

A Believer's Holy Longing for His God

Psalm 42-43

I. Background Information

1. The Psalmist was living away from Jerusalem—away from participating in Temple (corporate) worship

a. He was living in the land of Jordan and Hermon—Mount Mizar, roughly in the Syrian territory (verse 6b)

b. Either he was in a forced exile by unfriendly foreign adversaries (verse 10) or he was undergoing some kind of illness that prevented him from traveling

c. He was surrounded by ungodly people who were constantly taunting him (3:b): “Where is your God?”

d. He was depressed and felt tumultuous: “cast down” and “turmoil within me”

2. Structure of the psalm

a. Spiritual longing (verses 1-6)

b. Depression and dialogue (verses 7-12)

c. Prayer and hope (43:1-5)

d. Refrain: 6, 11, 43:5

II. A look at Psalm 42 & 43

1. The psalmist's state of being when he was helplessly stuck in a foreign land, away from the Temple worship and his people (42:1-2)

a. He had an overwhelming sense of want for his God (verse 1)—“pant”

b. He was in an intense desire toward his God—“thirst” (verse 2)

2. The psalmist's pain worsened when his non believing adversaries taunted

a. “Where is your God?”

i. Sarcasm or ridicule

ii. Apparent abandonment—incorrect correlation between his present situation and God's loyalty

iii. Self-pity—he could not sense God's presence

b. He desired God to be active in his life and life-situation, but God seemed to have been absent

3. He felt down casted, depressed, and tumultuous (42:5-6, 11, 43:5)

4. Despite his feeling of “absence of God,” he nurtured his desire for God and maintained communion with God (42:3-4)

a. By NOT paying too much attention to his tormentors (verse 3)

b. By being totally consumed with his thoughts on God (verse 3)

c. By reminiscing his earlier experience of going to the Temple along with the fellow worshippers (verse 4)

d. By nurturing his hope of going to the Temple and be around the fellow worshippers (43:3-4)

e. By appealing to God in prayer (43:1-4)

5. His theological convictions helped him to stand firm in his faith during the time of despair (42:8-10; 43:1)

a. The LORD's covenant faithfulness toward him (verse 8)

b. Living God—despite geographical distance, God continues to inspire His life (verse 8 read

c. His Rock (verse 9) and stronghold (43:2)

d. His Salvation/Savior (verse 11)

e. His Refuge (43:2)

6. When his situation continued for a period of time, instead of forcing his agenda he left it in God's hand (43:3-4)

III. Theological principles

1. If God and His people are not the primary pursuit of a believer, it points to his spiritual ill-health that needs attention

2. Biblical truth properly understood and practiced helps a believer face adversities of life

3. Glitches in ones circumstances and health issues do not point to God's absence or abandonment

4. If things do not change the way believers want, leave the things to how God wants—believers must not force a change that God permitted

5. By nature, man is not inclined towards God and matters related to God. Therefore, he needs regular worship, fellowship with other believers, prayer, testimonies, and proper teachings

6. Spiritual health indicators are: having an overwhelming need for God; having a thirst for God; feeling of being incomplete without regular worship and corporate fellowship

IV. God made His presence as "Immanuel" in Jesus (Matt 1:22; John 1:14) that no believer or congregation need to feel abandonment or exiled

1. There is no need for a physical structure that requires believers to visit

2. God tore the curtain that separated man from God (Matt 27:51; cf. 1 Cor 3:16) in order for man to experience God's presence through Jesus by the work of the Holy Spirit

TAKE AWAY

Make remedies for your spiritual illness—lack of appetite for God and His people