

(How to Understand the KJV Bible) 06 Psalm 42

by Keith Simons

David's Psalm 42 expresses his deep longing for God's presence and his trust in God's kindness, even in difficult circumstances.

Duration: 20:07

Scripture: Psalm 42:1

Topics: "KJV Bible", "Longing for God", "Hope in Despair"

Description

Keith Simons teaches on Psalm 42, illustrating David's deep longing for God during his exile from Jerusalem due to Absalom's rebellion. He emphasizes the metaphor of a deer thirsting for water, paralleling David's soul's desperate desire for the living God. Simons explains how David's tears and prayers sustain him in his distress, despite the taunts of his enemies questioning God's presence. The sermon highlights the importance of hope in God, even in the darkest times, as David reassures himself of God's faithfulness and love. Ultimately, Simons encourages believers to trust in God as their rock and source of strength.

Transcript

Welcome, my name is Keith Symons. I'm a Bible teacher from England and this is the next of our series of talks on how to understand the King James Version. In each of these talks we've been looking at one of the Psalms and today we're looking at Psalm 42.

We're going to go through it verse by verse and word by word, understanding the meanings of the words and learning the lessons that the Psalm has for us. This particular Psalm, Psalm 42, matches in its content the situation when David was driven away from Jerusalem by his son Absalom who'd organised a revolution against him. David went away from Jerusalem, never really expecting perhaps to return to it and he had to escape to the east side of the river Jordan and that seems to be the picture as this Psalm begins.

Many of the Psalms have titles and this one has the title to the chief musician, Maskil, for the sons of Korah. The sons of Korah were a group of temple musicians. They were descended from Korah who rebelled against Moses and Aaron and against God and who died for his sins but his descendants or his sons in later generations became musicians in the temple.

This Psalm is described as a Maskil, that's Hebrew word. We're not always sure what these Hebrew titles mean but this one seems to mean a poem to teach you something. It's a teaching poem so we're looking to learn lessons here as we begin the Psalm.

First one As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. The heart is, we normally call it the deer today, it's a very graceful animal, a wild animal which searches far across the hills of Israel and this heart is panting after the water brooks. It's desperate, it's longing for water, it's searching for those streams, it's almost crying as it desires the water and maybe David when he wrote this Psalm saw such a deer and he said it's like that, that my soul pants after thee, O God.

It's like that, that my inner life desires you, God. The soul speaks of the inner life of the person, the real life. David's body might have been strong and well but deep inside himself he was disturbed, he was upset.

He'd been driven from his home, he'd been driven from Jerusalem, he'd been driven from the city which God had chosen where he wanted to be. And so he comments, verse two, my soul thirsteth for God, for the living God. My soul, my life within me has a deep desire for God, such a deep desire.

I'm not satisfied with the false gods of other religions, I'm not satisfied with the distant relationship with God. God is the God who is living, always alive. And it's God, the real God whom I desire to be with.

And I don't just desire to pray to him from a great distance, I want to go to his house and pray there. I want to join those who on the sacred holidays go to worship. The temple wasn't there but the Ark of the Covenant stood in a tent in Jerusalem.

I want to be with those who worship there, says David. When, he asks, shall I come and appear before God? Verse three, my tears have been my meat, day and night. My meat.

Well, meat here translates the Hebrew word that always means bread. My tears have been my bread, day and night. What sustains me? What keeps me alive in this? It's only my deep desire for God.

I'm in such great trouble, says David, that what keeps me alive is that desire for God. I'm crying out in prayer to him. My tears are what keep me alive.

You might say, why have they translated bread as meat? Well, meat, of course, is what kept people in England alive. It was the substance of their food. And so, obviously, the King James translators, in 1600 or thereabouts, thought that meat was a better way to express this idea than bread.

But the meaning is, my tears have been my bread, because bread was such an important food to the ancient Israelite. That was the food which he depended upon utterly, just as in medieval England, a wealthier person would depend on meat. My tears have been my meat, while they continually say to me and to me, where is thy God? Where is your God, they're saying? All the people around him, maybe, are saying, you promised that God would help us, God would rescue us, God would look after us, and yet you've been driven from your home, you've been driven from the place of worship to God, you've been forced to be far away in this place on the other side of Jordan, and all his accusers say to him, where is your God? All his enemies are saying to him by implication, your God cannot rescue you.

Why are you hoping in God? You're in a desperate situation, God won't help you now. That's the meaning of that. Verse four.

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me. I pour out my inner life. How does he pour out his soul? He pours out his soul in prayer.

He turns in prayer to God. He remembers how he had gone with the multitude, with all the people, to the house of God, to the place of worship in the past. Then he could pray with them, and how joyful it was to give thanks to God in that situation.

With the multitude that kept holy day, the end of verse four. With all the people that kept holy day, the sacred holiday. That's the word that gives us the word holiday.

But this is not a holiday of just relaxing and ease. This is a sacred holiday. This is a time you go to the temple to worship at Passover, or on the feast of Pentecost.

You've gone to the temple, you've gone to God's house, you've gone to the place where the Ark of the Covenant is, because you want to worship with God's people. Oh how David so much wanted to worship with God's people at God's house once again. But he asks a question now.

He is upset, he is disturbed. Why? Why are you cast down? Why art thou cast down, O my soul? And why art thou disquieted in me? In other words, why are you disturbed? Why are you thrown over? To be cast down means to throw something to the ground. Why are you in this disturbed state? Because you've got a real reason for hope.

Hope thou in God. The person who serves God doesn't have to worry when his life is turned upside down and he's in great trouble, because his hope can be in God. He can trust in God who will act on his behalf.

And David writes, I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. His countenance means his face. When the doctor turns his face towards you, it's to listen to your problem and to solve your problem.

When God turns his face towards David, it's to rescue him from this trouble and this situation which he's in. So David says, I will yet praise God because of the help that he will give me by his face, by his turning to me. So now he continues in prayer, verse 6. Oh my God, my soul is cast down within me.

Therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites from the hill Mizar. My soul is so desperate. That's why I'm going to remember you.

Where do I remember you from? From the land of Jordan, the wrong side of the river Jordan, the east side, which originally God didn't give to Israel's people, which belonged to foreigners. From the land of the Hermonites, the Hermons. Hermon was a great mountain that stands in that region.

From the hill Mizar, that means a little hill. We don't know quite what that meant. But David wasn't on the great hill Hermon.

He was on a little hill and he was in a desperate place. Deep calleth, verse 7, deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water spouts. That might mean waterfalls or it might mean something else.

But all this deep water and the pictures of a drowning man with waves and waves going over him, all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me. And this man with the water going over his head, he's desperate. That's how David felt in this situation.

Yet he had a reason for hope, a reason for confidence. And he tells us that reason in verse 8. Yet the Lord will command his love and kindness. God will send his kindness, his love.

God will look after me, even in this difficult situation, even in all my troubles. And, you know, his love is continuous. His kindness never fails.

It's in the daytime and in the night. And in the night he'll be singing because his song shall be with me. This is God's song that will be with David.

It's a song that God gives to David. And David may be in a desperate situation, but God has given him a song that sustains him through the night. And so he turns in prayer to the God of his life, the only God he knows, the God who his life depends on.

He turns in prayer. Verse 9, the prayer and the revelation. I will say unto God, my rock.

My rock? Well, when you build a house, you want to build it on a strong foundation. You don't want to build it on ground that moves around. You want to dig down until you're on the rock.

And then your house will be strong and it will stand firm and solid. David's revelation is that God is his rock. God is the one who he can depend on.

Everything around might be disturbed and shaking, like waves going over his head. But God is his rock. And as long as he has that base to his life, that firm and definite base, he doesn't have to worry because he has someone to depend on who cannot fail.

I will say unto God, my rock. And then we see his prayers are still desperate. He puts them in questions.

Why has thou forgotten me? God, why have you forgotten me? When people say that, that sort of expression today, they're often expressing doubt. They're saying God's forgotten me. He shouldn't have forgotten me.

But for David, that's a great hope because God is saying, sorry, David is saying to God in a desperate way, God, I need you to return to me. I need you to rescue me. It's not right that you should forget me.

It's not even possible that you should forget me because I am your son. I am the one who you have chosen. And as your child, you wouldn't forget me.

So why does it seem to me almost as if you have forgotten me? You are my rock. My life depends on you. And he asks God in this desperate way to turn around the situation.

He continues, why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? Mourning, deeply sad. Why am I going around deeply sad? Because an enemy opposes me when God is my rock, when God is the strength of my life, when it's on God who I depend. Verse 10, he describes the trouble of the enemies yet again.

As with the sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me. It's like a sword in my bones affecting the strongest part of me, affecting the part, the structure of my body, which the strongest part feels weak because my enemies reproach me. They tell me off.

They oppose me. They speak against me. Daily they're saying to me, where is thy God? Daily they say to me, your God isn't going to rescue you.

There's no hope for you. But David answers in words which he's said before and he repeats here, why art thou cast down, O my soul? It's not right that you should be like someone who's been thrown to the ground. And why art thou disquieted within me? Why is my inner life so disturbed? Because I have a real hope, a real reason to trust someone who I can depend on, my rock, my strength, my salvation.

Hope thou, he's talking to his soul now, he's telling his inner life to put his hope in God because I shall yet praise him. Even now I know this situation will come to an end. I know that I can trust him.

I know that I shall give God thanks because he is the health of my countenance and my God. He will turn to me. He will rescue me.

He will give strength to me. He will take my depressed face and turn me again to joy as I trust in him because he will bring me back to the place where I will be close to him. So says David in this psalm.

I would love for you to write to me. My email address is 333kjb at gmail.com. That's 333kjb at gmail.com. But to conclude, let me read through the whole psalm. Psalm 42.

To the chief musician, Maskil, for the sons of Korah. As the heart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my meat day and night, while they continually say unto me, Where is thy God? When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me. For I had gone with the multitude. I went with them to the house of God with the voice of joy and praise, with the multitude that kept holy day.

Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted in me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him for the help of his countenance. O my God, my soul is cast down within me, therefore will I remember thee from the land of Jordan and of the Hermonites, from the hill Mizar. Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy water sprouts, all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.

Yet the Lord will command his loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night his song shall be with me, and my prayer unto the God of my life. I will say unto God my rock, why hast thou forgotten me? Why go I mourning because of the oppression of the enemy? As with the sword in my bones, mine enemies reproach me, while they say daily unto me, where is thy God? Why art thou cast down, O my soul, and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope thou in God, for I shall yet praise him who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

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