

(Psalm 42:1-5, NIV84)

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng. Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God.

Does this sound familiar: "I used to go with the multitude... to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng." Those were the days, huh? With each passing week it may seem like those trips to the house of God are becoming more and more a distant memory. Some may even be worrying that if and when public worship services resume, will we feel comfortable gathering in close proximity with fellow believers who, unbeknownst to them or us, may be carrying COVID-19 and able to pass it on to others?

I don't believe we are being fatalistic if we have the attitude that our health and life are in God's hands. Think about every other aspect of our lives. We feed and cloth our bodies, trusting that God will keep us well-fed and warm. We drive our vehicles, following the rules of the road and paying attention to our surroundings, watching out for other drivers and pedestrians, trusting that God will bring us safely to our destinations. We venture out into public places, taking proper precautions and keeping a watchful eye so that we don't become victim of some ne'er-do-well intent on taking our stuff or doing us harm, trusting that God's holy angels are watching over us. We ascend and descend staircases, cognizant of the reality that falls can occur, but that recognition doesn't paralyze us from moving about our houses or other places with the confidence that our mighty Lord is with us.

Remember what Jesus said to Peter when Peter got out of the boat and began to walk on water? Peter started to look at the waves and stopped looking at Jesus, so he began to sink. Jesus caught him and said, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" Peter received a well-deserved rebuke from our Lord. Do we have a greater reason for being doubtful than Peter? When the time comes for us to return to church for worship, it's not as though we're going to be required to walk on water. For us, it will only be a return to doing what we have done hundreds if not thousands of times in our lives: going "to the house of God, with shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng." Do not let your soul be disturbed; put your hope in God.

Trusting in Jesus with you,
Pastor Golm

May 19

Waters of Refreshment

As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God. Psalm 42:1

David was well acquainted with the terrain of a semi-arid country. He had often seen a hart (a deer), almost consumed by thirst, "panting after the water brooks" which still lay beyond the far horizon. Would the struggling animal make it to the trickling brook and be refreshed?

The psalmist likens himself to the fainting deer. His troubled heart is in desperate need of the refreshment only God can give him. And so he cries out: "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God!"

The life of David, from his early youth until his declining years as king of Israel, can very well be described by the words of the poet: "I live in danger all the way." Much of his personal tragedy was the result of his own sinning, of which he repented with heaving sobs of sorrow. We need only to read his Fifty-first Psalm in which he pours out his broken heart to God. Indeed, we find this great man of God "panting for the waters of refreshment" which he could find only in the heart of God.

Has life ever brought us to that pass where our soul panted after God "as the hart panteth after the water brooks"? If so, thank God, our Lord, that he was always there-right beside us. All we need do is throw ourselves upon his unending love and mercy, which is revealed to us in the Gospel of our Redeemer. Every life has its arid stretches where the horizon seems bleak and burning, where there seems to be no promise of refreshing, healing waters. But our gracious Lord has assured us that the water brooks are there, waiting for us to stoop and drink. There we will find pardon, peace, and strength for the stretch that lies ahead. On more than one occasion the Christ spoke of the "water of life" (John 4:10) which was his to give, freely and without price, to all who would put their trust in him.

Lord God, heavenly Father, may I find daily refreshment in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, my Savior. Amen.

(Devotion from: Daily Walk With God - Meditations for Every Day, by Herman W. Gockel)