



February 19, 2017

## I Woke Up in Nashville

**READ:** Psalm 42:1 (Common English Bible)

*“Just like a deer that craves streams of water, my whole being craves you, God.”*

### **MEDITATE:**

Country music artist, Seth Ennis, recently released what has been portrayed as a vulnerable love song, *I Woke Up in Nashville*. This piano-driven song builds a compelling story of a man, who leaves someone he loves for the promise of something more, presumably the bright lights of New York City. Convinced that everything he wanted was, “in this town,” a pervasive emptiness overcomes him. There is a hole in his heart that the promises of the city cannot fill; a hole that will only be filled by the love he left in Nashville. The lights of New York, and the promises within them for a complete and joy filled life, fail him: “Cause those Broadway lights don’t shine the way that your eyes did.” The hollowness of life apart from Nashville drives him back to his first love and the longing for forgiveness; forgiveness that he ever left. Fugitively and literally, he wakes up back where he always belonged, in Nashville.

Here, the author of this Psalm is on the same journey. With the urgency of a deer, parched with thirst and seeking cool streams of water, the one who speaks in this Psalm craves God. It is a journey that we are familiar with. It is a timeless journey driven by an urge – the urge for God – that takes possession of the human heart. It is a journey that leaps across borders of races and nations and shows no regard for the boundaries of generations. Men and women chase after dreams, chase after the lights of Broadway, to discover that any dream that leaves God behind results in emptiness. In that moment when the Broadway lights dim before the remembrance of God’s love, we rush back to Nashville; back to the embrace of God.

Although church membership and worship attendance is trending downward throughout the United States and Europe, considerable research reveals that there remains a deep and increasing desire to know God. Everywhere there is a sense of confusion and strain and struggle. Increasingly, people long for something which satisfies but seem unable to find it. Many have pursued pleasure and personal enrichment, but few have arrived at contentment. As the early church leader, St. Augustine once observed, there is a God-shaped hole inside each of us and, therefore, only God can fill that hole.

The radiant life that so many seek will not be found in the “Broadway lights” that are chased if God is left behind in Nashville. Naturally, God is not limited in location, not geographical location, anyway. God is present in both Nashville and New York. The great question for every person is whether God is welcomed in the human heart. What the songwriter discovers is, “I was wrong for thinking you were something I could ever do without.” And at the end of the journey which pursues the radiant life, the song writer finally discovers what we all must discover, “You (God) were all that I needed all along.” It is there, at the end, we realize that, just like a deer that craves streams of water, the life we crave is found in God.

**APPLY:**

1. How has this scripture or meditation spoken to you?

2. What insight can you apply to your life this week?

3. What one specific act do you intend to take, an attitude to change, a person to see, or prayer to pray?

**PRAY:**

*Lord, when I have wandered away from you, help me once again to find my way back to your embrace. Amen.*