

Series Title: Awake My Soul

Sermon Title: Week 2: Why am I downcast?

Date: 08-04-19

- **Have you ever been thirsty... I mean really, really thirsty.. parched. How about thirsty to point of death... Many have, I haven't.**
- **Have you been thirsty in your SOUL. Parched.... For joy. Peace. For hope, maybe for love. Thirsty to the point where you could describe... mortal agony.**
- **NOW, IN THAT place, have you ever felt like you had to pretend that you weren't thirsty? Where?**
 - **Around those you love? Peer groups? Everyone?**
 - **Honest, Possible answer is IN CHURCH. With God?**
- **IF YES, or know someone for whom answer is YES, two things we are going to see today**
 - **God/scripture never asks us to pretend**
 - **In the Psalms, Honesty of our brokenness isn't offensive to God, it is worship**
 - **In the midst of struggle, our hope isn't what we may ask God to do for us, it is God himself.**
- **PRAY**
- **Welcome to week two in the Psalms! Today our focus is Psalm 42, but first, a quick review...**

† Ready for a long sentence? *In the Psalms, we see very REAL PEOPLE, pouring their hearts out to God (in the full range of human emotion, including laments, worship, and thanksgiving), in the firm conviction that God is SOVEREIGN, and that He will bring justice and goodness to His people, here on earth, in the midst of LIFE AS IT REALLY IS. Oh, and all this happens through the form of ancient Hebraic poetry, intended to be set to music.*

– **When we look at the psalms, as with ALL of OT, we need to see through the....**

† The lens of the New Covenant: The writers of the Psalms cried out to God in the full confidence of what He WOULD DO. As New Covenant followers of Christ, we are in union with God because of what He has ALREADY DONE.

John 14:19-20 Because I live, you also will live.²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.

- **Even as believers, there are times when we find ourselves feeling that God is far away.**
 - **God is silent**
 - **Traumatic circumstances, prolonged hurt**
 - **Allowing persistent of sin, conscience hardened**
 - **Guilt, shame, fatigue, hopelessness**
 - **Bottom line... spiritual depression**
 - **WE CRY OUT... GOD! JESUS... where are you? How do I escape from this place...**
- **This is the heart cry that we see in many of the psalms, and one of the most poignant is 42.**
- † Psalm 42, an introduction: *For the director of music. A maskil of the Sons of Korah.*

● Psalm 42 is the first in the second Book of the Psalms.

– **Psalms is divided into 5 books, roughly corresponding to 5 books of torah.**

- Tradition holds that 1st two books (72 psalms) are by King David, although only 57 are directly ascribed to David (Psalm 2, Acts 4 attributes to David). All told, 74 psalms confidently 'Davidic'

• Psalm 42 is either for or by the "Sons of Korah". Tradition holds that Psalm 42 was written by, or expressing the experience of, King David.

- Part of original scripture- intended for musical worship... 42&43 go together
- Maskil- teaching, impart wisdom
- Son's of Korah- essentially, the chapel band- family in levite tribe assigned to write, arrange, and possibly perform music in temple worship. If Davidic, was to be used by "SOK" for temple, but also possible that SOK wrote this, reflecting on experience of David. Let's assume it's David- but it could be you.
- **SCENE: David in mountains of northern Israel, far from safety of Jerusalem, far from the temple. Not told specific occasion, but under great stress...**

— ∞ Psalm 42 ∞ —

¹ As the deer pants for streams of water,
so my soul pants for you, my God.

² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.
When can I go and meet with God?

³ My tears have been my food day and night,
while people say to me all day long,
"Where is your God?"

⁴ These things I remember
as I pour out my soul: **(soul like water, no firmness)**
how I used to go to the house of God
under the protection of the Mighty One
with shouts of joy and praise
among the festive throng.

- **What do we see here?**
 - **Pants... intense desire for water... place in his life where intense desire for God, to know his presence... desire born out of difficulty**
 - **Thirst... where can I go to find him? God, where are you!**
 - **So despondent, people mock... where is he?**
 - **V4- Didn't use to be like this! He remembers being in Jerusalem, temple, presence of God, protected by God, surrounded by joy, worship in temple... but now, he is separate, alone...**
- **This leads into refrain, repeated 3 times (with 43)**

⁵ Why, my soul, are you downcast?
Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,
for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

- **What is David doing here? He's reflecting on himself, asking himself why he is downcast**
- **Downcast/disturbed... bent over, under weight of sorrow, anxious**
- **BUT WHY? Fascinating! Sense that he realizes, coming to his senses just a little, that his sorrow and downcast spirit isn't right. Just maybe he's caught up in it too much, realizing that he's being a bit self-obsessed about his situation... THE SITUATION IS REAL, but he's realizing that there is HOPE, that he needs to lift his head! WHAT IS THAT HOPE?**

**Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.**

- **He's challenging himself here to MAKE A CHOICE. I'm HERE, and yet, I will choose to look to you...**
- **He continues in this thought...**

⁶ *My soul is downcast within me;
therefore I will remember you
from the land of the Jordan,
the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.*

- **Headwaters of Jordan, Hermon Mountains, Mizar is peak... this is where he is, but not where he wants to be. His thoughts go back to his grief (can you relate to his emotions here, back and forth?)**

⁷ *Deep calls to deep
in the roar of your waterfalls;
all your waves and breakers
have swept over me.*

- **He is overcome with his grief**
- **Deep to Deep... image of water crashing in, as soon as one wave subsides, another comes,**
- **CONTRAST with dry, parched, panting**
- **Really, he is crying out... IM DROWNING, can't escape**
- **AND YET...**

⁸ *By day the LORD directs his love, (commands.. love/mercy)
at night his song is with me— a prayer to the God of my life.*

- **Here, even it midst of drowning, he is looking forward with hope to a better time. "There will be a day when the Lord brings me his love and mercy"**
- **"At Night"... two interpretations- 'Night' as hardship, calamity... 'even then you will be with me', OR, some see a time of rest, peace, lullaby, that as the day comes, so will be nights of peace**
- **EITHER WAY, HE IS NOT LOSING HOPE.**
- **"MY PRAYER, MY HEART CRY, is to the GOD WHO GIVES ME LIFE!"**
- **And now, right back into the water...**

⁹ *I say to God my Rock, -- "Why have you forgotten me?"*

- **Do you see the contrast, the tension of emotion? GOD, you are my ROCK. MY LIFE... where are you!!**
- **He is NOT forsaking God, but in deep honesty, wondering if God has forsaken him. Been there?**
- **Does this sound familiar? Jesus... My god...**

Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?"

¹⁰ *My bones suffer mortal agony -- as my foes taunt me,
saying to me all day long, -- "Where is your God?"*

- **Nuance... this is our heart as well! He is crying out "God where are you!?"... Then, his foes ask the same thing- "Where is your God?!" It is the question of his foes that cause him to one again question the depth of his sorrow... is he losing his focus?**

¹¹ Why, my soul, are you downcast?

Why so disturbed within me?

- **SELF, wake up! Lift my eyes! Psalm 121... “I lift my eyes to the mountains (heaven) my help comes from the lord”**
- **And he make the choice... STILL IN THE WATER, STILL IN HIS SITUATION, he makes the choice...**

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him,
my Savior and my God.

HOW SPEAK TO US? THREE THOUGHTS

- **1. Stop looking at yourself and start looking at God. Choice of faith, change of focus**

Hebrews 12:2-3 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. ³ Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

- **2. In NOW, Stop looking at past, look to future**

Philippians 3:12-14 Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus.

- **3. By God's grace, start to let go of the “WHY”, and take hold of God and his perspective**

Philippians 4:4-8 Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. **GOD OF PEACE WILL BE WITH YOU.**

- **David was thirsty, learning to trust God to give him life.**

- **NOW, IN CHRIST, our thirst HAS BEEN QUENCHED. When we find ourselves in Psalm 42, WE KNOW THAT OUR HOPE IS IN CHRIST, AND WHAT HE HAS ALREADY DONE. Our HOPE IS HIM.**

John 4:13-14

¹³ Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

John 6:35

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.”

John 7:37-38

³⁷ On the last and greatest day of the festival, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them.”

Revelation 22:17

¹⁷ The Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let the one who hears say, “Come!” Let the one who is thirsty come; and let the one who wishes take the free gift of the water of life