

# A Word To The Weary • Psalm 42

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. *Who This Is For*

1. Some mornings you wake up and say "Good morning God!"
2. Other mornings you open your eyes and say "Good God it's morning!"
3. I don't know how YOU woke up today - but today's message is for the latter group!
4. Today's message is a word of encouragement to the weary
5. I realize that in focusing the message on this one audience, I run the risk of losing everyone else
6. Worse, there's the chance that those who woke up cheerful and bright may be brought down a bit by the blue mood expressed in Psalm 42
7. But by the time we're finished, I think we'll all be thankful for the truthfulness of scripture and the frank way it deals honestly with the human condition and the experiences of our lives

### B. *Insurance*

1. You know, the best time to buy insurance is *before* you need it
2. If you call your insurance agent while your house is on fire and try to add fire insurance, there's a good chance you'll be declined
3. If you use your cell phone to call your agent while sitting in a car that has just been wrecked and ask to increase your coverage, it's doubtful it will go through
4. Insurance is only good if you have it **BEFORE** you need it
5. Much of our study of the Word of God is a kind of acquiring *spiritual* insurance
  - a. we read and meditate
  - b. we listen and ponder
  - c. but it isn't till later that we have the opportunity to put in to practice what we have learned
  - d. it might be just an hour later, or it might be months
6. The important thing is that we've been equipped with the knowledge we will later need
7. So is the case with today's sermon
  - a. for those who are struggling and weary, it should be an encouragement
  - b. but for those who are doing well, think of this as acquiring spiritual insurance against the time when you will go through dry times

## II. TEXT

### A. *Set The Scene*

1. It's clear that this psalm was composed by someone who had been banished from the temple
  - a. his troubles were many and deep
  - b. and he had lost his way with God
  - c. to make matters worse, his enemies were taunting him and his faith
  - d. his cry to God has gone unanswered - so he speaks words of encouragement to himself

2. The superscription says that this psalm is . . .

**To the Chief Musician. A Contemplation of the sons of Korah**

3. The word "contemplation" is the Hebrew word "maschil" and means *instruction*
  - a. in other words - this psalm was meant to be used as a teaching device
  - b. it was intended to be precisely what I mentioned - a form of spiritual insurance
  - c. this was something the people were to meditate on and draw insight from
4. The sons of Korah were a worship team comprised of one of the priestly families
5. They were one of the groups of worship leaders David had organized when he designed the temple

**B. Vs. 1-2**

**{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?**

1. The region of Judea is mostly made up of barren rolling hills
  - a. it is a wilderness - almost a desert
  - b. grass is scarce and shepherds have to take their flocks far in search of pasture in that area
  - c. open water sources are very rare
2. Verse 1 presents the picture of a deer that has wandered far from water
  - a. when it gets thirsty, it returns to the springs it has known only to find they are dried up
  - b. so it goes in search of water - but finds none
  - c. now it is desperate - no longer merely thirsty, it is in real *need* of water
  - d. unless it is able to drink soon, it stands in danger of real harm
3. 7 years ago, I took Luke on a backpacking trip in the Sierra
  - a. we picked a hike on a trail I had never been on before
  - b. and it was a pretty tough trail
  - c. we were planning to stay for several days so we had a lot of gear - our packs were heavy
  - d. now - the map showed several water sources along the trail,
    - 1) so we didn't take much water with us
    - 2) we thought we would just drink and fill up our canteens along the way
    - 3) but that was right at the tail end of the drought, and all the springs were dry
  - e. we hiked over 10 miles, up 3000 ft. and went from 7 am till about 3:30 pm on 1 pt. of water each!
  - f. I have to tell you, I now what it means to be really thirsty!
  - g. not just parched and wanting a cold glass of water
  - h. but thirsty to the point of physical danger
    - 1) no moisture in the mouth
    - 2) no more perspiration to cool you off
    - 3) to have your eyes get really dry and when it blink it's painful because it feels like there's sand in your eye
  - i. when we finally got to some water, our bodies literally pulled us to the edge and just lapped it up
4. That is what the psalmist is experiencing here - though spiritually
  - a. something has happened that has seen him separated from the temple
  - b. and now he finds himself in a spiritual wilderness

- c. he is parched and dry
  - d. like the deer he has gone different places and tried various things to find relief, but nothing has helped -
  - e. nothing satisfies his spiritual need
  - f. nothing but God -
  - g. but God is distant and he cannot find his way to Him
5. I think it's safe to say that everyone here this morning who has known the Lord for a while knows from experience what we're reading about here
    - a. you've known dry times
    - b. you've gone through the spiritual wilderness
    - c. you know what it means to believe yet not sense the Lord's presence
    - d. you've panted, and cried out to God -
    - e. but the thirst only gets more keen, and the heavens seem to be made of unyielding brass in their silence
  6. My friends - being right with God doesn't guarantee a carefree, happy-go-lucky existence
    - a. being born again isn't an initiation into a life of uninterrupted prosperity and happiness
    - b. nor is praying the sinner's prayer an inoculation against depression
  7. The path of life that leads over the mountain peaks also descends into the valley and stretches across the trackless wastes of wilderness
  8. Life has its seasons: sometimes it Spring and Summer, sometimes it's Fall and Winter
  9. The psalmist finds himself in the wilderness in the dead of winter
  10. What is he to do?

### **B. Vs. 3-4**

**{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.**

1. To make matters worse, he has enemies who are mocking his trust in God
2. Not only is he *personally* not experiencing the Lord's presence, but his antagonists are poking and prodding him and asking him what good his faith is doing him
3. Now- his only companions are his tears
4. So he thinks of something that might help lift him out of his depression
  - a. he remembers back to the times when things were good
  - b. he reminisces to the glory days of the past when he went to the temple to worship
  - c. he recalls the congregation of those who praised God
5. Sometimes, all we need to do to get out of our spiritual funk is to recall a better time
  - a. when we're blue it's easy to look at life through dark lenses that color everything in a shade of negativism
  - b. we put everything down and become negative
  - c. and sometimes all we need to do is remember a better time when things were good
6. But this didn't work for the psalmist: Look at verse 5 . . .

### **C. V. 5**

**{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.**

1. This verse, repeated in v. 11, is the chorus of the psalm
2. It's a personal rebuke, followed by an encouragement
  - a. we often do this to ourselves
  - b. we make some foolish mistake, and say something like, "Well, that was dumb! Why did I do that?"
  - c. then we say, "I'll never make that mistake again!"
3. The psalmist tried to end his discouragement by remembering a better time
  - a. that had worked in the past, but not now
  - b. so he says, "Hey - why am I still depressed? What's going on?"
4. But then he turns from rebuke to encouragement: "Don't lose your faith in God! You will come through this. God will bring you through into a brighter day."
5. The better times are not all in the past - they lie yet ahead as well - keep the faith - HOPE IN GOD!
6. Then the psalmist tries another route . . .

### **D. Vs. 6-8**

**{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.**

1. Still depressed and weary, he remembers a revelation he once had when he was in the northern boundaries of Israel
2. Though he is now parched and dry, we recalls a time when he was at the headwaters of the Jordan river, up by Mt. Hermon
3. I've been to this area, and I can say that it is rich in crystal clear water that literally gushed out of the ground
  - a. as the snow on the top of Mt. Hermon melts, it filters through the soils and bedrock into cavernous underground rivers
  - b. to the south, the land falls away, and these rivers stream out of the ground in several places to form the headwaters of the Jordan river
  - c. there are dozens of water falls
4. The psalmist was at one of these places where the water comes out of the ground, and as he was there, just meditating on the Lord, God spoke to him
  - a. just as the depths of the earth were bubbling up to flow out that spring, gather into the Jordan, and then flow south to be gathered into the depths of the Dead Sea,
  - b. so the love of God was flowing from the depths of the center of His being and like waves were washing over him
  - c. he was overwhelmed with God's goodness and presence
  - d. he was immersed in an ocean of love
5. Yes, the Christian life knows it's Winter season - but it also knows it's Spring
6. Certainly the path of faith takes us through the barren wilderness, but it also scales the forest clad peak

7. But when we're in the wilderness in the dead of winter, we often forget the days walking in the Spring meadow - we forget all about the days we stood on the peak with God and felt His arm around us and thought life couldn't get any better.
8. The psalmist hearkens back to that time:
  - a. will the memory lift him from his depression?
  - b. will it end the weariness?

#### **E. Vs. 9-10**

**{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?"**

1. It didn't work - he is still weary, still discouraged
2. So he tries another tactic
3. He will cry out to God and claim His covenant promises
  - a. hadn't God promised to not leave them or forsake them?
  - b. hadn't He promised to love them and protect them?
  - c. didn't He bind Himself by an oath to be their God?
4. Indeed he did
5. And the Psalmist knew that God cannot lie or break His word
6. So he threw himself on God in desperation
7. But again - there is no answer: The heavens are like brass

#### **F. V. 11**

**{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.**

1. Again we have the chorus - telling us that the psalmists attempts to lift himself out of his blue mood have not worked
2. The Psalm ends where it begins
3. No relief has come to our psalmist

### **III. CONCLUSION**

#### **A. Note That**

1. Note that well my friends - This psalms ends with the author is the same place of weariness and depression he was at the outset - Nothing has changed!
2. And though the psalmist is still weary and depressed, mark well that his faith still burns bright
3. He has tried three different tactics to lift himself out of his funk
4. Each having failed, he resigns himself to wait it out - he will not give up on his hope in God
5. You see, he knew the problem was with himself, not God
6. And He knew that as he patiently waited for the Lord, this season would pass and he would once again be restored to wholeness

#### **B. Sometimes, That's All We Have Left**

1. A couple weeks ago, Jeff Daniel gave a wonderful study on faith from Hebrews 11:1

**Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.**

2. Romans 8 puts it this way . . .

**{24} We were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?**

**{25} But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.**

3. The point is this - genuine faith produces *hope*
  - a. but hope by its very nature can only exist in the absence or anticipation of the thing hoped for
  - b. once we have it, there is no longer any hope needed
4. Hope is a vital and critical part of the life of faith
  - a. without hope - we have nothing to look forward to
  - b. and if we have nothing to look forward to, then we will stop moving forward
  - c. and if we stop moving forward, then faith will die!
5. Hope is just faith deferred to the future God has promised
6. That means that God will continually take us through seasons of life where we are pressed to hope
  - a. hope for deliverance
  - b. hope for healing
7. But the greatest of all hopes - is the hope for Him!
  - a. and that means that there will be times when we feel all alone
  - b. when we find ourselves dry and weary
  - c. when it seems that no matter what we try, there is no relief
  - d. God shakes us loose from all our tactics, all our schemes
  - e. He troubles us so we might realize that ultimately the answer to all our needs is nothing more or less than Him!
8. We come to the place where we cry out

**Why are you cast down, O my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?**

9. But God brings us here so we might learn to say to ourselves . . .

**Hope in God; For I shall yet praise Him, The help of my countenance and my God**

10. Faith is never so pure and precious than when it is based on nothing but the sheer word of God
  - a. when every visible evidence has been stripped away
  - b. and all that is left is the believer, and the God who is

### **C. *They Shall Be Filled***

1. You and I have a promise the psalmist didn't
2. Jesus said,

**{Mat 5:6} Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.**

3. Are you weary? Are you discouraged and depressed?
4. Do you find yourself panting for God but finding no relief?
5. Have the last few weeks or months been a spiritual wilderness?

**Hope in God; For you shall yet praise Him, The help of your countenance and your God**