

Sermon Guide and Discussion Questions

When God Seems Distant – Psalm 42 and 43

Sermon Outline

1. Introduction – illustration of Gatorade
2. Why God Seems Distant
3. How to Respond
 - a. Preach to Yourself
 - b. Thirst for God
4. Conclusion – because Jesus endured similar grief and was forsaken by the Father, we can turn to God when He seems distant

Scripture Passages Referenced

- Psalm 119:105 - Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.
- Lamentations 3:22-23 - The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
- Romans 8:38-39 - For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- John 7:37-38 - If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'
- Exodus 23:17 - Three times in the year shall all your males appear before the Lord GOD.
- Mark 14:34 - My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.
- Psalm 22:1 - My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Discussion Questions

- What form of grief do we find in these two psalms?
- In what ways does the psalmist feel that God is distant?
- When have you felt that God is distant?
- How can you relate to the various reasons God can seem distant found in these psalms?
- Based on your answer to the previous question, what is God calling you to do differently?
- When God seems distant, why are we slow to turn to Him?
- How does the cry for God's light and truth help us understand what it means to turn to God?
- What is the difference between listening to yourself and speaking to yourself?
- Where in these two psalms do we find the psalmist preaching to himself?
- Why does the content of what we preach to ourselves matter so much?
- What are the truths of God's Word that you need to preach to yourself on a daily basis?
- Why is it comforting that Psalm 42:1-2 about thirsting for God are found in the context of such grief and God seeming distant?
- What does it mean to thirst for God?
- Do you have a thirst for God like the psalmist describes? Why or why not?
- What role does corporate worship have in growing and quenching our thirst for God?
- In what ways does your view of corporate worship need to change?
- How can you grow in your thirst for God?
- Where in the Bible do we see these two psalms connecting to Jesus?
- How does the fact that Jesus experienced this same type of grief and feeling help us draw near to Him in our times of need?
- How do these two psalms and this sermon help you love Jesus more?
- How do these two psalms and this sermon show you your deep need for Jesus?