

PSALM 43:5 THE SCRIPTURAL PREMISE OF TALKING TO YOURSELF

Psalm 103:1-2 A Psalm of David. Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits:

Psalm 43:5 Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope in God: for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God.

- There are no statistics available on people who talk to themselves, because most of them won't admit it! Experts say this activity is not harmful – unless you begin to hear responses!
- In the Psalms (hymnbook of human emotion) David gives us precedent for exhorting ourselves!
- Psalm 42 and 43 are described as a Maschil (mas-keel), a song written for the purpose of giving instruction.
- It was written for the sons of Korah (the Kohathites) to sing. Their ancestor Korah was the one who rebelled against Moses because he was jealous of Aaron's position as priest. His sons obviously separated themselves from their father's rebellion, for they later became prominent in Levitical service. In addition to their other Temple duties, they were an integral part of the Levitical choir.
- These words were most likely written by David when he had to leave Jerusalem because of Absalom's rebellion. It is the worst time of his forty years as monarch of Israel. Even the house of Saul has risen once more against David in the person of Shimei who curses him (*2 Samuel 16:5* *And when king David came to Bahurim, behold, thence came out a man of the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei, the son of Gera: he came forth, and cursed still as he came.*). He has been forced to cross over the Jordan River into safer territory and feels isolated from his beloved Jerusalem (*2 Samuel 17:22* *Then David arose, and all the people that were with him, and they passed over Jordan: by the morning light there lacked not one of them that was not gone over Jordan.*).
- David perhaps addresses it to the Kohathites because they have the privilege of serving constantly in the Tabernacle (no matter what the political situation!). Later, they will actually dwell in the Temple compound built by Solomon to provide music for the service of the Lord. (*2 Chronicles 9:32-33* *And other of their brethren, of the sons of the Kohathites, were over the shewbread, to prepare it every sabbath. And these are the singers, chief of the fathers of the Levites, who remaining in the chambers were free: for they were employed in that work day and night.*)
- Psalm 42 and 43 were originally one psalm with three verses, each followed by the same chorus (42:5, 42:11, 43:5). David's three verses (and his deepest emotions) can be summed up in three short phrases. These are the reasons he is passionate to return to Jerusalem and the house of God!

I'M DRY IN MY SPIRIT! (42:1-5)

- v.1 – A deer is normally a silent creature until their thirst makes them pant (“bray”) for water. They get like this when there is a time of drought, when they are extremely hot, or when they are being pursued (instinct causes them to run into the water where the dogs will lose the scent). It is not a luxury to drink of the water, it is an absolute necessity! We too are normally silent until trouble comes. But then, as the deer brays so the soul prays!
- v.2 – David's question is literally “When shall I see the face of God?” – he desires God's presence, not just his house!
- v.3 – It was Shimei who taunted David with curses. “Where is Thy God?” is the unspoken question behind his curses. It is also the deepest unspoken question of any human heart in the midst of a spiritual dry time.
- v.4 – David remembers the blessed times of feast days with the multitude in God's house. He longs for them again!

I'M DROWNING IN MY PROBLEMS! (42:6-11)

- v.6 – David is now across the Jordan River from Jerusalem. Today's Jordan has been deepened and straightened by Israeli engineers, so it is hard to visualize the ancient river which flooded annually. When it did, it was uncrossable. It symbolizes David's problems which are also insurmountable – he is drowning in them!
- v.7 – The language here pictures waters from above and beneath, like a small boat out on a rough sea in the middle of a treacherous downpour. No matter how hard one bails, the boat continues to fill with water. It is overwhelming!
- v.10 – Once again, the refrain “Where is Thy God?” is heard amid the crashing of the billows.

I'M DEFEATED BY MY ENEMY! (43:1-5)

- v.1 – Absalom has turned the whole nation against his father. This is a literal defeat, not just a figurative one!
- v.2 – When we have been defeated, it is normal to feel “cast off” by God. This is not the reality, however!
- v.4 – David promises that when he goes to the altar (of repentance!) he will sing praise “unto God my exceeding joy.” He knows that God expects him to resume his rightful place as king the very moment he returns to Jerusalem! This “repentance and rejoicing” is David's secret to “bouncing back” quickly. He refuses to let his mistakes be fatal!

TALK TO YOURSELF, DAVID! (42:5, 42:11, 43:5)

- David's question in the refrain is literally, "Soul, why do you cast yourself down? Why are you in a tumult?" He is talking to himself, because he knows that storms on the outside are only harmful when we let them inside!
- If like David we can maintain our hunger for the presence of God, dry spirits, drowning problems and defeating enemies will always be temporary! Repent – and then rejoice!
- We need to answer the question "Where is Your God?" with this question – "Where are Your eyes?" In the midst of dryness, drowning and defeat look at all the good things God has done instead of the one thing you don't understand.
- TALK TO YOURSELF! Bless the lord, o my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name!