mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?
- 3 Send out Your light and Your truth; let them lead me;
 let them bring me to Your holy hill and to Your dwelling!
- 4 Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy,
 and I will praise You with the lyre, O God, my God.
- 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.

ALWAYS: THE PRINCIPLES OF PSALMS 42-43

In the mire of difficulty and depression, the greatest comfort is the presence of God. The intense longing of our hearts is satisfied by the glorious person and atoning work of Jesus Christ. In the Gospel, God gives us the greatest gift – Himself.

“The Gospel is not a way to get people to heaven; it is a way to get people to God. It's a way of overcoming every obstacle to everlasting joy in God.”

— John Piper in *God Is the Gospel*

Joy is reclaimed by examining the causes of spiritual depression, embracing the certainties and mysteries of God, and preaching to truth to yourself.

“Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? [The Psalmist's] treatment was this: He starts talking to himself. ‘Why art thou cast down, O my soul?’ he asks. His soul had been depressing him, crushing him. So he stands up and says: ‘Self, listen for moment, I will speak to you.’”

– D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones in *Spiritual Depression*

Jesus is the supreme example of being mocked by His opponents, separated from the worshipping community, and rejected by God. His suffering and consequent victory pave the way for our hope, worship and trust in our heavenly Father.

NOW: THE APPLICATION OF PSALMS 42-43

1. Be honest about how you are feeling – with yourself, with God and with believers.
2. Desire God more than anything.

“To have found God and still to pursue Him is the soul's paradox of love, scorned indeed by the too-easily-satisfied religionist, but justified in happy experience by the children of the burning heart.... Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth. Acute desire must be present, or there will be no manifestation of Christ to His people.”

– A.W. Tozer in *The Pursuit of God*

3. Pray for light in the darkness and truth in the chaos.
4. Prioritize participation in congregational worship gatherings.
5. Broaden the emotional bandwidth of your worship.
6. Deepen your understanding of God's attributes and goals.
7. Look to Jesus as your perfection, your example, your comfort, your encouragement, your way and your destination.

LATER: THE FURTHER STUDY OF PSALMS 42-43

Scripture

Read, study and mediate on Psalm 73 to expand themes from Psalms 42-43.

Use a concordance or an online resource like www.biblegateway.com to do a search on words like joy, delight and desire. In reading the resulting verses, note themes that develop across Scripture when talking about these words.

Books

The Pursuit of God: the Human Thirst for the Divine by A.W. Tozer

The Reason for God: Belief in an Age of Skepticism by Timothy Keller

Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure by D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Interaction

Talk with someone who has gone through a difficult situation and emerged with a strong, richer faith in God. Ask them about their experience and how they view life now.

Talk with someone who was not able to attend congregation worship services for a long period. Ask them how it affected them and why they value gathering as the church.

Talk with someone who is more advanced than you in theology, worship or prayer. Ask them what led to their growth and what advice they could offer.

Media

Sermon Series by Mark Vroegop | www.yourchurch.com

"I Choose to Bless: Suffering, Sovereignty and a Man Named Job"

Veritas Forum | www.veritas.org

Click the "Talks" tab to access over 1000 audio and video messages by some of the nation's leading thinkers, scholars and professors on the truth claims of Christianity regarding philosophy, science, ethics, existence and faith.