

THIRST FOR GOD

Theme : Having a desire for God that nothing else can fulfil

Grade 9 - Unit 1 Lesson 3

Teacher's Preparation

The imagery portrayed in Psalm 42 is used often in song and prayer. It is an image of deer who longs for water and nothing else. This intense feeling is how our relationship with God should be. The psalm was written during a difficult time for the author. It talks about a time when there was no hope, and those around questioning the author's faith.

The teacher will take the children through the Psalm, as explained in the main section of the lesson. Place emphasis on the feelings that are displayed in the passage.

At the end, only God can fulfill the longing in our heart and be the hope that we seek.

Aim:

To understand that no matter the situation, God is the only answer and that we must have a real relationship with Him in order to experience this

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Psalm 42

To the leader. A Maskil of the Korahites.

¹ As a deer longs for flowing streams,
so my soul longs for you, O God.

² My soul thirsts for God,
for the living God.

When shall I come and behold
the face of God?

³ My tears have been my food
day and night,
while people say to me continually,
“Where is your God?”

⁴ These things I remember,
as I pour out my soul:
how I went with the throng,
and led them in procession to the house of
God,
with glad shouts and songs of thanksgiving,
a multitude keeping festival.

⁵ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help ⁶ and my God.

My soul is cast down within me;
therefore I remember you
from the land of Jordan and of Hermon,
from Mount Mizar.

⁷ Deep calls to deep
at the thunder of your cataracts;
all your waves and your billows
have gone over me.

⁸ By day the LORD commands his steadfast
love,
and at night his song is with me,
a prayer to the God of my life.

⁹ I say to God, my rock,
“Why have you forgotten me?
Why must I walk about mournfully
because the enemy oppresses me?”

¹⁰ As with a deadly wound in my body,
my adversaries taunt me,
while they say to me continually,
“Where is your God?”

¹¹ Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.

Aim:

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God is the only answer and that we must
have a real relationship with Him in order to
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Student Introduction

When do you find yourself praying to God most earnestly? Is during good times or difficult times? Why do you think this is so? We see many characters that turned to God during difficult times: Jonah in the whale's belly, Hannah when she was childless, etc.

The book of Psalms can be divided into 5 sections. The second section begins with Psalm 42. In particular, it is one of the 13 Psalms dedicated to the chief Musician, Maschil. Many believe this Psalm to have been written by King David. It has been set to music through out time. The popular song "As the Deer Panteth" is sung in many of our churches and prayer meetings.

What is the message that David is trying to portray in the Psalm? How can we apply it to our lives today?

Bible Exposition

The Psalmist uses the image of a deer to begin the passage. The deer is thirsting for water. When one is thirsty, that becomes the primary thing on a person's mind. The need for water engulfs the person's thoughts. The only thing that can quench thirst is not food, money or other items. It can only be satisfied by a drink. As such, we see that God is the only thing that can fulfill the author's desire.

Water is essential to life as is God to our lives. It is pure, abundant and everywhere but unless it enters a person's mouth, water cannot satisfy a person's thirst. Flowing streams of water represents our living God and His ability to sustain life to all who come to Him.

Some might say that you don't need God to live, as there are our Atheists who live without acknowledging God. In order to live forever, as this life is temporary, you need God. To live life to its fullest, it must be in accordance to the will of God that created you. God gave us free will but living in a close relationship with Him allows us to experience the life that God intended for us. The Psalmist is seeking a real relationship with the living God, not just a superficial understanding of the Almighty.

The Psalmist talks about how his tears have been his food. He is explaining a desperate time, where there seems to be no hope. Others around him question his faith in God due to the difficulties that he faces. It is in this situation where the Psalmist needs God more than ever. It is a lesson to us that there is no need to look anywhere else other than to the living God during such times.



*The Psalmist talks about
how his "tears have
been his food and day
and night."*

*What does that
mean to you?*

Activities

The Psalmist uses an analogy of a deer to describe his thirst for God.

An analogy is defined as a comparison of two things based on their being alike in some way (Merriam-Webster Dictionary).

On your own, create some other analogies to describe your relationship with God.

Share your ideas with the entire class.

When on the cross, Jesus cried out “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34). This is a direct quote from Psalm 22:1 but also reflects what the Psalmist is talking about in Psalm 42. We see a time when there seems to be no hope but the Psalmist reassures himself that there is no need to have doubts during these troubled times as God is in control.

All hope should be placed in God. This hope is strengthened through praising God. When you say out loud what you believe in your heart, that thought becomes more than just an idea: you start to truly believe. When you praise God out loud, others hear and you become integral to the message. Often times it is hard to believe that God is near. We must believe whole heartedly and say it out loud. Our thoughts must become spoken words so that they may grow into real actions.

During difficult times in our lives, we wonder who can we turn to. Sometimes we look around but have no one to share it with. Going through difficult times alone can be daunting. Whether it be school, family or other issues, we need to call on God. A genuine relationship with Jesus Christ is what we need to establish.

How would you feel if a friend of yours only called you when they had a difficult situation? During good times, they forgot about you. Is this how our relationship with Jesus is? We need to have a real relationship, not one of convenience. This is when we can experience a “thirst” for God. Our communication should not just be once a day for 5 minutes. It must be a constant communication. We should talk to him through out the day, seeking guidance for all our decisions. Real intimate communication can only take place between two who have a true relationship.

There must be an acknowledgement that Jesus paid the price for you and there is no one else that can provide you that assurance. Let us seek God and accept His son in our hearts so that this relationship can allow us to get through all the difficult situations that we may face.



Lesson Review

1. Who is believed to have written Psalm 42?
2. What does flowing streams of water represent?
3. Explain the type of situation the author of this Psalm is facing.

Values for Life:

Hopelessness can turn into triumph only when we have true relationship with Jesus Christ and experience the love of God

Memory Verse:

Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer.

Romans 12:12

Closing Prayer:

Father, we thank you for your unchanging love for us that was displayed on the cross. We pray for a relationship with you that can withstand all the difficulties that we may face. Help us to realize that there is nothing in this world that can take the place of you. We need you now and forever. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

