

Psalm 42:1–5

1As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.

2My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?

3My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me, “Where is your God?”

4When 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.

5Why 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.

“Craving God”

Psalm 42:1-5

Have you ever had a craving? You know what I am talking about, you are in bed and you are reading a good book and suddenly, the words on the page dissolve before your eyes and reform themselves into the form of a pizza with all the toppings you love. Your stomach growls and your mouth salivates. You go to the refrigerator hoping to tame the roaring beast within you with something near at hand. You consider the leftover goulash you had for supper and your stomach turns up its nose. It must be a pizza, nothing more and nothing else.

In Psalm 42, the Psalmist has a craving. His craving is not for food. This is a craving of the heart and not of the stomach. He yearns for God and God alone. He longs to be in the presence of the Living God. While I think most of us can identify with the craving I described above, I am not sure all that many of us know what it is to long for God. The Psalmist described his thirst in picturesque language. The danger can be that we are so mesmerized by the vividness of the picture, we miss the intensity of the Psalmists need for the presence of God.

I. The Fact of His Desire (v. 1-2)

II. The Source of His Yearning (v. 3-5)

I. The Fact of His Desire (v. 1-2)

A. Do we really desire God? In our text the Psalmist described a desire for God that we can almost taste. ***“As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God.”*** The word “soul” appears prominently in the first two verses. The best description “of the soul” comes from ***Psalm 103:1. “Bless the LORD, O my soul, And all that is within me, bless His holy name.”***

1. This Psalmist was not the only one who yearned to be in the very presence of God. In ***Psalm 63***, David also wrote of his great desire to be in the presence of the eternal God. ***“O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water.”*** David illustrated his longing for God with the language of thirst. Have you ever been thirsty? Thirst is a strong want claiming all we are until it is satisfied. Can we honestly say our desire for God is on the level of a deep body thirst? From what these Psalmists told us, our desire for God should be at that level!

2. In ***Psalm 84:1-2*** David again pleaded for God’s presence in his life. ***“How lovely are Your dwelling places, O LORD of hosts. My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”*** Do we feel this way when we come into church? We love the fellowship of God's people. However, do we love fellowship with the living God even more? David wrote, ***“My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.”***

B. Do we recognize desiring God is something only those who really know Him can do? Only those who know the Lord Jesus as Savior really seek Him today. ***Romans 3:10-12 “As it is written: ‘There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one.’*** The very fact the Psalmist had this desire tells us he had entered into a saving relationship with God through faith.

C. The Psalmist's desire was very focused. ***“My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?”*** God and God alone can fill the hole and satisfy the deep thirst of his soul; no one and nothing else.

1. People desire many things in life. Some thirst after treasures, some power or influence. The Psalmist wanted one thing and one alone. He wanted to be in the presence of God.

2. I am reminded of what another Psalmist wrote after he had stumbled because he looked at the apparent prosperity of the wicked. He concluded his song by saying, ***“Whom have I in heaven but You? And there is none upon earth that I desire besides You.” Psalm 73:25.*** This sounds like a song. *“I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold/ I'd rather be His than have riches untold/ I'd rather have Jesus than houses or land/ I'd rather be led by His nail pierced hand/ than to be the King of a vast domain/ or be held in sin's dread sway/ I'd rather have Jesus than anything/ this world affords today.”* Do we really mean it when we sing it? I hope we do.

II. The Source Of His Yearning (v. 3-5)

“My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me, “Where is your God?” 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. 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.”

A. Okay, we want to desire to be with God like the Psalmist did. How do we learn to have a desire like the Psalmist had?

B. One method God uses to bring us to the place of wanting to be with Him is allowing trouble to come into our lives. Look ***at verse 3. “My tears have been my food day and night.”*** One verse sums this up for me. ***Psalm 23:4, “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.”*** This is true for us in the New Covenant also. ***Romans 5:3-5 “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope. Now hope does not***

disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us."

C. Another thing that God uses to produce a desire for Him in our lives is to bring to mind the way it used to be in our relationship with Him.

1. Here is **verse 4** from the NASB ***"These things I remember, and I pour out my soul within me. For I used to go along with the throng and lead them in procession to the house of God, with the voice of joy and thanksgiving, a multitude keeping festival."***

2. The public worship of the people of God was such a joy to this man because he remembered the relationship he enjoyed with the Lord of Glory personally. External worship acceptable to God is always the expression of a heart delighting in God.

3. The Psalmist followed the advice the Lord Jesus gave to the Ephesian church in **Revelation 2:5**. ***"Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works."*** When we remember the way it used to be, then we are motivated to repent and to return to that blessed relationship with the Lord.

D. Out of this remembering and desiring to return, the Psalmist finds the strength to talk to his own heart in **verse 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. Listen; heart! God will yet deliver me! I will yet praise Him! I am convinced we need to learn to talk to our hearts. Listen to what Jesus said in **John 14:1** ***"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me."*** and then in **John 14:27**, He said, ***"Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid."*** These are third person imperatives. None other than our Lord Jesus is telling us it is our responsibility to not let our hearts be troubled or afraid. We do this by reasoning with our hearts and reminding ourselves of what is really true!

2. Our Psalmist spoke to his heart in this Psalm. ***“Heart, hope in God. He is the One who will yet bless me.”*** The Psalmist had this confidence because he believed God would answer his prayer and God would be found of him.

Do we want God like this Psalmist did?

If not, it may be that a storm is just on the horizon to drive us to Him.

If not, it may be that we have no memories of sweet fellowship with Him to whet our appetite for our return to Him.

If not, we may not really know Him.

But, if this lights a fire in your heart and you find yourself thirsty for God, do what the Psalmist did.

(1) Remember from whence you are fallen, repent, and return to the first works.

(2) Pray and seek His face in His word and worship Him in the services of the church. God said to Jeremiah, ***“And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. I will be found by you, says the LORD.”***
Jeremiah 29:13-14.

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