



ST NINIAN'S UNITING CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 30th 2026

PRAYERS AND REFLECTION

Psalm 42

Longing for God and His Help in Distress

To the leader. A Maskil of the Korahites.

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

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

When shall I come and behold
the face of God?

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

⁴These 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.

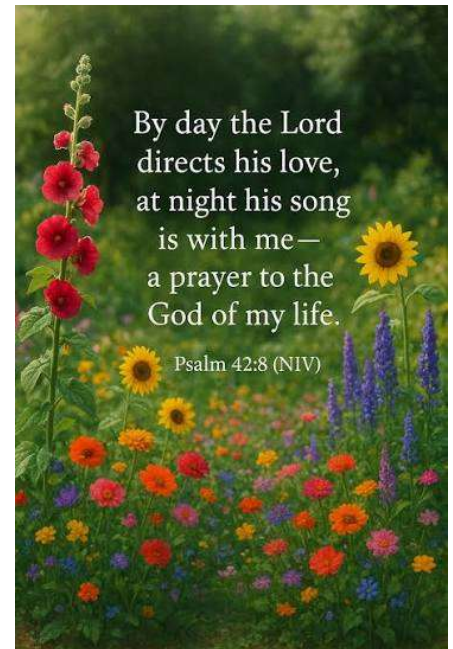
(refrain)

⁵Why 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.

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

⁸By 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.

MEDITATIVE PRAYER - sit with your feet firmly on the floor, and firmly in your chair,
you're your palms open to the ceiling and between each section say, 'remember me, when
I come into your kingdom' times three

As the deer longs for streams of water, so my soul longs for You, O God.
My soul thirsts for You, even when the world feels dry and far away.
I remember Your presence, and I feel the ache of distance.

‘Remember me, when I come into your kingdom’ times three

My tears have been my food day and night, while those who pass by ask me,
“Where is your God?”

But You, Lord, still You are my Rock, my hope, my song.

‘Remember me, when I come into your kingdom’ times three

Even in the night seasons, I will speak to You.
Even when answers feel silent, I will not stop seeking.

I pour out my heart to You; You know the sorrow within me.

‘Remember me, when I come into your kingdom’ times three

My enemies may taunt me, and my bones may feel broken,
but let the depths of my life turn toward You.

Teach me to speak hope again: “Why are you cast down, O my soul? Hope in God.”

‘Remember me, when I come into your kingdom’ times three

Your steadfast love is real. Your mercy is not finished with me.

Day by day You will guide me, and night by night You will gather me back to You.

Let me remember: God is my salvation.

‘Remember me, when I come into your kingdom’ times three

Even if my tears come, make them prayers.

Even if my waiting feels long, make it holy.

Until the day I see You, let me cling to You, the lifter of my head, the restorer of my heart.

‘Remember me, when I come into your kingdom’ times three

Amen.

PRAYER POINTS OF THANKSGIVING

- Thank God for being so near to you always
- Thank God for having the kind of love that doesn’t grow old or stale
- Thank God for listening to every prayer silent or spoken, be it long or short

PRAYER POINTS OF PRAISE

- Praise God for being your rock, hope and salvation
- Praise God for remaining faithful through the past, in the present and in the future
- Praise God for the gift of remembering and remaining close to God and for a hope that rises as I recall the goodness of God.

LORD, I CONFESS

- Forgive me when I have been quick to say ‘nothing will change’ and slow to have hope
- Forgive me for complaining when things don’t go my way
- Forgive me when I have failed to reject falsehoods and not allowing God’s Wisdom to correct me.

WORDS OF GRACE

In grace, God accepts you, renews you, and calls you to live in love and justice. Go from this time of reflection in peace, confident that you are forgiven and empowered to walk in newness of life.

Amen

REFLECTION

This psalm may bring to your memory a worship song ‘*As The Deer Pants for the Water, so My Soul longs after You.*’ It’s a psalm that begins with a picture of deep longing: a deer panting for

running streams when water is far away. David isn't only experiencing physical thirst; he is speaking from spiritual dryness, when God feels distant from him, and yet in his soul he still knew his soul was made for God. The refrain in the psalm implicates a form of inner turmoil where honesty is being named and where despair isn't permitted to have the last word.

This psalm of David's prayer doesn't erase emotion, instead emotion is given a direction a place where it can be experienced. Tears become language. Complaints become confession. Even when David is tempted to withdraw, he keeps bringing the longings of his heart to God. Linda Allcock author of 'Deeper Still' discusses meditating thinking about less of 'me' and more of 'he' (God). That's a key lesson for all our thoughts. Hope isn't the denial of the existence of suffering, but the decision to keep returning to God the Creator who meets us where we're at.

The thread of angst heard in David's words isn't just an external angst as it's also the internal voices of discouragement like a torment that's asking 'Where is your God?' Sometimes our hardest battles happen in the mind, where silence from God is interpreted as abandonment. However, psalm 42 teaches us that God's silence isn't the same as God's absence. Night can be long, but David learns to use his voice and speak anyway.

A final thought about today's psalm turns from one of longing towards remembrance where David makes the choice to recall God's character and previous mercies of love and grace. He doesn't yet claim instant relief. He chooses to anchor his identity in his hope in God and sees God as his salvation. For us today we can also learn to carry the mountain and still have the capacity to lift our eyes.

When you feel dry, and in need of nourishment, bring your burdens to God. Let your tears become prayer and your time of waiting become worship.

PRAYER POINTS OF INTERCESSION

- Pray for God's presence to be with you and never leave
- Pray for those who are feeling overwhelmed, out of their depth, depressed, ill. May the comfort of God overcome any discouragement you may be feeling
- Pray for a renewed hope, and a strengthened sense of purpose and worship

