

## **PRAYING THROUGH YOUR SADNESS**

Psalm 42-43

### **What Should A Christian Do With His/Her Sadness?**

#### **The Condition/Ailment Described By The Psalmist**

*Downcast* = dissolved, crumpled, collapsed. Metaphor for complete despair, emotionally spent.

Examples in Old Testament: Moses in Numbers 11, Elijah in 1 Kings 19, Jonah in Jonah 4

*“As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and appear before God?”*

#### **Some Causes For The Psalmist’s Despair**

1. His rhythms of worship and Christian fellowship have been disrupted.

Psalm 42:4 (New Living Translation): *“My heart is breaking as I remember how it used to be: I walked among the crowds of worshipers, leading a great procession to the house of God, singing for joy and giving thanks amid the sound of a great celebration.”*

2. He has had to battle for his faith in the midst of a hostile environment.

Verses 9-10: *“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?”*

3. He has had to deal with other physical and/or emotional factors.

Verse 3: *“My tears have been my food day and night.”*

#### **The Cure That The Psalmist Took To Heart and Practiced**

1. Pray even when you don’t feel like it.

Verse 4 *“These things I remember as I pour out my soul...”*

2. Challenge yourself about your hopes. (vv5, 11, 43:5)

*“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.”*

3. Comfort yourself with God’s unconditional love.

Verse 6: *“My soul is cast down within me; therefore I will remember you”* Verse 8: *By day the Lord commands his steadfast love, and at night his song is with me, a prayer to the God of my life.*

Psalm 43:3-4 *“Send out your light and your truth; let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy hill and to your dwelling! Then I will go to the altar of God, to God my exceeding joy, and I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God.”*

## **Psalm 42-43:**

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<sup>6</sup> and my God.

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.

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 about 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, 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.

## **Questions for personal reflection and/or discussion:**

1. The Psalms are made up of beautiful poetry, heartfelt prayers and worship, and amazingly accurate prophetic truth. Yet many Christians have not yet discovered the practical value of the Psalms, that we can learn to pray through them. If you have had the opportunity to pray through any Psalm, how was it for you? What might it take for you to become comfortable praying them in a natural way?
2. When was the last time you felt really down and you found it difficult to overcome it? What did you do? How might the words or phrases in Psalms 42 and 43 have helped you pray in that situation?
3. Three times the Psalmist asks, “*Why are you so cast down, O my soul?*” In his time of sadness, the Psalmist not just listened to his soul but he ministered to himself. A) What are some unhealthy things that your soul tends to tell you when you’re feeling down? (Example: “God must be unhappy with me.” “I’m just getting what I deserve.” Etc.) Why is it important to stop listening to negative self-talk and minister God’s truth in return? What words of truth might you use to counter the negativity that your soul tells you? Write a list of what is true of you in Christ. If needed, ask a friend for assistance.