

12. Psalm 42-45

September 29, 2011

Psalm 42

We just sang one of the most beloved chorus songs from Maranatha Music, "As the deer". Many Christians don't even know that the song's lyric was inspired by v1 of Psalm 42.

As we read this beautiful Psalm, we will notice one thing right away. The author king David longs for God's presence in his life, not because he can have a bragging right to others; nor can he feel good about himself. Rather, he wants to find peace and comfort from the Lord because of his discouraging heart.

When we read the Bible, we somehow think that the men of God, such as Moses, Elijah, and apostle Paul, would never have a day of discouragement in their lives. That is NOT true.

Moses, on one occasion at least, was overwhelmed by his circumstances. After he had listened to the constant complaining of the children of Israel, he basically told the Lord, "I'm fed up. Just kill me. I don't want to deal with this another day."

Elijah, after a great victory at his contest with the prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, heard that queen Jezebel had put a contract out on his life. What did he do? He tucked his tail between his legs and ran away from HER. He was so overwhelmed by his circumstances, so discouraged, so uncertain, and so filled with doubt that he said to God, "Take my life."

Even the great apostle Paul had moments when he was discouraged. He wrote to the church at Corinth:

2 Corinthians 1:8 For we do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, of our trouble which came to us in Asia: that we were burdened beyond measure, above strength, so that we despaired even of life. .

Yes, this is the spiritual giant apostle Paul whom we are talking about.

A. AS THE DEER

Psalm 42:1-2 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?

Many biblical scholars believe that this Psalm was written during the time when king David was being chased by his own son Absalom. I wouldn't be surprised that as the king was hiding in a cave with his followers and he looked outside only to see a deer panting for water.

I agree with C.S. Lewis, who described David's craving for God as an "appetite for God" in his book 'Reflections on the Psalms.' The appetite for God is something we have to develop, it is not something we receive as a full package from the beginning.

Jesus said, "Blessed are they that do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled" in Matthew 5:6. Here the psalmist is expressing his desire for God.

Down deep inside of every man there is that thirsting after a meaningful relationship with God. Now this thirst is like being hungry sometimes and not knowing exactly what we are hungry for. Maybe it is in enchiladas, or maybe it is in ravioli, but we are hungry for something and we can't quite pinpoint what we are hungry for.

It is amazing the many things by which people seek to satisfy this thirst. Look at the world around us in which we live and we see people trying to satisfy this spiritual thirst by all kinds of experiences – physical, material, spiritual, and emotional experiences. So often, as they are pursuing after one of their immediate goals, their idea is, "If I can just attain, if I can just achieve, it is going to satisfy."

And they become promoters for this particular little deal that they are in right now, "Oh, this is it. This is going to satisfy. This is going to bring to me all that I am looking for in life." And they are running down the trail. But when they get to the end of the trail, they find that it is empty, just like everything else. So they are looking for another path to follow. They are running here, they are running there in vain. They've got a thirst. It is like trying to fit a square peg into a round hole. It just doesn't work.

Please note what Jesus said to the woman of Samaria at the well in John 4:

John 4:13 Jesus answered and said to her, "Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again,

Jesus is the ONLY answer because He is the Living Water.

B. TAUNTING ENEMIES

Psalm 42:3-4 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.

When we are lonely, we become spiritually and emotionally vulnerable. Of course, our enemy, satan is right there to taunt us endlessly by using the ungodly people, or even well-meaning godly people around us. David looked at his current surrounding situation. It was bad enough to drain anyone's strength and courage.

I am sure that you all remember the situation Peter, one of Jesus' disciples was in. He was walking on water as Jesus told him to.

Matthew 14:26-30 And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. 27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." 28 And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." 29 So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. 30 But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!"

Though Peter was walking on the physical liquid water which only can be explained in supernatural way, but in reality, he was walking on the Word of Jesus spiritually. The command of Jesus, "Come" was supporting the body weight of Peter. Though Peter's physical legs were walking on water, in reality, it was his faith in Jesus' commands that were stepping forward to his Lord Jesus.

When Peter took his eyes off from Jesus, his faith was no longer there to step forward and his physical weight overtook the situation in natural way and he started to sink. This is exactly the same situation with king David in v4.

C. HOPE IN GOD

Psalm 42:5-6 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.

Here king David is talking to himself. I think that it is a good and healthy thing to talk to ourselves. I'd prefer writing over talking. English author and philosopher Sir Francis Bacon said, "Reading maketh a full man, conference (speaking) a ready man, and writing an exact man." We can ramble while we are talking to ourselves, but once we start to write, those abstract thoughts can be filtered and become more sensible sentences and paragraphs.

But David does not mean any rambling, rather remembering the faithfulness of God. When we think of God's faithfulness in our lives, it is very easy to have hope in Him.

Failing to understand God's purpose and plan is often the reason that believers experience lapses of faith. Our faith falters not because God has been inconsistent, or unfaithful, or because God has broken His promises. We experience lapses of faith because we have a false perception of what God is supposed to accomplish. Our expectations of God are not pure. We offer our prayers to Him and expect Him to answer with exact precision as we want. And when God doesn't come through like we asked Him to, we can doubt who God is.

So, is speaking to ourselves right for us all the time? No, but it depends on what we are based on. If our talk is based on how we feel emotionally, our talk to ourself can be extremely dangerous.

1 Samuel 27:1-3 And David said in his heart, "Now I shall perish someday by the hand of Saul. There is nothing better for me than that I should speedily escape to the land of the Philistines; and Saul will despair of me, to seek me anymore in any part of Israel. So I shall escape out of his hand." 2 Then David arose and went over with the six hundred men who were with him to Achish the son of Maach, king of Gath. 3 So David dwelt with Achish at Gath, he and his men, each man with his household, and David with his two wives, Ahinoam the Jezreelitess, and Abigail the Carmelitess, Nabal's widow.

Right after sparing king Saul's life for the second time by following God's grace and mercy, here David the fugitive of Israel was talking to himself to join with the enemy in their camp. Was his talk based on God's faithfulness? No, completely based on his own emotion. For the next 16 long months, David was backslidden and there is not a record of a prayer or Psalm during that time.

D. SONGS IN THE NIGHT

Psalm 42:7-8 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.

When a worship service is biblically grounded and properly done, what a powerful testimony it can be to nonbelievers. They come into the midst of it and don't quite

know what it is, but they know it's different from anything they have seen anywhere else. It is unique to the church.

When we believers worship the Lord, other people will listen to what we have to say, especially when they know we are singing in the midst of difficult circumstances.

Anyone can sing when things are going well. But when the bottom drops out, when hardship hits and we can keep singing – that is something unique to the Christian.

In Acts 16, we read that Paul and Silas were thrown in prison for preaching the Gospel. But at midnight, they began to sing praises to God. Instead of complaining or calling on God to judge the people who had done this to them, they were worshipping. The other prisoners listened, because they were having a real encounter with God. And when the Philippian jailer saw it for himself, it opened his heart to the truth of the Gospel.

When we are in pain, the midnight hour is not an easy time to have a worship service. As the great British preacher Charles H. Spurgeon said, "Any fool can sing in the day. It's easy to sing when we can read the notes by daylight. But the skillful singer is the one who can sing when there is not a ray of light to read by. Songs in the night come only from God. They are not in the power of man."

Psalm 45

The psalm is a royal psalm and functioned as a wedding song at the occasion of the wedding of a royal couple. In a special way the psalm also applies to our Lord Jesus, who rules as the Son of David.

A. THE GLORY OF THE MESSIAH

Psalm 45:6-7 Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.

I am sure that these two verses remind you what you read in chapter 1 verses 8 and 9 of the Book of Hebrews. The author of Hebrews was quoting these two verses from this Psalm to show us the divinity of Jesus. It is God the Father referring Jesus as God. If God the Father called Jesus "God," I don't need anyone to tell me otherwise.

Some will object, "How do you know that it is God the Father referring Jesus in the Book of Hebrews?" I have a very simple answer, "Context." Read the first chapter of Hebrews, it is so obvious that the Father is speaking about His Son Jesus. It doesn't take a biblical scholar to comprehend it.

B. THE BEAUTY OF THE BRIDE

Psalm 45:10-11 Listen, O daughter, Consider and incline your ear; Forget your own people also, and your father's house; 11 So the King will greatly desire your beauty; Because He is your Lord, worship Him.

I want all of you to pay attention to what the Lord is telling His bride, the church to do here:

1) "Forget your own people also, and your father's house"

When we decided to follow the Lord Jesus as our Savior and Lord, the love for Him should be so much that it would make the love for our loved ones – spouse, parents, children, and others – like hatred in comparison.

Luke 14:26 If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.

2) "Worship Him"

The church is to be subject to Christ as the wife to the husband, to call Him Lord, as Sarah called Abraham, and to obey Him, and not only to submit to Him, but to give Him divine honor. We must worship Him as God, and our Lord. Because this is the will of God, that all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father.

C. APPLICATIONS

1) The greatest antidote against discouragement is remembering our God's faithfulness.

2) Our relationship with the Lord Jesus should be exclusive with complete dedication to Him.