



STORM SHELTER

A STUDY IN PSALMS

THE SHELTER OF GOD'S ENCOURAGEMENT

BIG IDEA: God encourages me when I feel overwhelmed.

DATE: September 14, 2025

SCRIPTURE: Psalm 42:1-3, 6-8; 43:3-5

OPENING QUESTION

Play the Alphabet/Number Game: How did you feel as your turn was approaching? Were you starting to feel anxious, distressed, maybe even a little overwhelmed?

Today we are going to talk about how we can receive encouragement from God when we feel overwhelmed.

THE SETTING

The repeated refrain in Psalm 42:5, 11 and 43:5 leads many Bible scholars to conclude that initially the two psalms were actually united as one. Whether that was ever the case or not, both psalms reflect that the composer was distressed and depressed over his inability to worship God on His holy mountain. He repeatedly reminded himself to put his hope in God and to praise God as the remedy for his depression.

SCRIPTURE READING

PSALM 42:1-3, 6-8; 43:3-5 (NIV)

As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, my God. ² My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? ³ My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

⁶ My soul is downcast within me; therefore I will remember you from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar. ⁷ Deep calls to deep in the roar of your waterfalls; all your waves and breakers have swept over me. ⁸ By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me— a prayer to the God of my life.

⁴³ ³ Send me your light and your faithful care, let them lead me; let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell. ⁴ Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight. I will praise you with the lyre, O God, my God. ⁵ 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.

DISCUSSION

READ Psalm 42:1-3

- ° In your own words, how would you describe what the writer of the psalm experienced?
- ° What do you long for when you feel overwhelmed?

On that note, here are some ways to assess your spiritual desires:

- ❖ **Do I desire God Himself?** The psalmist wanted God above all else; his grief was profound when away from God's presence.
- ❖ **Do I desire scripture?** The strength of your spiritual life is tied closely to your willingness to be a student of the Bible.
- ❖ **Do I desire to worship God?** Whatever receives your undivided attention is the focus of your worship. It takes an honest evaluation to determine who or what has your heart.
- ❖ **Do I feel sorrow away from God's presence?** When we are distant from God, we should have an unyielding desire to find Him quickly and be near Him again.

READ Psalm 42:6-8

- ° This is a very poetic Psalm. What do the sights and sounds in this passage communicate to you?
- ° When you feel overwhelmed, what truths about God help you put one foot in front of the other?
- ° How would you like to respond when trouble comes your way?

READ Psalm 43:3-5

- ° What are some ways to trust God when you don't know what to do?
- ° How has God encouraged you through worship? (in times of praising Him, honoring Him)
- ° In what ways could worship have a greater influence on your everyday life?

SUMMARIZE & CHALLENGE

Whether or not you fight the blues, you will feel overwhelmed at times – the waves of doubt will crash around you. But you don't have to drown. Depression will seek to embrace you, but you can choose the presence of God instead. Seek Him.

Live it Out: How will you respond when hard times arrive? Consider the following suggestions to prepare yourself even now.

- ✓ **Choose worship.** Make the decision to actively worship God both in public and in private. Seek Him at all times so you'll know how to find Him when you're overwhelmed.
- ✓ **Encourage others.** Be intentional about speaking words of encouragement to friends, family, and coworkers this week.
- ✓ **Find help.** If you experience prolonged periods of depression, consider speaking with a close friend, pastor, or counselor about the deeper issues at the core of that struggle.