

## **“The Downcast Soul” [PART 4] (Psalms 42 & 43)(9.4.22)**

### **Psalm 42**

For the director of music. *A maskil* of the Sons of Korah.

<sup>1</sup> As the deer pants for streams of water,  
so my soul pants for you, O God.

<sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When can I go and meet with God?

<sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food  
day and night,

while men say to me all day long,

“Where is your God?”

<sup>4</sup> 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.

<sup>5</sup> Why are you downcast, O my soul?

Why so disturbed within me?

Put your hope in God,

for I will yet praise him,

my Savior and<sup>6</sup> my God.

My soul is downcast within me;

therefore I will remember you

from the land of the Jordan,

the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.

<sup>7</sup> Deep calls to deep

in the roar of your waterfalls;

all your waves and breakers

have swept over me.

<sup>8</sup> By day the Lord directs his love,

at night his song is with me—

a prayer to the God of my life.

<sup>9</sup> I say to God my Rock,

“Why have you forgotten me?

Why must I go about mourning,  
oppressed by the enemy?"

<sup>10</sup> My bones suffer mortal agony  
as my foes taunt me,  
saying to me all day long,  
"Where is your God?"

<sup>11</sup> Why are you 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.

Psalm 43 (NIV84)

<sup>1</sup> Vindicate me, O God,  
and plead my cause against an ungodly nation;  
rescue me from deceitful and wicked men.

<sup>2</sup> You are God my stronghold.  
Why have you rejected me?  
Why must I go about mourning,

oppressed by the enemy?

<sup>3</sup> Send forth your light and your truth,  
let them guide me;  
let them bring me to your holy mountain,  
to the place where you dwell.

<sup>4</sup> Then will I go to the altar of God,  
to God, my joy and my delight.  
I will praise you with the harp,  
O God, my God.

<sup>5</sup> Why are you 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.

**The word of God for the people of God.**

LET US PRAY.

Title: **"The Downcast Soul" [PART 4]**

INTRODUCTION:

Each Sunday, we pray the Lord's Prayer. It is called the Lord's Prayer because the Lord Jesus gave it to His disciples in response to their request, "Lord teach us to pray." How often do you pray the Lord's Prayer? How often should we pray the Lord's Prayer?

The answer is in the prayer itself: Give us this day our daily bread. The manna from heaven that was given to the Israelites in the wilderness was given anew each day to sustain them. And, in our prayer we acknowledge our dependence on our Heavenly Father is needed daily.

In the next part of the Lord's Prayer, we pray, "And, lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." Some manuscripts of Matthew's Gospel give Jesus' words as "deliver us from the evil one." Think about the significance of the juxtaposition of our need for daily bread and our need of deliverance from the Evil One.

In the Gospels, many times Jesus cast out demons or evil spirits from people. Probably the most famous is when he cast out a legion of demons and banished them into the pigs. When He sent out the disciples to prepare the way for Him, they returned with excitement. Luke 10:17 (NIV84) The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name."

There is much more evidence that spiritual warfare is a reality, but for now what I have already presented will suffice. What I want to do, is demonstrate that there is a strong case that The Downcast Soul was in the midst of a spiritual battle in his depression. This will be done by looking at the workings of Satan in the Book of Job and comparing them to Psalms 42 & 43. We will also incorporate some insights from the well-known scripture on the Armor of God in the sixth chapter of Ephesians.

BODY:

Job lived in the land of Uz. He was blameless and upright; he feared God and shunned evil. He had a very large family and great wealth. He was the greatest man among all the people of the East. He followed the religious practices on behalf of his whole family.

God pointed out Job's righteousness and faithfulness to Satan. Job 1:9-12 (NIV84)

<sup>9</sup>“Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied.<sup>10</sup>  
“Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land.<sup>11</sup> **But stretch out your hand and strike everything**

**he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.”**

<sup>12</sup>The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.”

Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

He was going to put Job to the test. Sabeans were sent to attack and carry off the oxen and donkeys. The Chaldeans raided and carried off all the camels. Fire came from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants. A mighty wind swept in from the desert and destroyed the oldest son’s house where all his sisters and brothers were feasting. They were all killed. In each incident the servants were killed too.

Job 1:22 (NIV84) In all this, Job did not sin by charging God with wrongdoing.

Job 2:3–10 (NIV84)

<sup>3</sup>Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil. And he still maintains his integrity, though you incited me against him to ruin him without any reason.”

<sup>4</sup>“Skin for skin!” Satan replied. “A man will give all he has for his own life.<sup>5</sup> **But stretch out your hand and strike his flesh and bones, and he will surely curse you to your face.**”

<sup>6</sup>The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, he is in your hands; but you must spare his life.”

<sup>7</sup>So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord and afflicted Job with painful sores from the soles of his feet to the top of his head.<sup>8</sup>Then Job took a piece of broken pottery and scraped himself with it as he sat among the ashes.

<sup>9</sup>His wife said to him, “Are you still holding on to your integrity? Curse God and die!”

<sup>10</sup>He replied, “You are talking like a foolish woman. Shall we accept good from God, and not trouble?”

In all this, Job did not sin in what he said.

In his book, *Depression: A Rescue Plan*, Jim Winter describes Satan: “As the arch enemy of God he seeks to: lead people into sin (Genesis 3:1–6; Luke 22:31); blind the minds of unbelievers (2 Corinthians 4:4); inflict sickness (Acts 10:38); remove God’s word from people’s hearts (Matthew 13:19); sow tares among the wheat (Matthew 13:39); buffet God’s servants (2 Corinthians



12:7); plant evil thoughts in the mind (John 13:2); and pervert the Scripture (Matthew 4:6).”

Paul tells us in Ephesians 6:12 (NIV84),

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but **against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.**

And in a parallel scripture: Ephesians 2:1–2 (NIV84)

**2** As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,<sup>2</sup> in which you used to live when you followed **the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.**

To the biblically uninformed, and even to some professing Christians, it is hard to believe that Satan can be the cause of so much trouble. Do NOT forget that the devil is called the god of this age, the ruler of this world. At the same time, we know that he can only do what Almighty God allows. Satan does not work alone. He has his demons and his human instruments or agents.

In the story of Job, immediately after Satan was given permission to test him, enemies were allowed to come in and destroy his wealth. The elements of wind and fire further decimated his wealth and killed Job's children. Disease and pain descended upon him. And even his wife was used to tempt him to give into the devil's desire – **Curse God and die**. Yes, sin and death are his tools and darkness his natural realm.

Those were the tactics of the Enemy. The strategy was to isolate Job, to take away everything he had: to take his family, his wealth, and his health. If we continued reading in Job, you we see even his three loyal friends would be used against him and they failed him. They added to his despair and depression.

Throughout the Book of Job, he called on God to give him his day in court – to vindicate Job. Sound familiar? The Downcast Soul sings his prayer, Vindicate me, O God, and plead my cause against an ungodly nation; rescue me from deceitful and wicked men.

Might these deceitful and wicked men be agents of the Enemy? In fact, he feels surrounded by this ungodly nation. The Downcast Soul is almost overcome with fear, anxiety, and fatigue. His tears are his food. Men ask,

“Where is your God?” My foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, “Where is your God?” He is mourning because he is oppressed by the enemy, which he states twice. It seems that Satan and his minions are winning the battle against the Downcast Soul.

Isn't the twice asked question, “Where is your God?”, a parallel thought to Job's wife's advice, Curse God and die? It is the very outcome Satan pursued against Job. The Enemy knows The Downcast Soul is feeling alone and isolated, thirsting for his God. Satan fans the flames of doubt by this taunting question, “If God is good, if God loves you, why are you suffering?”

Certainly, the downcast soul is feeling spiritual pain as he continually addresses his soul within him. He expresses a deep spiritual thirst: like a deer pants from streams of water; his soul pants for the living God; when can I go and meet with God?”

We associate thirst with a lack of water, but the downcast soul uses the metaphor of an abundance of water to describe how he feels overwhelmed. Waterfalls and waves sweep over him. He feels that God has forgotten him. Our bones provide the structure of our bodies and the downcast soul feels an extreme pain in his inner being. To his very core he is shaken. The very thing, water, that he

feels he needs to give him life, he also sees as a threat to his life. His mind seems caught up in a vortex, swirling around the toilet bowl.

At first glance, it is strange that the downcast soul uses real geographic references in this prayerful song: "I will remember you (God) from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon – from Mount Mizar. Well, it is likely that there is a physical separation between him and Jerusalem – he longingly remembered leading the festive throng in a procession to the house of God. That would be the Jerusalem Temple. Being separated from home, being in exile, being denied the things that bring us comfort, can cause people to become depressed.

But there is another layer here. There is the issue of barriers and boundaries. Mount Hermon was the northern boundary of Israel. The Jordan River was the eastern boundary of Israel. It was the ever present snow atop Mount Hermon that provided the water for the Jordan River. From there, the Jordan flowed down to the Sea of Galilee where Jesus did much of his ministry. Then it continued all the way down to the Dead Sea, also called the Salt Sea. Here is an amazing fact – "In Arabic, the wide valley floor is called the *Ghor*, meaning "depression"."

It is interesting that the Jordan River has the lowest elevation of any river on earth. And, the Dead Sea is 1388 feet BELOW sea level, making it the lowest point on the earth's surface. It is almost 10 times saltier than the oceans. Because of the salt and many other minerals, plants and fish cannot live – the sea is literally dead. While the Jordan provides the inflow, there is no outflow of water. It is estimated that six feet of water evaporates from it each year.

Mount Hermon was part of the region of Bashan; and Bashan was known as the major site for the worship of the Greek God Pan. The Roman Emperor was also worshiped in that region as a divine being.

It is also known as the Mount of Transfiguration, where Jesus was shown in his glory to Peter, James, and John. Just prior to that, the Gospel of Matthew records this exchange: Matthew 16:15–18 (NIV84)

<sup>15</sup> “But what about you?” he [Jesus] asked. “Who do you say I am?”

<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

<sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man,

but by my Father in heaven.<sup>18</sup> And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Now a few years ago, I preached a whole sermon explaining the big picture of what is going on in this episode. Because of time limitations, I will just give you the crucial and key point. Jesus is declaring war on the little “g” gods of this world. He is claiming his rightful place as the Christ. Mount Hermon is the rock to which he is referring – the gate to the underworld. And the Church of Jesus will bring victory against the forces of darkness.

From that mountain flows the Jordan River. It served as a physical barrier and has often been used as a metaphorical barrier. The Almighty God parted the Jordan during the flood season and The Chosen People, led by Joshua, crossed over into The Promised Land. Crossing over the Jordan is crossing over the barrier of death and entering heaven.

#### CONCLUSION:

How will The Downcast Soul navigate through this spiritual attack of Satan? The light and truth of God will guide him to the Lord’s holy mountain, to the place where God dwells.

Then will I go to the altar of God,  
to God, my joy and my delight.

I will praise you with the harp,  
O God, my God.

Let us now prepare our hearts to come to the altar of God as we prepare to celebrate Holy Communion. Let Jesus be our Joy and our Delight. Let the bread of Christ be our food. Let the blood of Christ satisfy all our longings for communion with our God.

AMEN & AMEN. Let us pray.