

OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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SERMON TITLE Thirsty for God

SERIES

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KEY SCRIPTURE Psalm 42:1-6

SYNOPSIS We all have a soul-thirst which can only be satisfied by God.

HIGHLIGHTS Closing songs: As the deer; You deserve the glory



☞ Thirsty for God

Psalms 42:1-6

☞ **1 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O 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 men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"**

☞ **4 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.**

☞ **5 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 6 my God.**

The writer here was apparently in a time of distress, likely unable to join in the public worship at the time. Whether by choice or by circumstance, he realizes he is missing something. So, he expresses his appetite for the Lord. It's not just a little rumble of hunger, but rather a deep-seated empty feeling in the pit of his stomach.

1 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

The image is that of a deer on the run from predators, desperately in need of a break to rest and get a drink. There's an overwhelming thirst.

We can sometimes find ourselves in a similar situation. The circumstances of life have you against the ropes and you wish you could just get a break. The problem is that we try to get our break and our refreshing drink from the wrong sources.

It is amazing the things will try in order to quench this thirst. Look at the world around you and you see people trying to satisfy this spiritual thirst by all kinds of experiences. This is why there are so many problems with abuse of alcohol and drugs. People are looking for something to "take the edge off."

For believers, it typically doesn't go that far, but we might look for satisfaction in things like your job. So, you throw yourself into the work and wear yourself out. The project you've been working on doesn't come together, or even if it does, it goes unappreciated.

For others, it may be recreation; just something to dull the feelings. You can spend a fortune on recreational activities and still come up lacking.

Still others may seek some satisfaction in relationships. Now, to a degree that may bring a little relief, but it won't be enough. And, if you're not careful, it can get out of hand and lead you into inappropriate relations that you never intended.



The problem is that none of these pursuits fully satisfy the thirst that is deep within our souls. That's what the psalmist says here, "my *soul* thirsts." This is more than just a physical need for a restful break. It's more than just an emotional need for encouragement. This is a **soul issue that cannot be resolved by worldly solutions.**

When Jesus talked with Samaritan woman at the well, he said to her, "If you drink of this water you are going to thirst again" (John 4:13). Now, the water at the well can represent any earthly ambition you may have. Not all are harmful, but none can really satisfy. So, go ahead and drink from that well, but you are going to be thirsty again. You are not going to find the real satisfaction that your heart is yearning for until you find a meaningful relationship with God.

Every human being has an innate desire for God. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that God has put eternity in the human heart. There is a desire in everyone for something eternal which cannot be satisfied by anything less than God himself.

Perhaps you have been trying to satisfy your inner thirst with some of these things. It's time to turn to the real source.

Psalms 34:8

Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man who takes refuge in him.

Maybe you're a believer who already understands this and yet is not all that thirsty for God. You know that nothing else can really satisfy, but you've filled up on those things anyway. It's been said that **sometimes we're not hungry for God because we are full of other things.**

Proverbs 27:7

He who is full loathes honey, but to the hungry even what is bitter tastes sweet.

Stop looking for satisfaction elsewhere and turn to God!

3 My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?"

You've possibly been running on empty for some time now. For some it's a feeling of despair. You've been let down in so many ways. Perhaps there's some affliction that has taken you on the road of discouragement. Maybe people around you are pulling you away from God. Some might even be encouraging you to just walk away. And, maybe you've been considering it.

For some believers who have fallen into the pit of despair, it may not be others who are saying, "Where is your God?" It may be that you, yourself are asking this question. "Where is God?" "He feels so far away!" I know those feelings. I've been there. In fact, I think it's a rare person that has never felt that way.



☞ But here's the truth, **God has not moved away**. He's the same yesterday, today and forever. (Hebrew 13:8).

It reminds me of the married couple many years ago driving down the road in one of those old bench seat cars. While the husband is driving, the wife is reminiscing about their earlier days and how much more romantic they were back then. She fondly recalls some of the activities they used to do to express their love for each other. She even remembers when they were dating how he used to put his arm around her while in the car. (Remember, old time, bench seat). Finally, she suggests to her husband, "We should do those things again." To which the husband replies, "Well, I never moved."

Sometimes, we want those warm feelings with the Lord that we remember. We want the fire and passion from our early days with the Lord. We want the zeal we experienced at Bible Camp, Breakaway or some retreat. Here's the truth again: God has not moved. And that seems to be the realization of the psalmist here...

4 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.

☞ He **remembers how it used to be** and instead of blaming God or anyone else, he recalls his previous behavior. It's all about intentionally connecting with God. It's about the house of God and gathering with other believers to worship God. Something has changed over time, but it's not God! *He* used to go with the crowd to the house of God. *He* used to lead out. *He* used to shout for joy. *He* used to express thanksgiving. It's his change in behavior that has led to his current condition.

What about you? How have you changed? Did you used to make the house of God a priority, and now it's an afterthought? Did you used to enter wholeheartedly into worship, and now it's a wimpy, lackadaisical approach?

I know the answer for some of you. I've been here for a lot of years now and I remember when some would come right down front during worship and energetically give praise to the Lord. I remember some who used to shout from time to time. I remember some who grabbed on to others, leading the procession to the altar to seek the Lord. I remember some who didn't wait to be fired up, but were the ones firing others up. Yeah, I remember. How about you?

Table talk: What are some of your fondest memories with the Lord? What sort of things do you remember doing when you were "on fire" for God?

Revelation 2:4-5

You have forsaken your first love. 5 Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent ☞ and **do the things you did at first**.



Yes, I know that time passes and circumstances change, but God hasn't changed. And, our attitudes don't have to change. So, it's time for some self-talk.

5 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 6 my God.

I've mentioned this "self-talk" several times recently. It's not a sign of mental health problems. It's actually a good, biblical practice when you do it right. The psalmist here is basically saying, "Self... you don't have to be down and distraught. You can still be positive and praise the Lord."

Remember, part of being New in 2022 is in our minds. We have to change the way we think.

☞ **Get your mind focused on God instead of your circumstance.**

☞ **He is your Savior.** Think about the eternity you would have if the Lord hadn't saved you. Aren't you glad you're saved?

☞ **He is your God.** There is nothing that is too difficult for him. Any problem you may be facing is infinitely smaller than your God. He sees it and understands. He loves you. He's working for your good in all circumstances.

☞ **He is your hope.** Now, think of eternity with the Lord, who saved you. One day very soon, you will experience the fullness of his glory when he returns for his people. You get a new body which will be immortal and incorruptible. You get a new location which will be literally out of this world. You get a new situation where there is no more sorrow or pain. His plan for you is beyond your wildest imagination. It's so much better!

Does that stir something in you? Doesn't that fire you up? Then praise the Lord! That thirst ☞ within your soul can be satisfied by God. **Other things will leave you empty and dry, but God can fully satisfy.**

So, get your focus on him. Begin to thank him for who he is and what he has already done. Choose to put him first in all things. Go after him like that deer panting for streams of water. He ☞ is still there. He hasn't moved. So, **preach yourself happy; press in to God; and praise him with all your heart!**

Closing songs:

As the deer
You deserve the glory