

## **Introduction**

- Image
  - I want to begin our time by sharing an experience I had a few years ago
  - I share that story because while experiences like what I just shared are sometimes seen as taboo topics in the church, they are actually not uncommon for God's people
  - In fact, if you take your spiritual journey seriously for any real length of time, you will likely experience something similar to what I just described
  - The Psalms cover the whole range of human experience, and Psalm 42 addresses the experience of what many saints throughout the years have called The Dark Night of the Soul or even Spiritual Depression.
- Subject: What do you do when God seems gone?
- Text: Psalm 42
- Preview: Four Things

## **Body**

- Acknowledge Your Experience
  - Image of the deer panting for water in a desert
  - God feels far away and you don't know why
    - Reason we can feel far from God: unrepentant sin, lack of pursuit
    - This is not someone who feels far from God because of his own lack of pursuit or some unrepentant sin (He's thirsty for God / He's trusting God as his rock / He pours out his soul before him)
  - He is taunted by his enemies for his continued faith
  - Creates a longing for better days
  - This apparent distance creates confusion (Why have you forgotten me?)
  - MTR: Be honest with where you're at with God, yourself, and others
    - The writer does all three here (This psalm was written for the people of God to sing together)
    - You're not alone (St. John of the Cross [dark night], C.H. Spurgeon [spiritual depression])
- Talk to Yourself
  - Our hearts are panicky and finicky. We can be tempted to walk away from God.
  - The writer preaches to his heart about who God is
    - He rehearses his theology
    - He remembers specific moments he encountered his theology personally (Worship processional, Springs in the mountain, vs. 8)
  - MLJ Quote
  - Not a one time thing (lament - hope pattern repeated three times)

- MTR: Do you talk back to your heart?
- Look for the Lesson
  - The waves pummeling him are God's waves
  - Call back to Jonah's psalm in the belly of the whale
  - MTR: What are you trying to teach me?
    - He refines our love (C.S. Lewis Quote / The Psalmists thirst for God is at an all time high)
    - He teaches us surrender (My personal story)
  - MTR: Let the desert have its purifying effect in me
- Wait With Confidence
  - "I shall again praise him"
  - Why can we have confidence?
    - But our ultimate confidence comes from realizing that even when God feels distant, it's only a feeling. When he feels far away, he never really is.
    - How can we have that confidence?
    - In the garden, Jesus identifies with this Psalmist's dark soul > But he was not preparing to feel distant from God > He was preparing to actually be distant from God > He was actually cast out from the temple and killed on an arid mountain
    - Why? So that we could know that when God's presence feels far away, it's only a feeling. Jesus lost the face of God so that even when it feels like God has removed his face, we can know he hasn't really.
      - When you feel like God has forgotten you. That he doesn't see you. That he's overlooked you.
      - Jesus knows what's that like, even more than we do. His was actual. Ours was relative.
  - Finding Nemo: "Just keep swimming" / The night will end