

“As a deer longs for flowing streams, so I long for you, God.” Psalm 42 verse 1

The writer of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes says “He has placed eternity in the hearts of people.” In other words, to whatever degree we are or are not aware of it, there is within each person a desire and a need for God. Most people do not automatically experience it as such. For most, it is experienced as a sense that something is missing, and people attempt to satisfy it by using other things. None of those things, however, will ever succeed in meeting that need, because it is eternal and can only be met by God himself.

The Bible encourages us to seek God. It promises that everyone who sincerely seeks God will find him. More than that, it tells us that God actively seeks those who are lost and crying out for help, and that he took the initiative in opening the way to reconciliation with him when he sent Jesus to become a sacrifice for our sin. By turning to God through faith in him, we can enter into a loving, saving relationship with God.

But the writer of Psalm 42, from which today's verse is taken, is already a believer. Why is he bemoaning the lack of a sense of God in his life? He even goes so far as to say that God has forgotten him.

God hasn't forgotten him. It is unthinkable that God would forget those he loves who have put their trust in him. It is possible that God is calling his attention to something in his life that needs dealing with; or it may be that God has withdrawn a sense of his presence for a while so that the Psalm writer can be sure that his relationship with God is really reliant on faith rather than experience.

Most likely, it is so that he will do what he actually does, which is reach out for God even more, determine to put his hope in him more firmly, praise him as his saviour and his God, remember the times when he felt close to God, and the things God has done in his life in the past. He speaks to his own soul, asking why it is so dejected and downcast and commanding it to put its hope in God.

When God seems distant, we don't need to just wallow in misery. Whatever he is doing, he has never rejected us.

Prayer

Father, thank you that you will never leave us and never reject us. Help me to put my faith and trust in you. When I lose the sense that you are near me, help me please to continue reaching out to you. I know from your word of truth that you will never leave me or forsake me, so please reveal to me the reason that I may feel less close to you than I would like, so that I may take steps to be close to you again. In Jesus' name, amen.

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