FBS “Unlikely Praise—Replenish Your Soul” 7-23-17

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**Intro.** At some point in your life, you will go through a trial—it may be a tragedy, an accident, a diagnosis, a divorce, a job loss, or any number of things—and you will still want to praise the Lord because He has been gracious to you & provided for you & saved you & given you peace & hope & forgiveness. Others may look at you & wonder, “How in the world can you praise the Lord when you are going through such a trial?” That is, what you are offering in their eyes is “Unlikely Praise.” The Bible says “let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy” (Psalm 96:11b-12) & Jesus said, when told by the Pharisees to rebuke His disciples for praising Him during His triumphal entry, “I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out” (Luke 19:40). If we don’t praise the Lord, even at unlikely times, the rocks & the trees will praise Him. Today, we look at Psalms 42-43 to help you “Replenish Your Soul.”

Theme: Rest & nourishment

Background: Both the 42nd & 43rd Psalms go together, because of their theme & structure. The Book of Psalms is broken down into 5 books & Psalm 42-43 are the introduction to the 2nd volume, focusing on petitions & praises to our God. The authors are the sons of Korah, descendants from the man of rebellion who led 250 Israelites against Moses & the Lord struck them down (Numbers 16). But his descendants did not continue in the way of their father & served in the priesthood & became musicians to lead Israel in song—you can have an ungodly parent or grandparent & still receive God’s grace & serve Him well.

* The psalms are a source of great inspiration to help us face trials & temptations. When your trial continues to prolong or you move from trial to trial, you need to have your soul replenished. That may mean taking a sabbatical from service. It may mean taking a vacation or getting alone with the Lord for a few days. You cannot become a monk or nun & completely separate yourself from the world, focusing only on your soul, but you can take a break to care for your soul.
* **I believe we can find 3 responses to “Replenish Your Soul” so you can praise the Lord even in unlikely circumstances:**

**1. Long for the spiritually thirst-quenching water found only in Christ & His Word (42:1-3, 9-10; 43:1-2)**

* The psalmist describes the longing we should have for Christ as a deer panting for water, desperately needing a drink

Illus: You know what it’s like to work in the yard or play a sport or go to the beach & sit in the sun & sweat a great deal—you really get thirsty—you want water or a sports drink to replenish your fluids—just as we want our thirst quenched physically, so we should keep coming to Christ & His Word to have our souls quenched

* The psalmist is going through a trial & is crying day & night (42:3) & in mourning because of his enemies (42:9-10), but He still longs for the Lord to supply him & be his strength (43:1-2)
* Daily reading the Word of God is so important because the Lord can nourish you & sustain you—no pastor/shepherd can sustain you daily, but the Chief Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ can do it!

**2. Remember the good things from the Lord (42:4, 6-8)**

* Whenever you go through a trial, it is easy to get down & stay down, but the Lord wants us to praise Him. How can we praise the Lord when we are going through a trial? By remembering the good things He has done for us & that’s what the psalmist does
* He remembers leading others in worship at the house of God as they sang praises as a multitude gathered together (42:4). He remembers the source of the Jordan River at Mount Hermon & working toward Mount Mizar & remembers times the Lord sent so much water it was a waterfall & flood representing His steadfast love (42:6-8)

Illus: Much of Israel is desert which gets very little water, but I’ve seen a couple of inches of rain in those places turn into flash floods, because the way the rocks & canyons were carved & the flood washed out a highway—that’s so much water it causes a problem, but the steadfast love of Christ never gives up on us—“Your love never fails, it never gives up, it never runs out on me.”

* Do you remember getting zero rain for months just a short time ago? We began praying for rain & now we have gotten it daily the last couple of months! The steadfast love of Jesus never runs out!

**3. Hope in & praise God for Who He is & what He has done (42:5-6, 11; 43:3-5)**

* While going through trials & longing for the Lord & remembering what good things He had done, the psalmist breaks out in hope & praise 3x in these psalms
* It’s like he’s talking to himself—“Why are you so weary, my soul?” “Hope in God & praise Him!”

Illus: Have you ever talked to yourself? I know of one man who could never win an argument so he started talking to himself & he lost that argument, too! But sometimes the Holy Spirit impresses on us what we need to do & how we need to keep putting our hope in God & keep praising Him

* Why? Because of Who He is—He is God, ***my*** God—He personally reigns over me—He is holy & gracious & sovereign & supreme & He is personal—the Creator of the universe is personal with His people—that’s amazing!
* We also hope in & praise God for what He has done—He has brought us salvation through the incarnation of Christ who took on flesh & walked in our shoes & never sinned & died in our place & rose from the dead—only a living God can save you; none of the false gods of this world can do anything for you, because they are lifeless, but Jesus is alive & can save you & transform you, which is why we must hope in Him & praise Him!

**Take Away Questions:**

**1. Who do you know who needs encouragement to keep longing for Christ & His Word?**

* It may be you need to remind yourself to keep longing for Christ or someone close to you—a family member or friend or co-worker. Think of who needs encouragement in this way & encourage them

**2. What are some good things the Lord has done for you?**

* It may be family members or friends, but it may also be a good job or good house or good health or forgiveness or hope & a future or any number of things—think of a few & share them with those closest to you (turn to someone right now & tell them something good the Lord has done for you)

**3. Do you find yourself praising God more for Who He is or for what He has done? Why do you focus on one area more than the other?**

* There isn’t necessarily a right or wrong answer here, because in many ways, the character & conduct of God are intertwined. But it’s helpful to stop & consider why you praise Him.

**Conc.** Some of the greatest times of praise in our church’s history are during times of tragedy. I had not been here long when Retia Dukes, wife of Dr. Jimmy Dukes, the interim preacher who preceded me here, had been struck by a car while crossing the street & after a few months of struggling, she passed away to be with the Lord. The church family came together to mourn with Jimmy & his family & yet we praised God through it. A couple of years later, we lost Bruce Speers, one of the most outgoing, joy-filled Christians I’ve ever known. The memorial service was a great time of praise & remembrance for God’s goodness. I can only guess that a similar thing happened when Dr. Mark Stevens passed away un-expectantly a few years before I came or Todd Stitt. During some of our greatest trials, when we should be down for the count, we offer “Unlikely Praise” to our Lord. “Unlikely Praise” begins when you turn from your sins & trust in Jesus & let Him “Replenish Your Soul.”