

P260

**Grace Notes Radio Program
THEME: FELLOWSHIP RESTORED
SONGS: AS THE DEER
HE'S ALL I NEED**

INTRO: Are you feeling spiritually dry? Does what always seemed to bring you close to the Lord not work anymore? Well, it might just be time to assess what it takes to keep your relationship flourishing. Today on Grace Notes, Barbara Sandbek will look at King David's efforts to restore the fellowship he once knew with the Lord, and glean some insight into how we can do the same.

Psalm 42 is King David's plea for deliverance from being "oppressed by the enemy". Most likely this was written during the time when he was exiled to a pagan land. I imagine he had to constantly look over his shoulder for the enemy, much like a hunted deer would. In his travels he probably saw a deer with foam around its mouth walking toward a stream. It looked around, dipped its parched mouth into the cool water. Quickly it lifted its head to check for danger and then lowered it again to drink. Its life depended on water, especially when pressed by hunters. David could identify with this picture. He wrote in the first verse...

As the deer pants for streams of water so my soul pants for you, O God.

In running from his oppressors, David, too, probably understood what it was like to actually pant and need a cool drink. But the panting David is describing here is a demonstrative longing, a yearning for refreshment from the God who gives LIVING WATER. David's SOUL was thirsty. He wrote in verse 2..

My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

Perhaps he wrote this Psalm as a song like this one...

***** AS THE DEER *****

This Psalm is also a prayer for restoration to the presence of God. David wrote...

Where can I go to meet with God?

You see, his ENVIRONMENT had changed. He was far from Jerusalem and far from worship in the house of God. In verse 4, he recalled the good old days...

These things I remember as I pour out my soul, how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng.

David was comfortable with how things were. Then...I guess you could say, he had the rug pulled out from under him.

In verse 9 he wrote...

I say to God, my Rock, "Why have You forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by my enemy? My bones suffer mortal agony as my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

His CIRCUMSTANCES prevented him from being in the house of the Lord to meet with God and he was losing sleep over it. Listen to verse 3...

My tears have been my food day and night while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

But, one thing David hadn't yet realized, God is not a GOD OF THE ENVIRONMENT. And maybe we haven't realized that, either. Is that quiet place where you migrated to for communion with God now deluged with noise and commotion – or the time you had for Bible study and prayer absorbed with new commitments? God may allow these changes to help you refocus on Him in a new way. We should never grow ACCUSTOMED to God.

God has a good purpose for every change that occurs in our lives, but, too many of us are pining away because things are not the way they used to be. We've depended on PLACES, PEOPLE, PROCEDURES or POSITION to draw us closer to the Lord. I say, "Where is your God?" Is He in a church sanctuary, in an idol you look up to, in a ritual, in your service for Him? Do you love the GIFTS more than the GIVER?

GOD is not a GOD of the CIRCUMSTANCES, either. Has there been a split in your church? Have you lost someone you loved? Has your health deteriorated? Have you entered into financial difficulty? These may be 'oppressions' from the enemy but they're allowed by God, just as David's exile was. Life is constantly changing. We can count on NOTHING except the faithfulness of God. We err when we let circumstances or environment rule our lives.

GOD resides in your soul if you're a Believer in Christ. And if you haven't asked Jesus to save you from your sin and become a part of your life as Savior and Lord, you can never enter into the presence of God. But Isaiah 1:18a says...

COME NOW, let us reason together, says the Lord. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.

Isaiah 55:3 says...

Give ear and COME TO ME; hear me that your soul may live.

Jesus says in John 7:37-38...

If anyone is thirsty, let him COME TO ME and drink. Whoever believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, streams of LIVING water will flow from within him.

Matthew 11:28 Jesus says...

COME TO ME all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest.

Did you get the emphasis? All these verses say...COME TO 'ME', not to a place, thing or person. And it takes action on our part – we must COME. David sensed God drawing him when he wrote in verse 7...

..Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls all your waves and breakers have swept over me.

This pictures the great distress the author suffers. It reminds me of standing in the ocean and being knocked down by a strong wave and pulled into the current. At this point, I'm no longer in control, but subject to the draw of the tide. It can be distressing. Only with God, the drawing is not unto death, it's unto LIFE who is Jesus, the way, truth and life.

God knows the deepest agony of our souls and how uncomfortable we are with change. He draws us to Himself through His Spirit and gives us hope. Isaiah 40:31 says...

...those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

David began to understand this, too, when he wrote these words twice in verses 5 & 11...

**Why are you so downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?
Put YOUR HOPE IN GOD, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God.
And in verse 8 he focuses on his Source of comfort..**

**By day the Lord directs His love, at night his song is with me – a prayer to
the God of my life.**

**If you're feeling like God is distant, you can be assured YOU'VE moved away.
Come to Jesus and ask Him to redirect your focus, remove the barriers, and
show you that He's all you need.**

***** HE'S ALL I NEED *****

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praise!**