# COME TO THE ALTAR

(How David Went From Downcast To Joyfulness)
Psalms 42 & 43



# DAVID'S CAUSE FOR TEARS:

- ◆ His Plans Go Unfulfilled
- ◆ His Feelings Go Unrelieved
- ◆ His Questions Go Unanswered

"Then Will I Go Unto The Altar Of God" (Psalm 43:4)

# "COME NOW TO THE ALTAR, COME NOW"

Text: Psalm 42:1-11; 43:1-5 Subject: "Bring It To The Altar

### Introduction

- 1. The inscription in many bibles before this Psalm reads, "To the chief musician, Maschil, for the sons of Korah".
- 2. It's a Psalm written by David that expresses deep emotion, earnest feelings and strong language.
- 3. Psalms 42 & 43 were written to Maschil the chief musician.
- 4. Maschil was to then deliver them to the sons of Korah.
- 5. Korah's sons were in charge of arranging the music for the sanctuary.
- 6. The sons of Korah were a family of Levitical singers.
- 7. It was from these sons that David selected a number to preside over the sanctuary music. (I Chronicles 6:22-31)

**Question:** Why was Psalms 42 & 43 composed? **Question:** Why was it sung in the sanctuary?

Question: Why was it inspired by God and given to the church?

### (For One Reason)

◆ To point every man, woman, boy and girl to the Lord.

◆ And, to lead every person (without exception) who reads it, to be changed on the inside.

# (The Psalms Whole Purpose)

◆ Is to lead its reader:

From heaviness to gladness,

From ashes to beauty,

From mourning to joy

From cast down to held up!

### (Remember)

- ◆ David's son Absalom was in rebellion.
- ◆ David was driven from his throne and from his normal place of worship.
- ◆ He was an exile and a wanderer now beyond the Jordan River.
- ◆ He was "sifting through" and "processing" his feelings that had been worn and torn.
- ◆ He was needing a word to heal his broken heart.

Question: So why did God give Psalms 42 and 43 to David?

Question: Why did David give it to Maschil?

Question: Why did the chief musician then give it to the sons of Korah?

Question: Why did the sons of Korah give it to all who would gather in the sanctuary? Question: And, why is it in your Bible, in your hands and hopefully (in your heart)?

- #1. To reveal the God who gave the Psalms.
- #2. To reveal that God knows what's in the heart of every one of us.
- #3. To reveal that God knows the need of every person (without exception) in this meeting.

### (So Much So That:)

- ◆ God gives us three instructions that will change us.
- ◆ Three words of power that transform the mind.
- ◆ Three absolutes that affect how we think and how we feel:

# L Quit Looking At Yourself And Start Looking At God

Fact: 51 personal pronouns are found in Psalms 42 and 43.

Fact: David uses the word "I" 15 times, the word "ME" 16 times, and the word "MY" 21 times.

Fact: Life was a mirror to David as he was looking only at himself.

Fact: And God reveals why David was discouraged and downcast.

# (David's 3 Causes For Lamenting)

# #1. David is downcast because his plans had not been fulfilled:

- (v. 2) "When shall I come and appear before God"?
- (v. 4) "When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me". (In Other Words)
- ◆ David wanted to join the pilgrims in their annual trip to the temple (but he couldn't go).
- ◆ David was in exile and his agenda was changed by a higher agenda.
- ◆ David's plans were not fulfilled because of events and people outside of his control.

Question: Have you been disheartened because of unfulfilled expectations that have touched your own life?

# #2. David is downcast because his feelings had not been relieved:

- (v. 3) "My tears have been my meat day and night". (In other words)
- ◆ Instead of eating food, David can only weep. A cloud of heaviness hangs over his head.
- ◆ David is continually feeding on his tears and downcast emotions.

Questions: Have you found yourself in recent days downcast in spirit?

- #1. David is down because his plans have not been fulfilled.
- #2. David is down because his feelings have not been relieved.

# #3. David is downcast because his questions have not been answered:

- (42:2) "When shall I come an appear before God"?
- (42:5) "Why am I cast down in my soul"?
- (42:5) "Why am I disquieted (or agitated) inside"?
- (43:2) "Why does God cast me off"?
- (43:2) "Why do I continually mourn"?
- ◆ 10 times David asks why? (And there is no record that God ever answered him).
- ◆ David just can't seem to get answers to all of his questions

Question: Do you have any questions without answers to them?

Question: Have you been looking at life from just your point of view"?

Question: Have you found yourself asking, "God, why this"? or "God, why that"?

### (God Has Good News You Can Trust In)

- (v. 8) "Yet the Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime, and in the night His song shall be with me".
- Daytime represents times of prosperity and gladness.
- Nighttime represents times of sorrow and pain.

### (And God Declares)

- ◆ That your challenges will become a window to see God instead of only a mirror to see yourself.
- ◆ That (whether daytime or nighttime) the Lord will be equal to the task and command His favor towards you.
- ◆ That God will reveal Himself to you, will sustain you and will point you "upward" instead of "outward".

# II. Quit Living In The Past And Start Looking To The Future

Fact: David's answer to despair is to encourage himself in God.

Fact: Three times David cries out "Hope thou in God"

Fact: The Bible word hope is not "hope so"

◆ It's a word that means "A guarantee that the future is secure" (Repeat)

Question: Does David have cause to be "cast down"?

Answer: Of course he does:

#1. His son Absalom has gone astray and is in rebellion.

#2. David's desire to travel to Jerusalem is unfulfilled.

Question: What's the cure for David's downcast soul?

Answer: David gets his eyes off the past and on to the future guarantee of God.

Question: What does God reveal in the future that encourages David in spirit?

### (4 Absolutes To Trust In)

# #1. David is assured that God will defeat the enemy

(43:1) "Plead my cause" means, "God deliver me from every foe as I walk with you".

Question: Is there anything in your life (any sin that is opposing you right now) that you need to be free from?

#2. David knows that God will be his strength

(43:2) "For thou art the God of my strength"

Question: Do you need for God to replace your weariness with his strength today?

#3. David is assured that God will lead and direct him

(43:3) "O send out thy light and thy truth; let them lead me"

Question: Do you need specific direction in any matters of life at this time?

#4. David believes that sorrow will give way to joy

(43:4) "I will go unto the altar of God, unto God my exceeding joy" means:

◆ David knows that his joy will be restored by God.

◆ David knows that (in God's time) he will get back to Jerusalem, to the altar and to the harp of praise and joy once again.

◆ David knows that God will renew his hope, vision and passion to look ahead.

Question: Have you felt that the best days are behind you; but are willing to let God change your outlook to look forward?

"Yesterday God helped me, today He'll do the same, How long will this continue? Forever, praise His name".

# III. Quit Asking Questions And Start Resting On The Promises

Fact: Everyone has questions without answers!

Fact: Everyone asks "why God"? at some time.

**Fact:** Everyone has times and seasons when they need to just pour out their heart to God in prayer.

**Question:** How can we rest assured in the promises of God?

### (3 Unshakable Reasons)

### #1. We know that God is a living God

(42:2) "My soul thirsteth for God, for the living God".

◆ He lives and promises to meet our every need!

# #2. We know that God is a faithful God

(42:8) "In the daytime (of prosperity) or the nighttime (of adversity) the Lord will prove to be faithful".

# #3. We know that God is willing to answer prayer:

(42:4) "I went with them to the house of God" (43:4) "I will go to the altar of God"

Question: Why go to the house of God and the altar of God?

#1. Because the temple was the place where the people met God.

#2. Because the altar was the place where the Jew brought a sacrifice to have entrance to God.

### (The Glorious Truth Is):

◆ That you and I have been invited to the altar of God (and)

◆ That you and I come into God's presence through our New Testament sacrifice of Jesus.

Question: How do we come to the altar of God?

"As the deer pants for water, so our soul panteth after God" (42:1)

◆ The Hebrew word "pant" means:

"To be intense" "To be earnest about"

"To rise up and go after"

### (It Means:)

How can we stay in our seat when we know that God will meet us at an altar of prayer?

Fact: In (43:3) God is drawing David to the altar. "...Let them bring me unto thy holy hill".

Fact: In (43:4) David is responding to the altar call of God:

"Then will I go unto the altar of God"

### (It's One Of Two Choices)

#1. Sit in my seat and stew and sour (or) #2. Run to the altar and do business with God.

# (What Do I Do At The Altar Of Prayer?) What David Did

- #1. Quit looking at yourself (and start looking at God).
- #2. Quit looking back (and start looking at the future).
- #3. Quit looking for reasons (and start standing on the promises).

(Altar Call)