

Psalm 42 — “The Sure Hope for the Depressed & Despairing Person”

“There is no cure outside of Christ for soul-depression.”

Background:

Sons of Korah — Sons of Korah are a guild of singers and composers of music & 10 Psalms (Ps 42; 44-49; 84-85; 87)
Called a “*Maskil*” — a poem of skill; understanding; wisdom; intelligence in godly living.

THESIS — How the balm of Scripture sufficiently helps battle despair & hopelessness. *Two divine counsels:*

1. You must CHOOSE to pursue your God in pains of adversity. (1-5)

2. You must CHOOSE to trust your God in times of trouble. (6-11)

I. YOU MUST CHOOSE TO PURSUE YOUR GOD IN PAINS OF ADVERSITY (1-5)

- A. A Longing for God (v.1-2)
- B. A Recounting of Troubles (3)
- C. A Praying to God (4a)
- D. A Remembering of Past-times (4b)

II. YOU MUST CHOOSE TO TRUST YOUR GOD IN TIMES OF TROUBLE (6-11)

- A. I'm troubled v.6-7
- B. I'm trusting v.8
- C. I'm travailing v.9-10

- We must fight for a satisfied soul by going after God! When temptation and hardship comes, we have to GO HARDER AFTER GOD.

***THE CHORUS/REFRAIN* (V.5, 11)**

- **SPEAK TRUTH.** Speak to self rather than listen to yourself (v.5, 11)
- **ANCHOR HOPE.** Find hope in God & His unchanging character (v.5, 11)
- **PRAISE GOD.** Fight to praise and thank God regardless of how you feel. (v.5, 11)
- **MEET GOD.** Seek God's presence every day by 'meeting with God'. (v.5, 11)

CH Spurgeon >> I find myself frequently depressed – perhaps more so than any other person here. And I find no better cure for that depression than to trust in the Lord with all my heart, and seek to realize afresh the power of the peace-speaking blood of Jesus, and His infinite love in dying upon the cross to put away all my transgressions.

Note some solid theology of Christ that carried William Cowper thru his bouts of depression:

God moves in mysterious ways:

Ye fearful saints, fresh courage take; the clouds ye so much dread
are big with mercy and shall break in blessings on your head.
Judge not the Lord by feeble sense, but trust Him for His grace;
behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.

Approach my soul the mercy seat

Bowed down beneath a load of sin, by Satan sorely pressed,
by wars without, and fears within, I come to Thee for rest.
"Poor tempest-tosséd soul, be still, my promised grace receive";
'tis Jesus speaks; I must, I will, I can, I do believe.

There is a fountain

There is a fountain filled with blood Drawn from Immanuel's veins;
And sinners, plunged beneath that flood, Lose all their guilty stains:

Hark my soul, it is the LORD!

Hark, my soul, it is the Lord; 'tis thy Saviour, hear his word;
Jesus speaks, and speaks to thee, 'Say, poor sinner, lov'st thou me?
Lord, it is my chief complaint that my love is weak and faint;
yet I love thee, and adore; O for grace to love thee more!

*If we look within – it will dispirit us;
if we look around – it may distract us;
if we look back – it may awaken fears;
if we look forward – it may arouse foreboding!
But if we look UP to God – it will preserve . . .*

*Beloved, let us look up!
There our loving Father is!
There our interceding Savior is!
There all our supplies are!
There our everlasting home is!*

*Do not look at your sin – it will discourage you!
Do not look at your self – it will distress you!
Do not look at Satan – he will bewilder you!
Do not look to men – they will deceive, or disappoint you!
Do not look at your trials – they will deject you!*

– James Smith

FURTHER QUOTES ON DEPRESSION

Martyn Lloyd-Jones, in his solid book, *Spiritual Depression: Its Causes and Cure* ([Eerdmans], pp. 20-21), says:

Have you not realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? Take those thoughts that come to you the moment you wake up in the morning. You have not originated them, but they start talking to you, they bring back the problems of yesterday, etc. Somebody is talking. Who is talking to you? Your self is talking to you. Now this man's treatment was this; instead of allowing this self to talk to him, he starts talking to himself....

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, upbraid yourself, condemn 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 Himself 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".

Would you like to be rid of this spiritual depression? The first thing you have to do is to say farewell now once and for ever to your past. Realize that it has been covered and blotted out in Christ. Never look back at your sins again. Say: "It is finished; it is covered by the Blood of Christ." That is your first step. Take that and finish with yourself and all this talk about goodness, and look to the Lord Jesus Christ. It is only then that true happiness and joy are possible for you. What you need is not to make resolutions to live a better life, to start fasting and sweating and praying. No! You just begin to say: "I rest my faith on Him alone who died for my transgressions to atone." (Lloyd Jones)

John Broger >> Depression is not a disease. While there are some organic malfunctions that may trigger feelings of depression, many symptoms and maladies defined as depression (whether short-lived or chronic) are the consequences of unbiblical habits and/or sinful reactions to circumstances and other people. Depression that stems from unbiblical living can be overcome as you deal biblically with your sins and purposefully live in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord.

John MacArthur >> The root of both psychological and spiritual sickness is preoccupation with self. Ironically, the believer who is consumed with his own problems – even his own spiritual problems – to the exclusion of concern for other believers, suffers from a destructive self-centeredness that not only is the cause of, but is the supreme barrier to the solution of, his own problems. Usually such selfishness isolates him from the other believers, who if they were intimately involved in fellowship with him, would be regularly praying for his spiritual welfare.

Ed Welch (in his book: "Blame it on the Brain"): Don't assume that you understand what someone means by "depression." Don't fill in the meaning from your own experience, which may or may not be similar. Instead, listen. Allow the depressed person to fill the word depression with the meaning it has for him or her. When you do listen, you will hear pain, fear, hopelessness, dread of the future, terror, silent screams, and emptiness that threatens to destroy.

LORD FROM SORROWS DEEP I CALL

1. Lord from sorrows deep I call
 When my hope is shaken
 Torn and ruined from the fall
 Hear my desperation
 For so long I've pled and prayed
 God come to my rescue
 Even so the thorn remains
 Still my heart will praise You

2. Storms within my troubled soul
 Questions without answers
 On my faith these billows roll
 God be now my shelter
 Why are you cast down my soul
 Hope in Him who saves you
 When the fires have all grown cold
 Cause this heart to praise You

3. Should my life be torn from me
 Every worldly pleasure
 When all I possess is grief
 God be then my treasure
 Be my vision in the night
 Be my hope and refuge
 'Til my faith is turned to sight
 Lord my heart will praise You

*Oh my soul put your hope in God
 My help my rock I will praise Him
 Sing oh sing through the raging storm
 You're still my God my salvation*

Words/Music: Matt Papa and Matt Boswell, 2018 Getty Music; Love Your Enemies Publishing; Messenger Hymns (CCLI#: 21652586).

PSALM 42: PSALTER

Tune: How deep the Father's Love for us

As pants the deer for flowing streams,
 so longs my soul for you, O God.
 I thirst for God, the living God.
 When can I go and meet with God?
 My constant tears have been my food,
 both in the night and in the day,
 while all day long insistently,
 “Where is your God?” to me they say.

I now remember all these things
 as I pour out my soul within:
 how with the multitude I went
 up to God's house on Zion's hill.
 In their procession I would lead
 as we approached with cheerful song
 and shouts of thankfulness and mirth
 among the festive, joyful throng.

Why are you downcast, O my soul?
 Why are you so disturbed in me?
 But hope in God, for him I'll praise;
 my Savior God alone is he.
 My soul within me is cast down;
 I will recall you, LORD, my God
 from Jordan's land, from Hermon's heights,
 and from the top of Mizar hill.

By day the LORD directs his love;
 his song remains with me at night—
 a prayer to him who is my God,
 my only source of life and light.
 Why are you downcast, O my soul?
 Why are you so disturbed in me?
 But hope in God, for him I'll praise;
 my Savior God alone is he.

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