

ISRAEL
PROGRAM 4 (#911164)
WEEK 1 (#911333)
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SERIES: Israel

TITLE: Program 4 – What Do You Do When You Are In A Desert Situation?

THURSDAY

OPEN

O my friend, do you feel like you can't make it? Do you feel like you're in a barren wilderness and there's no way of escape? That you're dying of thirst and you say, "O my God, where are you? My soul thirsts for you as in a dry and thirsty land." O listen to me. God has written the Book of Psalms, the Book of Psalms that are taken out of the anguish of your soul to show you that there is a rock that you can get a grip on, a rock that will keep you from slipping. Let's look at that today, so that you can have a grip on God.

PART ONE

I'm sitting in the wilderness of Judea. This is where David would come. Before David ever became king of Israel, David tended sheep. I think God had him in training. David would come to this wilderness and he would bring his flock of sheep. Here in the silence, he would talk to God. Here in

the quiet of these Judean hills, in this barren wilderness, he would pour out his soul to God. And in that pouring out of his soul, God would preserve his words so that they might speak to you and they might speak to me when you and I are desperate, when you and I feel like our hand is slipping, like we can't hold on any longer. When we say, "Why are you in despair, O my soul?" (Psalm 42:5a) Those were the words of David in Psalm 42, verse 5. "Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me?" (Psalm 42:5a) You know that's a question you need to ask yourself when you feel depressed, when you feel overwhelmed, when all of a sudden you feel like there's a dark cloud around you and the sun has disappeared and life is full of shadows and gloom and darkness instead of blue skies and fluffy clouds and bright sunshine. You need to ask yourself, "Why are you in despair, O my soul?" You know what I want to do, today? Because I feel like God wants you to hear this message, I want you and I to talk about the Psalms. First of all I want to take you to Psalm 63. This is a Psalm that David said that he wrote in the wilderness of Judea. That's where I am. I'm in Israel. I'm in the wilderness of Judea. And all around these hills periodically, you can see the shepherds. And you see them traverse these hills and you see them find these little plants. And this is where they feed in this wilderness. And you can see the flock on those hills going down to the water, the water that seeks the lowest point. And David said in Psalm 63, verse 1. "O God, [Thou art] my God; I shall seek [Thee] earnestly; My soul thirst for [Thee], my flesh yearns for [Thee], in a dry and weary land where there is no water." (Psalm 63:1) In other words, [I'm in the desert. I'm in a place where it is hot. I am in a place where it is barren. I am in a place where where life is wearing and it's pulling me down. "And O God, in this barren place, my soul is thirsting for You. My flesh is yearning for You."]

(PARAPHRASE 63:1) What does David do when he's in that kind of a situation? Watch what he does. He says in verse 2, "Thus I have [beheld] You in the sanctuary, to see [Thy] power and [Thy] glory." (63:2) In other

words, when David is in a situation like this, when there are shadows cast over him. He remembers that there is a tabernacle, that there is a sanctuary where he can go and where he can see God in all of His beauty and all of His glory. And he remembers there what he learns about a holy God and how an unholy people approach a holy God. He goes on to say, “Because [Thy] loving kindness is better than life, my lips will praise [Thee].”(63:3) One of the secrets, Precious One, of taking you through the valleys, taking you through the dry and barren places, is the secret of praise. You know the book of Hebrews, was written to a group of people that were undergoing persecution. Their possessions were being taken away from them. Some of them were being put in prison. They were counted as sheep, so to speak, to be slaughtered. They were despised. They had come out of Judaism and they had believed in Jesus Christ and the Jews had rejected them. They had joined the Christians and yet the Christians were being rejected by the Roman Empire. And so in the midst of all of this, God reminds them that He is God. He reminds them that His Son is the ultimate priest. He's the ultimate sacrifice. He's the mediator of the new covenant. He reminds them that after this wilderness that there comes a time of rest. It's a rest of faith. And as He takes them through the book of Hebrews and He shows them that Jesus is better than the angels. And He shows them that yes, Moses was a servant over God's house. But Jesus was the Son over God's house. As He reminds them, yes you have an earthly priest, after the Aaronic order of the priesthood, but Jesus is a priest after the order of Melchizedek. As He reminds them, yes you have the old covenant, but the old covenant could not take away your sins. The blood of bulls and goats cannot take away sin. So Jesus says, “...a body [Thou] hast...prepared [for] Me...Lo (in the volume of the Book it is written of Me,)...”(Hebrews 10:5-7a) He reminds them that they had an earthly tabernacle. But that earthly tabernacle was only a shadow. Where are the shadows coming from? They're not coming from anything on earth. They're coming from the heavens. They're coming from

the clouds and the heavens and they're shadowing it. And so he's saying that this earthly tabernacle was simply a shadow of the things to come, that this earthly tabernacle was simply a shadow of a heavenly tabernacle. That what you saw on earth was made after a pattern of what is in heaven. So as he looks at all this, as he looks at all of this in the book of Hebrews and he reminds them of these things, that there's a better covenant, that the new covenant has replaced the old, then he urges them to persevere. And you come to Hebrews, chapter 13. And in Hebrews, chapter 13, he talks about what they are to do, how they are to bear the reproach of Jesus Christ. And it says, in verse 12, "...that He might sanctify the people...", that He might make them holy, that He might set them apart, "...through His own blood, [He] suffered outside the gate." (Hebrews 13:12) He went outside the gates of Jerusalem. He went outside the walls of Jerusalem. He went to Golgotha, the place of the skull, the road that passed through and passed by that Damascus gate that led into the old city, the city of Jerusalem. He says, "[Hence], let us go...to Him outside the camp, bearing His reproach." (13:13) And then he says, "For here we do not have a lasting city, but we are seeking the city which is to come. Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God. When they went into the temple, every day they offered sacrifices to God." There was the morning sacrifice. There was the evening sacrifice. It was a continual day by day sacrifice. And playing off of David and playing off of what the tabernacle was all about, the sanctuary that David talked about, he said, ["We must continually offer a sacrifice of praise to God."] (13:15) What is a sacrifice of praise? A sacrifice is something that you lay on the altar. It's something, in a sense, that you put to death. It's your expectations, your understanding of the situation. So when you're in a difficult situation, beloved, what you need to do is you need to say, "God, whether I feel like it or not, I will praise You. My soul, God, will hope in You." So he says, "[Let's] offer...a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name." (13:15)

What does that mean? That means that in any difficult situation, what you do is instead of looking at that situation, instead of looking at that wilderness, instead of looking at those clouds that are overshadowing life, that seemingly are obliterating the sun, you need to remember that the Son is there, S-o-n is there. And that He has made the ultimate sacrifice, the sacrifice of himself. He has gone outside the camp. He has born our reproach. And in bearing our reproach and becoming sin for us, He has brought you into an eternal, everlasting relationship with God. And he looked to the heavens. He looked to God. He remembered God, who was in the sanctuary. He remembered that He was the creator of the heavens and the earth. He wrote, ["I will look up to the hills from whence cometh my help. My help comes from Him who made the heavens and who made the earth."] (PARAPHRASE Psalm 121:1-2) When you're weary, when you're thirsty, when you're longing for something more, precious one, the more is always God. The more is always God. And you need to go to God. You need to remember that this is earth. There is heaven. We'll talk about it when I come back.

PART TWO

When David found himself in difficult situations, he remembered God and he learned to praise God. And that's what you must do, beloved. Remember we were looking at Hebrews and in Hebrews, chapter 13, verse 16, He says, "And do not neglect doing good and sharing, for with such sacrifices God is pleased." (13:16) What is He saying to us? He's saying, So often when you and I are in a desert situation, so often, when we wonder where God is, we need to remember that we come out of those situations, first of all by praising God, by remembering who He is, by offering to Him the sacrifice of praise. Whether we feel like it or not, sing beloved, sing. Turn on praise music, whether you feel like it or not. Get in the Psalms. Read them aloud.

Notice how He starts with just, “Why are you in despair, O my soul?” (Psalm 42:5a) “[I thirst for Thee as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is.]” (PARAPHRASE Psalm 63:1) And keep reading until you get to the end of the Psalm. And there you find the answer. And there you find the victory. So you keep communicating with God. You keep praising God. You keep reminding yourself of who God is and what He has promised. But then you get up out of your chair. You get up out of that bed, Beloved. And what do you do? You start doing good to others. You start sharing with others what God has done in the past. But also share with them the physical things you have. You say, “But I don't have much.” I remember a young couple when I became a new Christian and they had a ton of kids that they had adopted. And they didn't have much. But I will tell you, that sitting with the Apple family, with a big kettle of vegetable soup and crackers for dinner, were some of my most precious times. Because it was around that kettle of vegetable soup that this poor family shared with me, that I learned about my God. They taught me. I was a brand new babe in Jesus Christ. And I saw their faith and I grew. So what do you do when you're in despair, O my soul? What do you do when you're yearning for God, as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is, where your soul thirsts for God, when your flesh yearns for God? You go to God. You go to God. Because, listen, He's your wellspring of life. He's the one that supplies all of your needs. I want to take you back to Psalm 42. And in Psalm 42, he says this, “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for [Thee], O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God; when shall I come and appear before God?” (Psalm 42:1-2) Listen to me very, very carefully. The answer to every situation of life, the answer to every longing of your soul is not found in the arm of flesh. It's found in the arm of God. Flesh will fail, but God will never fail. He will never leave you. He will never forsake you. You can boldly say, “... ‘The Lord is my helper, [and] I will not [fear]. What [man shall do un]to me?’” (Hebrews 13:6) Now listen to what he says. He says, “My tears have

been my food day and night, while they say to me all day long, ‘Where is your God?’” (Psalm 42:3) You're going through this tragedy. You're battling with this depression, you've lost your job, you've lost your child, you've lost this, you've lost that. Where is your God? “The Lord....” as Habakkuk says when he sees all the corruption and all the violence and he wonders where God is because the enemy seems to be having the victory. He remembers this, “...the Lord is in His holy temple. Let all the earth [keep silence] before Him.” (Habakkuk 2:20) Be still and listen to God. He says, “Hope in God, for I shall again praise Him for the help of His presence.” (42:5b) You can know this, there's a cloud, there's a shadow, but the sun is still there. And then he says, “O my God, my soul is in despair within me; Therefore I remember [Him] from the land of the Jordan....” (42:6a) And he points back. He's in this desert, but he remembers Him from the lush land of the Jordan, “...[from] the peaks of Hermon....” (42:6b) The peaks of Hermon is where it is lush and green because that's almost the beginning of the Jordan River that empties down into the Sea of Galilee. And he remembers the water that comes crashing over the peaks of Hermon. He says, “...from Mt. Mizar. Deep calls to deep at the sound of [Thy] waterfalls; all [Thy] breakers and [Thy] waves have rolled over me. The Lord will command His loving kindness in the daytime; and His song will be with me in the night, a prayer to the God of my life.” (42:6c-8) What you have to realize, Beloved, is that God is sovereign. And God has you in His hand. No one can touch you without God's permission. No one can peel back a finger and look at you without God's permission. No one can whisper to you or say a thing to you without God's permission. And if it has God's permission, listen to me very carefully, if it has God's permission to touch you, then you can know this, that because it has His permission, you have His promise. And that promise is this, It's found in Romans 8:28, 29 and 30: “...that all things [will] work together for good....” Not that all things are good, but, “...all things [will] work together for good to those who love God, to those who are [the] called

according to His purpose.”(Romans 8:28) He's called you. He has you in His hand. And in John 10, He says, [“No one will ever be able to pluck you out of My hand.”] (PARAPHRASE John 10:29b, KJV) He has you in His hand. You can trust Him. The sovereign God has everything come into your life filtered through His fingers of love, because God is love. You can trust in God. He says, “I will say to [my] God..., ‘Why [has Thou forsaken] me? Why do I go mourning because of the oppression of [my] enemy?’”(Psalm 42:9) Lay those things out before our God. Say them to God. He says, “As a shattering of my bones, my adversaries revile me, while they say to me all day long, ‘Where is [thy] God?’” (42:10) He repeats it again. And then he says, “Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed...in me...?”(42:11a) In other words, you look again at that list. You look again at that reason that you're feeling this way, that reason that that depression has overcome you. You look at it again. And you analyze it, not in the light of the list, but in the light of the character and sovereignty of God and the promises of His Word. All things keep on working together for good, not that all things are good. And keep on working together for good, I say it that way because it's in the present tense. Because whom God has foreknown He has predestined. He has marked out beforehand that you might be conformed to His image. He says, “...Hope in God, for [yet again] I shall...praise Him, the help of my countenance....” (42:11b) will put a smile on your face in the deepest wildernesses.