

## **TITLE: The Insatiable Thirst for God**

### **THE INTRODUCTION – The Blessing of a Hymn with a Great Refrain**

I'm sure if asked, you could make a list of your favorite hymns. For me, one of the characteristics of a great hymn is the good refrain. Many of the beloved hymns of the church are constructed with several verses, called lyrics, followed by a great refrain that is repeated throughout the song. One of my favorites is How Great Thou Art. Verse one: the author considers the all the mighty creation of God, then breaks into the refrain: Then sings my soul, my Savior God to Thee, how Great thou Art. Verse 2: he considers the gentle breeze, the quiet brook and the birds; the quiet beauty of God's presence, and again in the refrain repeats Then sings my soul, my Savior God to thee, How Great Thou Art. In verse three he moves into the depth of his soul as he considers Christ being sent as our Savior, and His suffering, and bleeding, and dying for our salvation, and then breaks a third time into the refrain How Great Thou Art. The song ends in the last verse by considering the glorious magnificent return of Christ and the final rescue of His people and reign as omnipotent King, and then the refrain one last time, Then Sings my soul, My Savior God to Thee, How Great Thou Art.

I begin with that review of that marvelous hymn as an illustration of the power of a great refrain in song. This morning we are going to look at the Bible's Song Book, the book of Psalms, specifically a lament to God. A lament is a song of struggle, challenge and crying out. I have been praying that this message will bring hope and encouragement to my brothers and sisters who are currently in a struggle or difficulty. I also want all of us to be reminded that God has provided us with a sufficient word that helps us with all our needs and troubles.

### **THE TEXT – Psalm 42 and 43**

#### **Psalm 42**

<sup>1</sup>As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. <sup>2</sup>My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? <sup>3</sup>My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, "Where is your God?" <sup>4</sup>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.

<sup>5</sup>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.

<sup>6</sup>My soul is cast down within me; therefore, I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. <sup>7</sup>Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. <sup>8</sup>By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. <sup>9</sup>I say to God, my rock; "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" <sup>10</sup>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?"

<sup>11</sup>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**

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

<sup>5</sup>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.

## THE OUTLINE

This morning we are considering both Psalm 42 and 43 together. Most commentators believe these originally were one in the same. Most scholars also agree that this Psalm was written by King David and sung by the Levitical choir of the sons of Korah.

The first thing I want us to understand is the significance of the structure of this Psalm. It consists of three stanzas with a refrain that is repeated three times. It is structured much like many of our hymns. The structure itself helps us enter into the Psalmist experience. As we walk through this Psalm, I want you to feel the flow and experience of the Psalmist as He struggles and cries out to God, is comforted, and then struggles again. The main point of this Psalm comes from the refrain; 42:5, 42:11, and 43:5. This is a song of struggle, as the Psalmist expresses his loneliness, doubts, and depression. In the refrain, he questions his own soul concerning the anxiety and inner turmoil and resolves to put His hope in God's deliverance. The structure demonstrates the struggle as the Psalmist moves from extreme thirst, to moments of hope, then to almost drowning, and finally to a plea for vindication. There are moments of hope that come and leave, but by the third stanza the Psalmist is finally gathering a hope and anticipation for soon deliverance. As we now walk verse-by-verse through both Psalms, I want you to capture the overall message and feeling. Then I want to share some additional encouragement and meditations in six lessons that I derived from these beautiful passages. Let's begin our walk. Again, we are going to look at three stanzas, each one followed by the same refrain.

### I. The First Stanza: The Psalmist Longs for God (Psalm 42:1-4)

<sup>1</sup>As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. <sup>2</sup>My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God? <sup>3</sup>My tears have been my food day and night, while they say to me all the day long, Where is your God?" <sup>4</sup>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.

- a. He desires God's presence like a panting deer thirsts for water
- b. He desires the living God
- c. He is currently full of continual sorrow and facing derision from others
- d. He finds a bit of relief by recalling the joy of leading corporate praise in the house of God

### II. The Refrain: The Psalmist Hopes in God (Psalm 42:5)

<sup>5</sup>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.

- a. The Psalmist questions his own soul.
- b. The Psalmist resolves to put His hope in God

### III. The Second Stanza: The Psalmist Struggles with God (Psalm 42:6-10)

<sup>6</sup>My soul is cast down within me; therefore, I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. <sup>7</sup>Deep calls to deep at the roar of your waterfalls; all your breakers and your waves have gone over me. <sup>8</sup>By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life. <sup>9</sup>I say to God, my rock; "Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of the enemy?" <sup>10</sup>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?"

- a. He struggles in his exile from God's house
- b. He feels like he is drowning in a sea of waves and waterfalls
- c. He experiences God's faithful lovingkindness in the midst of his struggles

d. He feels abandoned by God as he is taunted by enemies and crushed by pain

**IV. The Refrain: The Psalmist Hopes in God (Psalm 42:11)**

<sup>1</sup>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.

- a. The Psalmist questions his own soul
- b. The Psalmist resolves to put His hope in God

**V. The Third Stanza: The Psalmist Prays to God (Psalm 43:1-4)**

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

- a. He prays for vindication and protection from evil men
- b. He expresses more struggles, questions God and his own soul again
- c. He prays for light and truth to lead Him back to God's presence, worship and joyful praise

**VI. The Refrain: The Psalmist Hopes in God (Psalm 43:5)**

<sup>5</sup>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.

- a. The Psalmist questions his own soul
- b. The Psalmist resolves to put his hope in God

## THE LESSONS

**Lesson 1: As God's people, we have an inherent deep thirst for the living God that only He can satisfy.** I want you to recall when you first experienced the relief and satisfaction as the Spirit of God quenched your thirst with the living water of Christ. Remember when that burden of sin was lifted off your shoulders, and you had the joy of your sins being forgiven, and happiness of being set free from guilt and condemnation. How many times in your Christian walk have you had moments when He pours out His comfort in the midst of a difficult time, and He gives you that deep assurance that it is well, and that He is with you? How often do we experience even a deeper yearning to know Him, and to love Him, and to see Him face-to-face; no longer through a dark glass, no longer obscured by the unredeemed flesh, and the clouds of doubt and fears that so often assail us. The Psalmist says it like this in Psalm 17:<sup>15</sup>*As for me, I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake, I shall be satisfied with your likeness.* As God's child, there is a groaning and longing to be like Him, and this will fully manifest when this corruption puts on incorruption and we see Him face to face. The former things will pass, and all will be new. Now we have moments of glory that break through our weakness. Sometimes He lets us see glimpses of the kingdom. They are little appetizers that create a deep appetite for that coming marriage supper with our Lord and Savior. As the bride of Christ, we await our Bridegroom's arrival, the day when He comes to gather us up and take us to that marriage supper of the saints. We yearn. We thirst. We long for the day when temptation, trial, sickness, pain, and the remnants of this old life are finally banished, when the whole

earth is full of His light and glory. As the deer pants for flowing streams, we thirst for the living God. O come quickly Lord Jesus!! Maranatha!

**Lesson 2: God provides a foretaste of the joy of His presence in true corporate praise and worship.**

In the Psalmist's struggles, his memories of the joy of corporate worship sustained him. God's people love to be with God's people, especially when we are singing, praising, and hearing the voice of our Savior in the teaching and preaching of the Scriptures. Our God has not left us alone. We have the unction of the Spirit that fills His people, and gives them gifts to strengthen and encourage us. He dwells with us in His church, as we feast at the table of His word together, as we remember His sacrifice at the communion table, as we rejoice in the salvation of our brothers and sisters before the waters of baptism, as we gather in prayer to seek His help together, as we bear one another's burdens and thus fulfill the law of Christ, as we love one another, and laugh together, and weep together, and carry one another from one trial to the next, we have the joy of the fellowship of the saints. My heart breaks for those who cannot or will not partake of the blessing and encouragement of God's presence in His people.

**Lesson 3: This life is filled with testing, difficulty, struggle and for the believer, a continual returning to our Savior as our ultimate hope and satisfaction.**

The Christian life is no walk in the park, but rather a rigorous fight to the end. Though the Lord graciously provides seasons of respite as He deem best, He takes us from one challenge after another, all for His glory and our good. It is by His sovereign design that we should be tempted and tried. His purpose is to humble us and drive us to a mature faith and trust in nothing but Himself. What we lack is endurance and maturity. The means to our ultimate joy and blessing is trial and tribulation. This morning, if you are struggling, you are not alone, and you are not forsaken, and God is at work in your life. You my brother, and my sister, are being refined and purified by the loving hand of your Father. His chiding hand only lasts for a moment, and it followed by a heavenly crown that He gives to those who love Him. If we suffer with Him, we shall reign with Him as well.

**Lesson 4: In times of difficulty, we can find hope by recalling past experiences of God's faithfulness of sustaining presence and joy.**

When we face hardship, we need to recall our Father's past faithfulness in our lives and the lives of His people. We have the assurance of His promises and the record of His past deeds. We have the memories of His great working on our behalf. We have the promise that He is working all things together for His glory and our ultimate good.

God also provides moments of relief to sustain us in our suffering. When we feel we can no longer continue, and are drowning, The Psalmist experienced God's steadfast love in the day, and songs of thanksgiving at night, and the gracious gift of prayer without ceasing. The author of Hebrews would shout to us that the veil in the temple was torn, and for His children there is now a free and open access into His presence to get the help we need, especially in times of great struggle. Through the work completed by our Lord Jesus, we now have access to receive the grace and help we need. He doesn't promise that He will immediately remove the pain and difficulty, but He promises us His sufficient, sustaining grace as we persevere through the difficulty.

**Lesson 5: It is good for us to talk to ourselves and question the source of our emotions and thoughts.**

It is spiritually and mentally healthy to consider the reasons for our worries, anxiety, and upsets. The Psalms teach us that godly people are not exempt from anguish, worry, sadness, and depression. But they also direct us to counsel ourselves and consider why we would worry and despair. Once we have questioned ourselves, we need to ask for the light and truth of God to lead us to His presence and altar. It is at the heavenly altar of God, where the blood of Christ was sprinkled on the mercy seat, that we have the promise and hope of the exceeding joy of His presence. After a time of considering our own thoughts, we then need to look outside ourselves to the truth and counsel of the One that understands like no other. This

One knows our thoughts before they occur. He is the sovereign of all creation. This is all powerful, all knowing, and loves us completely. The Psalmist would tell us that though we may be downcast and in turmoil, we can regain the joy of salvation by hoping in One who promised to never leave us. Such difficulties deepen our love for a kingdom that is yet to come and ween us away from the trinkets and idols of this life. As we consider our thoughts, and then compare them with the Scriptures, our kind and loving Father transforms our affections and desires so that we find our hope and security in Him and nothing else.

**Lesson 6: This fallen world is a place of sorrow, rejection, and disappointment and will never provide ultimate joy and satisfaction.** How vain is the pursuit of the unredeemed, looking for love in all the wrong places? What they find is a fleeting pleasure that turns into an addiction for more. The idols and trinkets of this world will never satiate soul's yearning for the Creator. We are created in His image, designed to worship, praise, and enjoy Him. Yet, when we seek the gifts, and not the giver, we are left empty and void of true happiness and joy. Spiritually corrupt, dead, and consumed with our desires, we are slaves to our desires and need a Savior to rescue us from our vain empty life headed for judgment and destruction.

Does this describe your state of being? Are you tired, and thirsty, and drowning in a sea of vain pursuit and emptiness. Are you tired and weary, and sick of the unfulfilled false promises of this world? Jesus is calling to you to leave that life, and come and follow Him. He said come unto me, all ye that labor, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek, and lowly of heart, and you will find rest for your souls. This is an invitation to leave your dead religion, your filthy rags of self-righteousness, your taskmaster of sin, and your hopeless, purposeless existence, and come receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior. We are all born into this world as sinners. Because we are sinners, we go our own way, and turn away from God. When our life ends, we will give an account for our life, and because we have chosen to live life our own way, and not God's way, we will face the judgment and penalty for that rebellion and violation of God's rule. The penalty is eternal death and destruction.

The good news is that this Jesus that calls you this morning also provides the remedy for your sinful condition. What you need to be right with God is a perfect righteousness, a pure heart free from corruption and sin. Jesus, the Son of God, came 2000 years ago into this world and lived that perfect, pure life. He was tempted to sin, just like us, but did not sin. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, cleansed the lepers, opened blind eyes, and raised the dead. Then this perfect man Jesus, gave His life over to sinful men that crucified Him on a Roman cross. He had committed no crime and had done no wrong. On that cross, He suffered the full penalty and judgment for sinners, which was death. Three days after He died and placed in a tomb, He rose from the dead, proclaiming His victory over sin and death. In His death and resurrection, He bore the sins of every person that trusts in Him as Savior and Lord. He bore their sin and gives them His righteousness so that they can now have the presence and hope of God as their Father.

If you want to talk more about pursuing Christ as your Savior, please reach out today to myself or another person that knows the Lord, and we will help you. If you are a believer, and you find that you are down cast or in turmoil, I would be glad to counsel with you are direct you to someone who can encourage and help you.

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