

PRAYING THE PSALMS: **THIRSTY FOR GOD**

Saturday, January 6

Reading: Psalm 42

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: 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. 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.*

An internet guide for hunters gave the following facts about the drinking habits of deer:

- Deer need to drink water several times a day.
- A 200-pound buck will typically drink 3-5 quarts of water per day, more if it is especially hot.
- Deer will usually bed down close to a water source.
- Deer often go to water before they eat food.
- Deer don't need large sources of water. Sometimes a rain puddle will do. ¹

Psalm 42 begins by comparing the psalmist's desire for God to a thirsty deer (42:1-2). The comparison is striking. If we are to "pant for God" He must be a crucial part of our day. We need to come to Him often to fill our thirsty souls. Like the deer, we need to stay close to the Source of this refreshment and desire God before anything else.

This desire for God is more striking when we read the rest of the psalm. The psalmist is struggling to stay close to God. Those around him ridicule his hope by asking "Where is your God?" (42:3, 10). It makes the psalmist question God's concern for him (42:9). His repeated refrain shows his argument with himself about his condition: "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" (42:5, 11).

The phrase "I will yet praise Him" has a future and present hope. It is a promise that the longings and problems of this life will eventually pass and also a reminder to praise God in the here and now. He remembers all that God has done and the joyful times of worshipped with the faithful (42:4-6). He also remembers that God is working within the troubles for the waves sweeping over him are "Your waves" (42:7). These truths give him songs in the night - "a prayer to the God of my life" (42:8).

When God seems far away and you are thirsty for His presence in your life, what do you do? This psalm is clear: We must put our hope in God! We must long to "meet with God." Remembering His great love and salvation spurs us on to know Him better.

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

PRAYER THOUGHT: The title above this psalm tells us that it was written for Temple worship. The Sons of Korah were the worship leaders of the Temple (1 Chron. 6:31-38). This psalm was meant to be sung by people in worship. Worshipping together and singing songs of praise helps us draw near to God. Worship in song should be part of our prayer life - - - even if you think you're not a good singer. Make a joyful noise!

"I will sing to the LORD all my life; I will sing praise to my God as long as I live" (Psalm 104:3)

¹ <https://www.realtree.com/brow-tines-and-backstrap/5-watering-habits-of-mature-deer>