

**Revive us, Oh Lord:  
Through Radical Dependence  
Psalm 42**

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**Introduction to Text:** As I said last week, we are putting our series on “Defining Moments” on hold. We will return to that series on Easter Sunday. God has blessed and spoken to us through our look at these defining moments, and so I look forward to returning to that theme on Easter Sunday.

However, as I considered this year of preaching, I answered the challenge of preaching on the theme of revival. In our “Do Something” conversations of last year, it was obvious that there is a strong yearning among many in our church for something of a series of meetings often called “revival.” I am actively working on that now, have a number of calls out to prospective partners in leading us in this time, and hope to be able to announce those plans to you relatively soon when all the pieces fall into place.

In the meanwhile, I do want us to give thought to revival and spiritual awakening. There is no greater need in America today than a revival or spiritual awakening that shakes us and changes us. We have been praying to that end for some while and will continue.

So, over the next weeks I want to help us to think about revival. Here is what we will think about. Today, we think about revival coming through “Radical Dependence.”

In subsequent weeks we will consider:

March 8	Revive us, Oh Lord: Through Radical Prayer
March 15	Revive us, Oh Lord: Through a Radical Return to the Bible
March 22	Revive us, Oh Lord: Through Radical Repentance
March 29	Revive us, Oh Lord: Through Radical Evangelism

Let’s read the text in Psalm 42 as we think about “Radical Dependence” on God. It is the starting place of revival.

**Text:** As a deer longs for streams of water,  
so I long for You, God.

<sup>2</sup> I thirst for God, the living God.

When can I come and appear before God?

<sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food day and night,  
while all day long people say to me,  
“Where is your God?”

<sup>4</sup> I remember this as I pour out my heart:  
how I walked with many,  
leading the festive procession to the house of God,  
with joyful and thankful shouts.

<sup>5</sup> Why am I so depressed?  
Why this turmoil within me?

Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him,  
my Savior and my God.

<sup>6</sup> I am deeply depressed;  
therefore I remember You from the land of Jordan  
and the peaks of Hermon, from Mount Mizar.

<sup>7</sup> Deep calls to deep in the roar of Your waterfalls;  
all Your breakers and Your billows have swept over me.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD will send His faithful love by day;  
His song will be with me in the night—  
a prayer to the God of my life.

<sup>9</sup> I will say to God, my rock,  
“Why have You forgotten me?  
Why must I go about in sorrow  
because of the enemy’s oppression?”

<sup>10</sup> My adversaries taunt me,  
as if crushing my bones,  
while all day long they say to me,  
“Where is your God?”

<sup>11</sup> Why am I so depressed?  
Why this turmoil within me?  
Put your hope in God, for I will still praise Him,  
my Savior and my God.

**Introduction:** If we are going to talk about revival, we probably ought to define what we are talking about. One way to use the word revival is in speaking about a specific event or time given to a series of meetings. Another way to use the term is to think more generally about the meaning of the word. When I use the word revival, I want you to think this way with me:

A revival is a spiritual awakening in the lives of believers that results in spiritual conversion of unbelievers so large in scope that the results can only be explained as a work of God.

At the beginning of the Psalm before us today, we see this editorial heading, “For the choir director: A Maskil of the sons of Korah.” The sons of Korah are believed to be workers in the Temple. They had a great desire for the work of the Temple. The meaning of “maskil” is not as easy to understand. Some believe it is just some lost musical instruction—maybe meant to offer instruction to the choir director as to the rhythm and other musical features of this song. Some suggest the word represents something of a genre of song—something like a ballad. Others suggest that the term refers to something like wisdom as if to say, “Here is instruction for the sons of Korah.”

Whatever the meaning of the word, we do get the idea that the Psalmist has great depth of emotion in this song. He is depressed, but yet still puts his hope in God. He feels abandoned by God, but still feels the presence of God falling over him as breakers of the sea.

In sum, the Psalmist is longing for restored fellowship with God which at the moment seems distant. God, for reasons that are not altogether clear, seems strangely silent.”

For this reason, this Psalm has an individual feel to it rather than a corporate or national feel. However, the feelings of the Psalmists are our feelings, both individually and corporately. This kind of emotion may be the very place that a yearning for revival begins.

### **Four Attitudes that Must Precede Revival:**

#### **1. Desire (42:1-2)**

The first attitude that must precede revival is desire. This sounds rather simple, but the first step in revival is wanting revival. Notice the analogy of the Psalmist. The analogy is driven by a deer panting for the water brooks. His soul pants for God. His soul is said to be thirsty. The effect of the analogy points to a deep thirst or hunger for God.

I'm afraid our problem is that we want revival the results of revival, but we don't long for God as is communicated in this text. The specific longing communicated in this text is for the "living God." We have settled for less. We have settled for alternatives of the living God. Churches and Christians all across the world have settled for alternatives of the living God. We have accepted numbers and excitement as though that is a signal of God's blessing. As a result we have not desired genuine revival. Until we genuinely desire the living God, we will never experience genuine and lasting revival.

#### **2. Desperation (42:3)**

The second attitude that must precede revival is desperation. My fear is that we will not desire revival until we become desperate about our situation. The reason for the Psalmist's desperation is the apparent "absence of God." "While they say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" This must indicate the mockery of the watching world. Doesn't our world do that today? The watching world continues to ask, "Where is your God?"

Instead of admitting that there is an absence of God, we make excuses for God not being seen. We say things like "Well, we don't have all the evidence." Or, we might say, "God doesn't work like He used to work." We might say, "Well, people don't respond like they did years ago." As long as we accept these excuses, there will be no agonizing, no desperation over the absence of God.

We must come to that place where we would say, "God, unless you show up, there is no hope." That's desperation. That kind of desperation leads us to have tears as our food day and night.

#### **3. Disturbed (42:4-7)**

The third attitude that must precede revival is being disturbed about our situation. In our text, David is disturbed about his current situation. He remembered his experiences at the height of his relationship with God. He remembered what it was like when he led the multitude of worshippers into the presence of God. As he thinks of his current situation, he is in despair.

Like David, we must be disturbed about our situation. Revival never comes to complacent people. Revival never comes to satisfied people. If you are satisfied with your current situation, if you are satisfied about the spiritual temperature of our society, if you are satisfied of your

friends' and loved ones' relationship with God, you will never "pour out your soul" to God (42:4).

#### 4. Dependence on God (42:8-11)

Finally, a deep dependence on God must precede revival. All of these other attitudes lead here. Our situation is desperate. Nothing will work if God is not in it. Most anything will work when God is in it.

Two things we ought to notice in verses 8-11. First, the Lord is ready to command His *lovingkindness*. That is the Old Testament word for grace. Second, our only hope is in God, so our hope ought to be in God. Only when we depend on God will we experience only what God can do.

The refrain of this Psalm is seen in verse 5 and verse 11. "Put your hope in god, for I will still praise Him, my Savior and my God." When the Psalmist stops speaking to Himself and starts speaking to God, the beginning of delivery is in sight. (Word Biblical Commentary, p. 329) When one stops longing for the past and starts looking to God, the victory which seemed elusive is suddenly more in sight.

**Conclusion: So what?** What can we do? How can I take these four attitudes and make a difference? What can I do with these four attitudes? What can I do about the spiritual condition of our world today? Let me suggest four eternal truths that you can apply to your lives.

1. Acknowledge that we really do need revival.
2. Ask God to give you these four attitudes—desire, desperation, a disturbed spirit, and dependence on Him.
3. Analyze your own spiritual condition—The reason we do not experience revival has nothing to do with God's ability to bring revival. The reason that we do not experience revival is our own lack of readiness to prepare for and experience revival. You cannot expect national revival if you are not willing to experience personal revival.
4. Anticipate that God will do something great—something that only God could do. Dream big! Ask God to do big things. Things we could never do on our own.