



Psalm 42

WHY HAS GOD FORGOTTEN ME?

The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul, "Why art thou cast down"—what business have you to be disquieted? You must turn on yourself... exhort yourself, and say to yourself: "Hope thou in God"—instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way. And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man: "I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance, who is also the health of my countenance and my God." —D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

An overview of the themes of the five books of the Psalms:

- Psalms 1-41: Opposition to God's Anointed King
- Psalms 42-72: Communication to the Nations
- Psalms 73-89: Devastation and Despair of God's People
- Psalms 90-106: Faith in God's Sovereign Kingship
- Psalms 107-150: Consummation and Celebration!

In Book II, the predominant name of God shifts from *Yahweh* to *Elohim*. In this section, the nations are addressed directly and challenged to praise God (cf. Ps. 67). Book II ends with a reminder of the blessing of the Abrahamic Covenant (cf. Ps. 72:17-19).

Book II begins with Psalm 42 (and 43), written by the "sons of Korah," who as recipients of God's amazing grace vowed to praise Him throughout the generations (cf. Num. 26:9-11; 2 Chron. 20:19).

THE DESCRIPTION OF THE PSALMIST'S EMOTIONAL BATTLE

- Unquenchable _____ (42:1-2).
- Unceasing _____ (42:3).
- Unrelenting _____ (42:7).
- Unsettled _____ (42:5-6, 9-11; cf. 43:5).

Cast down. Heb., *sahal*, "to be bowed down; to sink or depress"

Disquieted. Heb., *hama*, "to growl, roar, cry aloud, mourn, murmur, rage, make noise, be troubled, be in great commotion or tumult"

The most striking thing about the content of this second collection of Davidic psalms is the number of psalms that refer to the "peoples," the "nations," the "foreigners," or "all mankind."

—O. Palmer Robertson

Preserved, we know not why, by the distinguishing favor of God, it may be surmised that after their remarkable election to mercy, they became so filled with gratitude that they addicted themselves to sacred music.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

The soul's deepest thirst is for God Himself. —F.F. Bruce

The one who longed for a refreshing drink tasted instead the bitter water of tears.

—Peter C. Craigie

When a man voluntarily abstains from food, and indulges so much in weeping, that he daily neglects his ordinary meals, and is continually overwhelmed in sorrow, it is obvious that he is troubled in no light degree; but that he is wounded severely, and even to the heart. —John Calvin

THE REASONS FOR THE PSALMIST'S EMOTIONAL BATTLE

1. He is _____ from the temple and his people (42:6).
2. He is being _____ by those around him (42:3, 10).
3. He is _____ past days of joy (42:4).
4. He doesn't really know _____ (42:5, 11; 43:5).

THE DETERMINATION WITHIN THE PSALMIST'S BATTLE

*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.
[or my salvation and my God.]*

- I will _____ my own emotions.
- I will put my _____ in God alone.
- I will choose to _____ Him.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

- What picture of the psalmist's emotional battle (thirst, eating tears, waves, breaking of bones) strikes you the most? Why?
- What is one of your best memories of worshipping with others? Why is this memory so special to you?
- What emotions are you dealing with right now? Examine them. What do they reveal about what you thirst for? Put your hope in?

Sometimes loneliness makes the loudest noise. —Aaron Ben-Ze'ev

Most men have found the taunts of their fellow men the most bitter of human experiences.

—H. C. Leupold

There is no greater sorrow than to recall a happy time when miserable. —Dante (1265-1321)

Nostalgia is from *nostos* "return home" and *algos*, "pain." It is "acute homesickness."

To search out the cause of our sorrow is often the best surgery for grief. Self-ignorance is not bliss; in this case, it is misery. The mist of ignorance magnifies the causes of our alarm; a clearer view will make monsters dwindle into trifles. —Charles Spurgeon

There is nothing which is quite so important as we should without delay, and as quickly as possible, get to know ourselves. ...Though we are all Christians together, we are all different, and the problems and the difficulties, the perplexities and the trials we are likely to meet are in a large measure determined by the difference of temperament and of type. —D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Hope. Hebrew, *yahal*, "to wait patiently but expectantly for God to work" (Ross).

The help of my countenance.

"An unexpected expression but perfectly understandable: depression shows itself in a downcast face" (Motyer).

Hope is like the sun, which, as we journey towards it, casts the shadow of our burden behind us.

—Samuel Smiles (1812-1904)