

Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption



"The Cry of the Brokenhearted"

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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Psalm 102; 42; Ps. 34:19; Ps. 145:18; 1 Sam. 1:1–20; 2:1–10

There are painful seasons in life we would never choose to walk through again, yet when we look back, there can be something strangely sweet about the memory of that time. Not because of the pain or heartbreak, but because of the closeness of the LORD in the midst of it. There is something about being brokenhearted, when everything seems to be falling apart, that drives us to our knees. When life is going well, we can easily slip into cruise control, thinking we have everything under control. But when life becomes overwhelming, we recognize how desperately we need Him. It's in those moments that we experience the sweetness of His embrace.

In Ps. 34:19, we read, *"ADONAI is close to the brokenhearted, and saves those crushed in spirit."* And Ps. 145:18 reminds us, *"ADONAI is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth."* There is a beautiful connection between our brokenheartedness and calling upon the LORD. Sometimes ADONAI allows seasons of disappointment, not because we've necessarily done something wrong, but because He's accomplishing something we cannot yet see. Consider Hannah in 1 Sam. 1. Year after year, she endured the heartbreak of barrenness and the bitter taunting of Peninnah. Yet in her anguish, she sought the LORD, pouring out her soul before Him, unaware of what ADONAI was preparing through her sorrow.

1. POUR OUT YOUR HEART BEFORE HIM (Ps. 102:1–12)

Psalm 102 opens with the prayer of someone afflicted, faint, and overwhelmed, pouring out his lament before ADONAI. He cries, *"ADONAI, hear my prayer, let my cry come to You"* (Ps. 102:2). There is urgency in his words. He's saying, "LORD, hear me! Don't turn away! I need You to answer!" His heart is withered like grass, he's forgotten to eat, and he lies awake like a lonely bird upon a roof. There is a profound sense of despair and isolation. He's not pretending everything is fine or trying to put on a brave face. He's bringing the full weight of his anguish before the LORD. And that's okay! It's okay to cry out with urgency and tell ADONAI how desperately we need Him.

This reminds us of Hannah, who stood before ADONAI in Shiloh, weeping and praying so intensely that Eli thought she was drunk. Her response was simple: *"I've been pouring out my soul before ADONAI"* (1 Sam. 1:15). She wasn't hiding her anguish; she was emptying herself before the LORD. And look, Hannah's suffering wasn't the consequence of some sin she had committed. For reasons she couldn't understand, ADONAI had allowed her season of barrenness. Yet her pain drove her into His presence. Sometimes we find ourselves in circumstances we cannot explain, facing disappointments that seem to have no end. Rather than withdrawing from the LORD, we need to bring our heartbreak and confusion before Him. He isn't intimidated by our cries or offended by our questions. He invites us to pour out our hearts before Him.

2. REMEMBER HIS UNCHANGING FAITHFULNESS (Ps. 102:13–29)

Something remarkable happens in Psalm 102. In the midst of describing his suffering, the psalmist suddenly turns his attention toward the LORD: *"But You, ADONAI, sit enthroned*

forever" (Ps. 102:13). The Psalmist's circumstances haven't necessarily changed, but his *focus* has. He begins remembering ADONAI's faithfulness and compassion. Then, in verse 18, we read that ADONAI *"has turned to the prayer of the destitute, and has not despised their prayer."* I love that imagery! The Hebrew conveys the picture of ADONAI turning His face toward the one who has been poured out, the one made bare. Think about Hannah, standing in her brokenheartedness, emptying herself before the LORD. His face is turned toward her. He doesn't think little of her anguish. Her prayer isn't insignificant to Him. **The God who reigns over heaven and earth turns His attention toward the brokenhearted.**

Then the psalmist reminds us of something foundational to our hope. The heavens and the earth, things that seem so permanent, will eventually wear out like clothing. But ADONAI remains unchanged. *"But You are the same, and Your years will never end"* (Ps. 102:28). It's as though he's saying that the clothing may change, but the One wearing the clothing never does! Everything around us changes. Our circumstances change, our strength changes, and seasons come and go. But the LORD remains the same. Because He remains, those who belong to Him can find rest and security in His presence. Our hope isn't anchored in everything immediately working out the way we want, but in knowing that the One who hears our cries is faithful, compassionate, and unchanging.

3. HOPE IN HIM, EVEN WHEN YOUR SOUL IS DOWNCAST (Ps. 42:1–12)

Psalm 42 begins with the beautiful picture of a deer desperately longing for streams of water. *"As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O God"* (Ps. 42:2). This isn't a casual desire for the LORD. It's the cry of someone who recognizes that ADONAI's presence is as necessary to his soul as water is to a thirsty deer. Yet this same psalmist is overwhelmed with sorrow. His tears have become his food day and night, and he continually hears the taunting question, *"Where is your God?"* (Ps. 42:4). Sometimes those voices come from others, as they did for Hannah. But sometimes they come from within, when we look around and wonder why everyone else seems to prosper while we continue to struggle. In those moments, the psalmist makes an intentional decision: he will remember ADONAI's faithfulness and pour out his soul before Him.

Then he begins speaking to his own soul: *"Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why are you murmuring within me? Hope in God, for I will yet praise Him"* (Ps. 42:6). The Hebrew carries the sense of a soul melting away in despair, restless and agitated within. But he refuses to let despair have the final word. He calls himself to hope, to wait, and to endure in the LORD. Notice, he doesn't pretend his pain has disappeared. He still asks God why He seems to have forgotten him! Yet even in his confusion, he remembers that *"By day ADONAI commands His love and at night His song is with me"* (Ps. 42:9). We can be hurting and still worship. We can have unanswered questions and still trust. We can be overwhelmed by life's waves and still declare that ADONAI is our Rock. Sometimes we must remind our souls, day after day, that we will yet praise Him because our hope rests in the salvation of His presence.

CONCLUSION

Think again about Hannah. We can read through the first chapter of 1 Samuel in a matter of minutes, but it wasn't "minutes" for Hannah. Those verses represent years of disappointment and heartbreak. Year after year, she brought her sorrow before ADONAI, not knowing when or whether her circumstances would change. But the LORD heard her cry. In His appointed time,

He gave her Samuel, whose name reminds us that God hears. And the fruit of that season of brokenheartedness extended far beyond Hannah's circumstances. Samuel would become a faithful prophet and judge over Israel, helping lead the nation through a pivotal moment in its history. Hannah couldn't have imagined everything ADONAI was preparing through those years of waiting. Yet when she finally lifted her voice in praise, she declared, *"There is none holy as ADONAI, for there is none besides You, nor is there any rock like our God"* (1 Sam. 2:2).

Perhaps you're walking through one of those seasons right now. Maybe you've been praying for months, or even years, wondering why the LORD hasn't answered. Perhaps your soul feels as though it's melting away under the weight of disappointment. Don't give up on the LORD! Don't sit silently in your brokenheartedness. Today, make an altar right where you are. Bring your pain, your confusion, your unanswered questions, and your tears before ADONAI. Tell Him where you're hurting, and then intentionally turn your heart toward His faithfulness. **He is near to the brokenhearted, and He has not despised your prayer.** We may not understand what He's accomplishing through our affliction, but we can trust that He's working in ways we cannot yet see. So continue seeking Him, continue waiting upon Him, and continue praising Him. The fruitfulness of what He's producing may reach further than you could ever imagine.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. In Ps. 102:1–12, the psalmist openly expresses his anguish and isolation before ADONAI. What does this teach us about the honesty the LORD welcomes in our prayers?
2. Psalm 102 shifts from describing suffering to remembering ADONAI's unchanging character. Why is remembering who God is so important when our circumstances seem hopeless?
3. In Ps. 42, the psalmist speaks to his downcast soul, calling himself to hope in God. What practical steps can we take when anxiety, discouragement, or disappointment overwhelm our thoughts?
4. Hannah endured years of heartbreak without knowing what ADONAI was preparing. Is there an unanswered prayer or prolonged difficulty in your life that has challenged your trust in Him? How might Hannah's example encourage you?
5. The psalmist determines to praise ADONAI even while struggling with sorrow. What is the difference between pretending everything is fine and choosing to worship the LORD in the midst of genuine pain?

CLOSING PRAYER

Avinu Malkhenu, Our Father, Our King, thank You that You are near to the brokenhearted and hear the cries of those crushed in spirit. Thank You that we don't have to hide our pain, disappointments, or questions from You. You know our hearts and invite us to pour out our souls before You. LORD, in our seasons of sorrow, help us experience the sweetness of Your presence. Remind us that Your face is turned toward those who cry out to You and that You never regard our prayers as insignificant. When our souls are downcast, teach us to remember Your faithfulness, wait upon You, and continue praising You. We trust that You are working even when we cannot understand what You're doing. Produce in us a fruitfulness that brings glory to Your name and extends far beyond what we can presently see.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.