

Week 4 - “Psalm 42 – Thirsting for God”

The Aim of the Session

Being “thirsty” is a relative thing – a glass of water may suffice or we may need much more. Spiritual thirst is something we all need to experience, but sometimes it is an extreme and painful time. So how thirsty are we for God at the moment – honestly?

- **Welcome**

Where is the hottest place you have ever been?

- **Worship**

Read Psalm 42:1-2. Spend a few moments pondering the question “Am I thirsty for God?” Read Numbers 20:7-11 and give thanks to God that he can provide water from anything. One or two might like to share a time when they have known God’s refreshment at a time of drought in their lives. Ask God to give you a thirst for him – and that you may find refreshment in your time together.

- **Word**

Read Psalm 42. The Psalmist is writing from a spiritual desert, where God has seems remote and the Psalmist’s own resources are running dry.

- ❖ How would you describe the spiritual desert? If you have experienced it, maybe share something of the feelings.
- ❖ What does “spiritual thirst” mean in reality?
- ❖ How does the Psalmist describe his thirst (v1)?
- ❖ The Psalmist is writing in a hot climate – different to the UK! How often are we truly “thirsty” as opposed to needing a cup of tea?
- ❖ Who does the Psalmist thirst for? What does this imply about alternatives (v2)?
- ❖ In order to find refreshment, what must he do (v2)?
- ❖ As he reflects on what has been in the past (vv3-6), what different things does he remember about his relationship with God in these places?
- ❖ Is it still possible to praise God in the desert (v5)?
- ❖ What sort of refreshment does he know God is able to give (v7)?
- ❖ God’s presence (v8) contrasts with the Psalmist’s inability to experience it (vv9/10). Why does this happen in our lives? We shall come back to this in a moment.
- ❖ Bringing these thoughts together, what hope does he express (v11)?

It is important to recognise the reasons why people find themselves in the desert place.

Read Luke 4:1-4.

- ❖ What had just happened (look back to 3:21-22)?
- ❖ What caused Jesus to be in the desert (v1)?
- ❖ How would you see Jesus’ spiritual state at the time (v1)?
- ❖ And his physical state (v2)?
- ❖ What happens to him throughout this time (v2/3)?
- ❖ How does Jesus respond (v4)?

The Holy Spirit drives Jesus into the desert to teach him total reliance upon his Father's provision. God allows us sometimes to find ourselves in the desert in order that we may recognise where we have made a wrong turning in our lives. But sometimes he takes us there in order that we may become truly thirsty for him and him alone, as the only one who can truly satisfy spiritual thirst.

Read John 7:37/8. Jesus speaking at a festival, where people were eating and drinking. What does this say about where people seek refreshment?

- When we have a constant supply of water or drinks machine, how does our understanding of "thirsty" relate to our thirst for God?

Read John 4:13/14. What was the woman at the well really thirsty for?

- Where do we see that around us today?
- How does the Christian message address this?
- Read Revelation 21:6. What does this say about God's resources and desire to share them?

- **Works**

Spend a few minutes reflecting on these questions. The leader might like to put on some background music and read the questions with pauses for reflection.

- Does it feel like I am in a desert at the moment?
- If not, do I remember being in the desert at a time in the past?
- Did I take a wrong turn that took me there?
- Has God taken me there for a purpose?
- Am I a little bit thirsty – or does my soul truly thirst for God at the moment?
- Have I been seeking refreshment elsewhere?

If it seems appropriate, share your reflections from these questions. Pray for one another and if it seems right, lay hands on each other and pray for the abundance of God's refreshment to come upon you.



Next Time ...

Psalms: Seeking God Through Honesty and Reality

5 - Psalm 46 "Confidence in God"