

## Daily Devotional

**April 17, 2005**

(Contributed by David Berry)

**Theme:** Thirst for God

**Text:** Psalms 42-43 Reading the Psalms reminds me that life can be very difficult—even for God’s children. Read Psalms 42 and 43 as one unit (that’s probably how those two should be read—you’ll see recurring themes in both), and you’ll meet a man who is in deep trouble. Just look at how he describes himself: in tears, taunted by enemies, downcast, disturbed, overwhelmed, mourning, oppressed, in physical pain, in danger and in need of rescue. He even feels at times that God has forgotten him, or worse, that God has rejected him. Like every human being who’s ever suffered, he asks the question that rarely has answers, “Why?” Ever been there yourself?

Yet, in these very circumstances the psalmist offers a beautiful and impassioned expression of his need for God. “As a deer pants for streams of water so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God” (Ps. 42:1-2). Desperate for God—that’s what he is—desperate! Desperation is a good thing when it drives us to the One who can mend our broken heart and satisfy our thirsty soul. I’m thankful the Lord listens to us when we’re desperate. That’s comforting.

But Lord, is there a way I can feel desperate for you when times are good? I confess that it’s easier to yearn for God when I feel need, when I’m anxious or depressed. If I were more mature in Christ, maybe I wouldn’t have to find myself in trouble before I recognize my desperation for God. I know intellectually that I need God every moment, but experientially I seem to require difficulty to make me realize just how desperately I need Him. Maybe that’s why New Testament writers tell us to rejoice in suffering (Romans 5:2-5; James 1:2-8). Trials have a way of refining us and focusing our attention on the only One who can give meaning to suffering.

Whoever wrote Psalms 42 and 43 was no Pollyanna. He’s not some naive, pie-in-the-sky-in-the-sweet-by-and-by type of person who refuses to see that life can get awfully ugly and hard. You see him struggle with his faith. His emotions, like mine, flip-flop. At times he feels God’s closeness, and at other times he questions and wonders where God is in his suffering (Ps. 42:8-9). He cannot deny his feelings. But neither can he forget that God has always been faithful in the past. So three times he asks himself, “Why are you so downcast and disturbed?” And then he reminds himself to trust in God who will deliver. So he prays that God will send light and truth to guide him out of his darkness and into God’s presence, where he can delight in God’s joy (Ps. 43:3).

“Why?” There may not be an answer in this life. But one thing we know. When “why?” drives us to our knees in desperation, God is there. And Father will draw us close to his breast so that we can hear His heartbeat.

**Prayer:** Father, whether today brings happiness or sorrow, success or failure, draw me close to

you. Especially when times are hard, quench my desperately thirsty soul with the satisfying, comforting water that only You can give. In Christ, Amen