

# When Faith is No Longer Exciting

Psalm 42-43

# Physical Drought (Joel 1:15-20)

- <sup>15</sup> Alas for that day! For the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty.<sup>1</sup>
- <sup>16</sup> Has not **the food been cut off** before our very eyes-- joy and gladness from the house of our God? <sup>17</sup> **The seeds are shriveled** beneath the clods.<sup>1</sup> The storehouses are in ruins, the granaries have been broken down, for the grain has dried up. <sup>18</sup> How **the cattle moan!** The herds mill about because **they have no pasture;** even the flocks of sheep are suffering.
- <sup>19</sup> To you, LORD, I call, for fire has devoured the pastures in the wilderness and flames have burned up all the trees of the field. <sup>20</sup> Even **the wild animals pant for you; the streams of water have dried up and fire has devoured the pastures in the wilderness.** (Joe 1:15-20 NIV)



# First Lament: Spiritual Drought

## Psalm 42:1-4

- As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God.
- <sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?
- <sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"
- <sup>4</sup> These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God under the protection of the Mighty One<sup>1</sup> with shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng. (Psa 42:1-4 NIV)

# The Emotion: A Longing for God

## Psalm 42:1-2

- The DEER SIMILE: *As the deer pants* for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. (42:1)
- The THIRST METAPHOR: <sup>2</sup> *My soul thirsts* for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? (42:2 NIV)
- Common theme: Water (here lacking, later overwhelming)

Psalm 42:1

As the deer pants for streams of water  
so my soul pants for you

O God

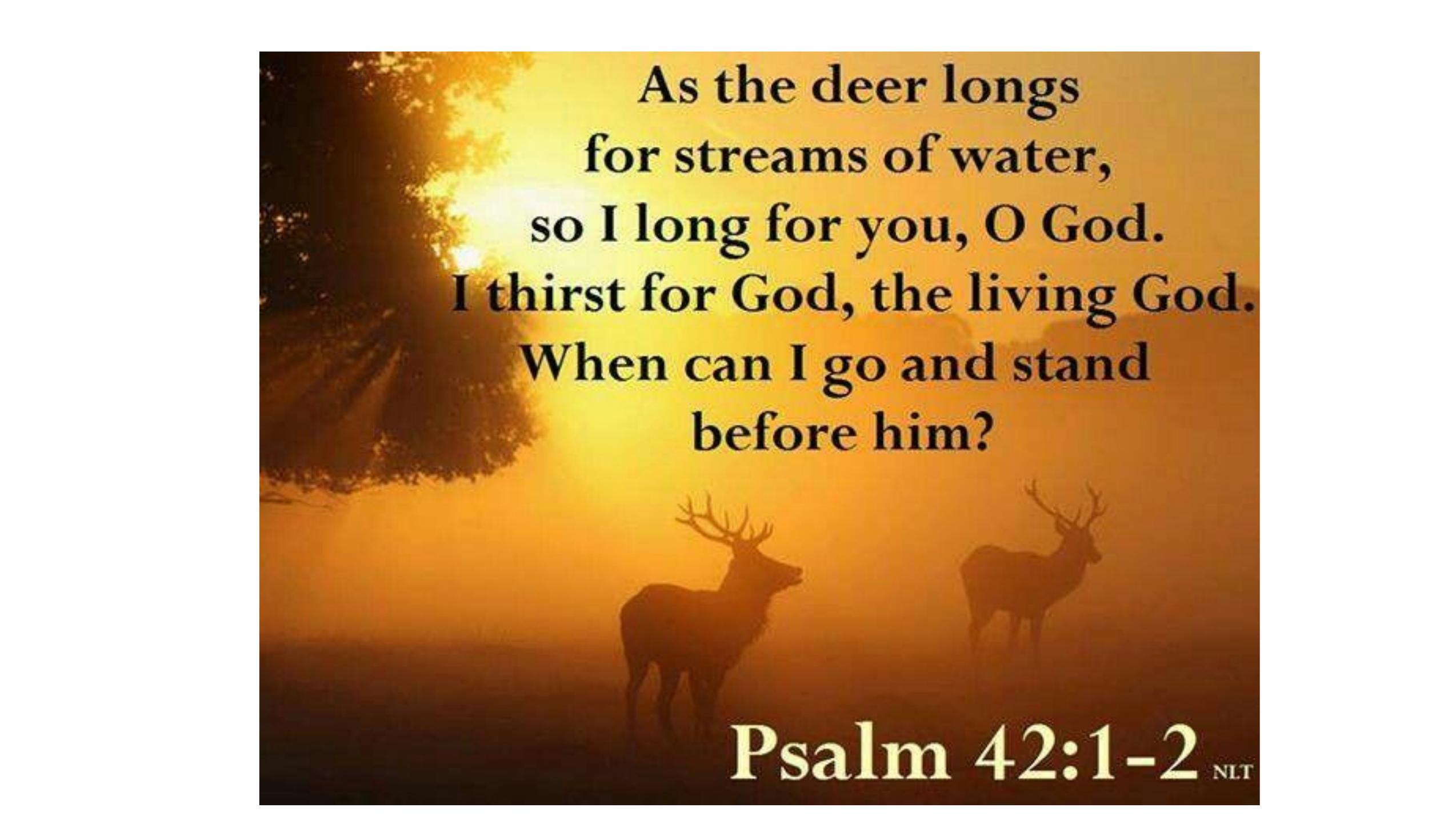
Jesus loves you



*As the hart panteth after the water brooks,  
so panteth my soul after thee, O God.*

*Psalm 42:1*





As the deer longs  
for streams of water,  
so I long for you, O God.  
I thirst for God, the living God.  
When can I go and stand  
before him?

Psalm 42:1-2 NLT

# The Problem: God has Become Elusive

## Psalm 42:3

- <sup>3</sup> My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long "Where is your God?" (NIV)
- I'm on a diet of tears—
- tears for breakfast, tears for supper.
- All day long people knock at my door,
  - Pestering,
- "Where is this God of yours?" (The Message)

# The Bitter-sweet Memories

## Psalm 42:4

- <sup>4</sup> These things **I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go to the house of God** under the protection of the Mighty One<sup>1</sup> with **shouts of joy and praise among the festive throng.** (Psa 42:4 NIV)
- My heart is breaking as I remember how it used to be: I walked among the crowds of worshipers, leading a great procession to the house of God, singing for joy and giving thanks amid the sound of a great celebration! (Psa 42:4 NLT)

# Summary: The Daily Reality

- **He is taunted by his critics** ‘Where is this God of yours?’ (v 3)
- **He is losing any vital relationship with God** (v 2)  
‘My soul thirst for God, **for the living God**’; ‘**When can I go** and meet with God?’
- **His worship life is flat.** (v 4) ‘I used to go to the house of God...with shouts of joy and praise...among the festive throng’

# The Refrain: a Dialogue with Myself (My Soul)

## Psalm 42:5 (42:11; 43:5)

- <sup>5</sup> **Why, my soul, are you downcast?** Why so disturbed within me? **Put your hope in God**, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (NIV)
- **Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul?** Why are you crying the blues? **Fix my eyes on God—soon I'll be praising again.** He puts a smile on my face. He's my God. (The Message)

# Second Lament: Depths of Despair Psalm 42:6-10)

- <sup>6</sup> **My soul is downcast** within me; **therefore I will remember you** from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon--from Mount Mizar.
- <sup>7</sup> **Deep calls to deep** in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me.
- <sup>8</sup> **By day the LORD directs his love**, at **night his song is with me**-- a prayer to the God of my life.
- <sup>9</sup> **I say to God my Rock**, "**Why** have you forgotten me? **Why** must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?"
- <sup>10</sup> **My bones suffer mortal agony** as **my foes taunt me**, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"(NIV)

# The Storm Metaphor ('water' theme)

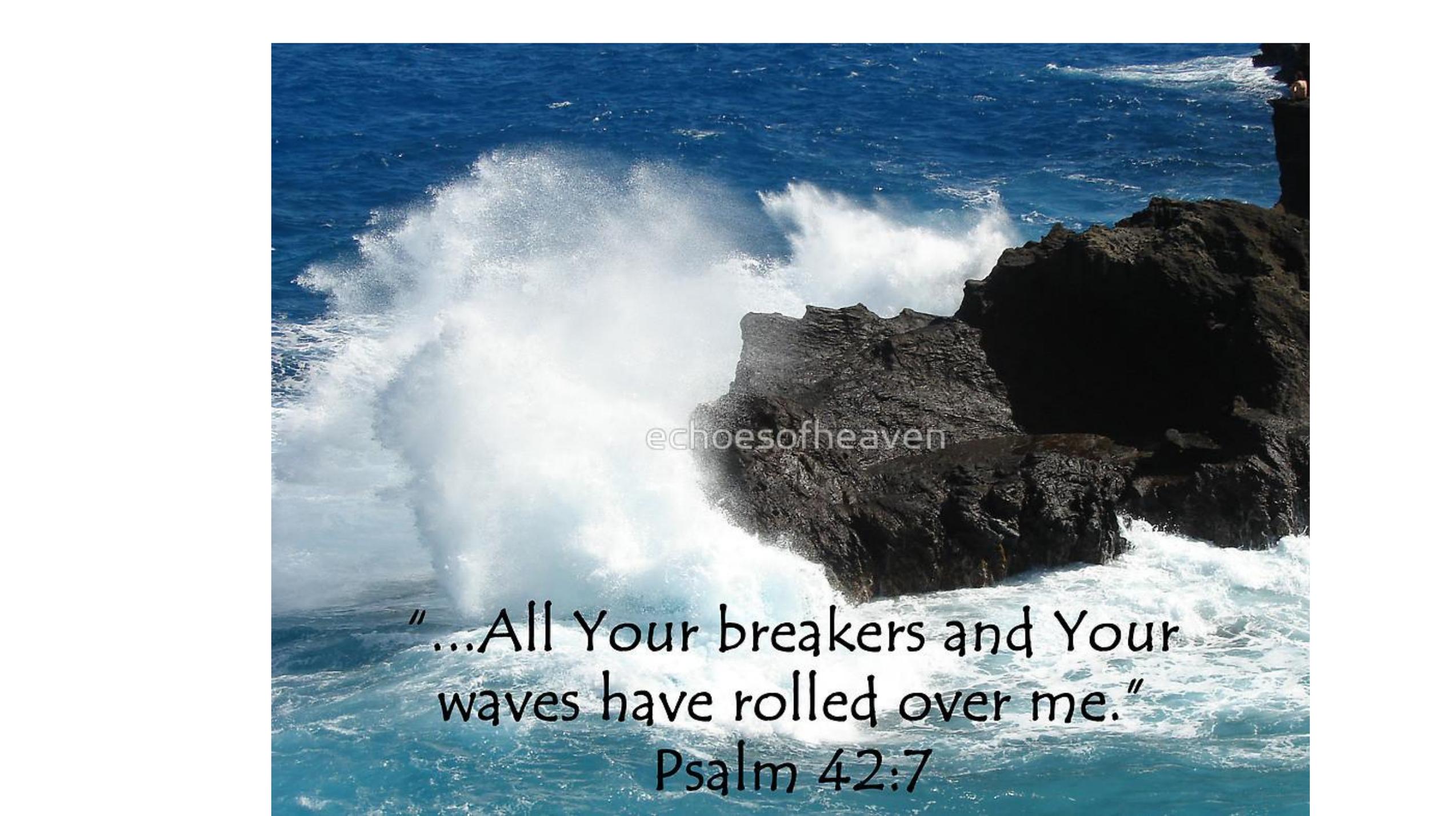




*Deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls;  
All Your waves and billows have gone over me.  
The LORD will command His lovingkindness in the daytime,  
And in the night His song shall be with me...  
~Psalm 42:7-8*



*Deep calls to deep in the roar  
of your waterfalls. ~Psalm 42:7a*



echoesofheaven

"...All Your breakers and Your  
waves have rolled over me."  
Psalm 42:7

# Waves and Billows



# Depths in the Psalmist's Experience

## Psalm 42:9-10

- **The Absence of God**

- <sup>9</sup> I say to God my Rock, "**Why have you forgotten me? Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?**"

- **Evil treatment by 'enemies'**

- <sup>9</sup> I say to God my Rock, "Why have you forgotten me? **Why must I go about mourning, oppressed by the enemy?**"

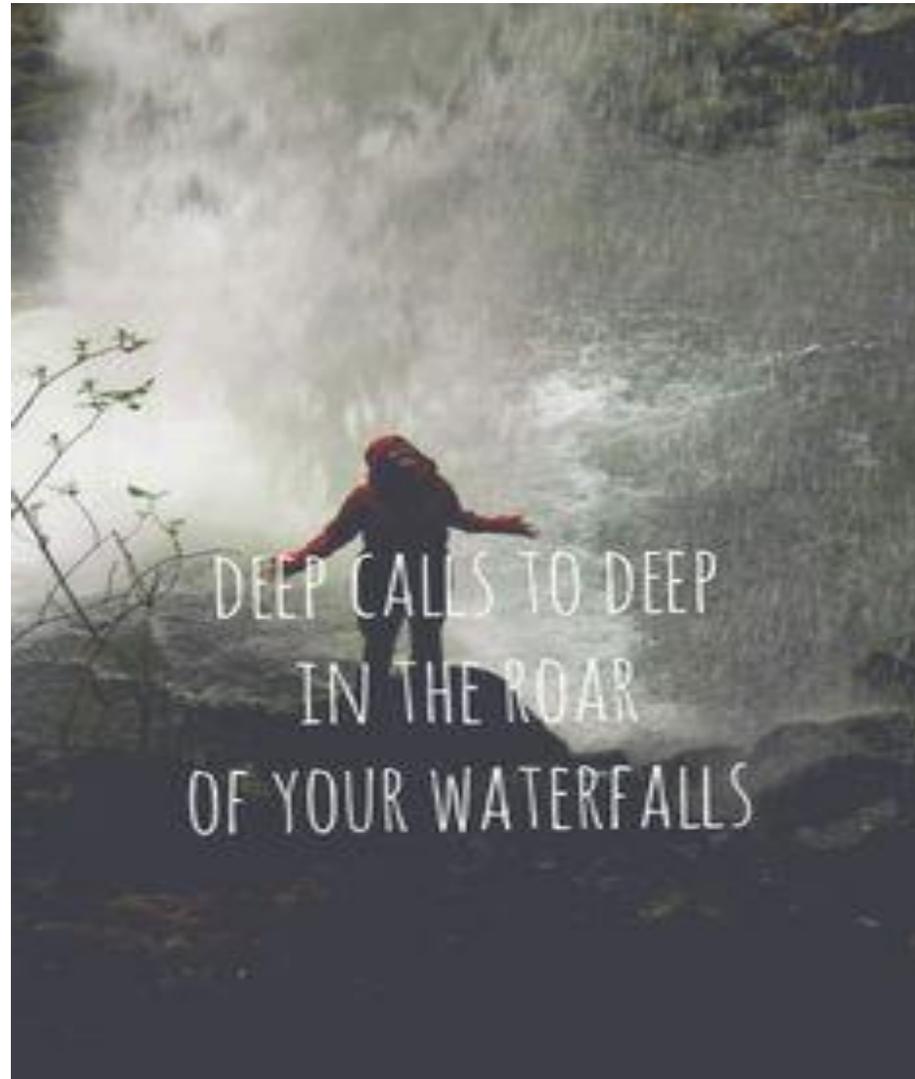
- **A loss of confidence in God as Defender**

- <sup>10</sup> My bones suffer mortal agony as **my foes taunt me, saying to me all day long, "Where is your God?"**(NIV)

# Depths in our Experience

- Physical Suffering, chronic illness
- Loss of a loved one
- Family Breakdown
- Financial, job loss
- Destruction of a reputation or relationship
- Slander
- Loss of meaning, purpose in life
- The absence of God, inability to pray
- Church, worship losing their appeal

# Deep Calling to Deep Facing the Depths



# The Psalmist's Defence

## Psalm 42:8

- **God's Direction** (by day)
  - <sup>8</sup> **By day the LORD directs his love**, at night his song is with me-- a prayer to the God of my life. (Psa 42:8 NIV)
- **God's comfort, encouragement** (by night)
  - <sup>8</sup> By day the LORD directs his love, **at night his song is with me--** a prayer to the God of my life.
- At all times: **God is his Life**
  - <sup>8</sup> By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me- **a prayer to the God of my life.**

# The Refrain: a Dialogue with Myself (My Soul)

## Psalm 42:11 (42:5; 43:5)

- <sup>5</sup> **Why, my soul, are you downcast?** Why so disturbed within me? **Put your hope in God**, for I will yet praise him, my Savior and my God. (NIV)
- **Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul?** Why are you crying the blues? **Fix my eyes on God—soon I'll be praising again.** He puts a smile on my face. He's my God. (The Message)

# The Challenge for Us

- **The Present Reality**
  - 1. **Discouragements, adversity will always be part** of our experience in this world.
  - 2. There will be **both heights and depths** in most of our lives.
- **The Resources of Faith:** <sup>8</sup> By day the **LORD directs** his love, at night **his song is with me--** a prayer to the God of my life. (Psa 42:8 NIV)
- **The Choice** (how we ‘instruct’ our ‘soul’):
  - Live on **nostalgia** (the past) and **despair** (the present)
  - Put your **hope in God** (v 5, 11)
- **The Assurance:** ‘I will praise him again – my Saviour and my God!’

# My Closing Instructions for My Soul

## The Refrain (vv 5, 11)

- **Why are you down in the dumps, dear soul? Why are you crying the blues?**
- **Fix my eyes on God—soon I'll be praising again. He puts a smile on my face. He's my God.**
- (The Message)