“Times of Spiritual Drought”
Psalm 42:1-11

Please turn with me in your Bibles to our scripture text this morning in Psalm 42.

READ: Psalm 42

PRAYER
******************************************************************************

INTRODUCTION

Dried up, crunchy grass beneath the feet.
Twisted up corn.
Shriveled up garden plants.
Cranky moods.
Clouds of dust blowing across fields.
Ever-shrinking ponds and creeks.
Smoke from wildfires filling the air.
Blistering heat.
Little or no rain.

These are all the tell-tale signs of a “drought.”

The dictionary defines a drought as: “an extended period of dry weather”
“an extended shortage of rain,” “a thirst.”

This morning (evening for Revivals) I want to talk to you for a
few minutes about a “drought” of another kind. I’m talking about a “spiritual drought.”

When David wrote this 42nd Psalm, he was going through a time of “spiritual drought” in his life. In fact, most Bible scholars believe David wrote this Psalm while he was on the run in the deserted wilderness of Judea after his son, Absalom temporarily took control of the throne.

Being all alone in that hot, dry, barren wilderness served as a reminder of the “spiritual drought” he felt down in the depths of his soul.

As we study this 42nd Psalm this morning, I want to point out three important truths about “Times of Spiritual Drought.”

*******************************

**Truth #1: Times of Spiritual Drought Come To All God’s People** (verses 1-4)

Read: Verses 1-4 again

1. David had slain the mighty giant, Goliath. He was the King of Israel. He wrote most of the Psalms we find in our Bibles. And he was the man God, Himself called, “The man after my own heart.”

And yet as he writes this 42nd Psalm, David is going through a “spiritual drought.”

“As the deer PANTS for streams of water, so my soul PANTS for you, O GOD. My soul THIRSTS for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

2. Every Christian here this morning (evening) needs to grab hold of this truth: All of God’s people go through
times of “spiritual drought.” All of God’s people spend time in a “spiritual wilderness or desert.”

-The children of Israel wandered for 40 years in the Sinai Desert.

-Moses spent 40 years in the remote Midianite Desert.

-Joseph’s “desert” was an Egyptian prison.

-Right after his “mountain-top” experience of defeating the Prophets of Baal on Mt. Carmel, Elijah sunk into a deep, dark depression and went out into a desert and begged for God to end his life.

-Paul spent three years in the Arabian desert.

-John the Baptist lived in a desert.

- Immediately after He was baptized, Jesus, Himself was carried away by the Holy Spirit into “the wilderness.”

3. This is the “white elephant” in the room we never talk about in the Church.

   We feel embarrassed and ashamed to admit we go through times of “spiritual emptiness.”

Do you ever go through times when it seems your prayers go unanswered? Do you ever go through times when you read God’s word and seemingly get nothing out of it? Do you ever go through spells where you seemingly get nothing out of going to Church? Do you ever go through periods where it feels like you are “standing still” or going “backwards” spiritually?

4. If you answered “yes” to any of those questions, guess what? You are not alone!
5. ALL OF GOD’S PEOPLE GO THROUGH TIMES OF SPIRITUAL DROUGHT!

**************************************************

Now here’s...........

Truth #2: Times of Spiritual Drought Are Necessary to Bring About Spiritual Growth (verses 5-10)

READ: Verses 5-10 again

1. When we go through “spiritual droughts” it is for one of two reasons:

   -Sometimes we go through “spiritual droughts” because we are outside the will of God. When there is a habitual sin in our lives, God often allows us to experience an intense loneliness and isolation in order to lovingly discipline us and bring us to repentance. (Hebrews 12:5,6)

   -But there are times when we go through a “spiritual drought” because it is part of God’s perfect will.

2. It was God’s will that Moses spend time in the Midianite desert to prepare him to lead the Israelite people out of Egypt.

   It was God’s will that Joseph spend time in the Egyptian prison to prepare him for the day when he would hold a chief position in the Egyptian government and set up a food storage program to save thousands of lives during the great famine.

   It was God’s will that Jesus be tempted in the wilderness for forty days and nights to prepare Him for His ministry.

   It was God’s will that Paul spend three years in the Arabian desert to prepare him for his ministry of preaching the gospel to the Gentile nations.
3. Here’s my point: Any time you go through a “spiritual drought” don’t automatically assume it is because you are outside God’s will and He’s punishing you.

It could be God is using a “spiritual drought” to bring about spiritual growth in you that couldn’t come about any other way.

It could be God is using a “spiritual drought” to prepare you for some special work He will call you to do.

4. I mean, let’s be honest. Our times of greatest spiritual growth seldom come during times of FEAST, but rather during times of FAMINE. Or simply put, we tend to grow more spiritually in BAD times than we do in GOOD times.

5. Whenever God allows you and me to go through a time of “spiritual drought” He wants three things from us.

(A) God wants us to WANT Him.

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

David is missing worship in the temple, but that’s not what he wants most. More than anything David wants more of GOD! His soul “pants” and “thirsts” for God!

Oh what a valuable lesson for all of us here! To be honest, sometimes we get so wrapped up in going to Church services and being involved in Church activities that we neglect the most important thing of all. And that is a close, personal relationship with God Himself! God wants us to WANT HIM!

(B) God also wants us to WAIT on Him.

Throughout this 42nd Psalm one can sense David’s desire to hurry this “spiritual drought” along. But what David didn’t
realize at the time was that GOD WAS TEACHING HIM TO WAIT ON HIM.

During this extreme drought we have been suffering through here in eastern NC, what is the one thing we want God to send us right now? R-A-I-N! We want RAIN right now! We want RELIEF right now! Will God be rushed by our impatience? NO!

It’s the same way when we go through a time of “spiritual drought.”

-We pray for something and we want GOD to answer us right now!
-We want GOD to open that door of opportunity right now!
-We want GOD to end our trials right NOW!
-We want GOD to resolve our problem right NOW!
-We want GOD to make our troubles go away right NOW!

This is why “spiritual droughts” are necessary in our spiritual life. They teach us to “WAIT” on the LORD! They teach us to be PATIENT! They teach us to PERSEVERE!

GOD ALLOWS US TO GO THROUGH SPIRITUAL DROUGHTS BECAUSE HE WANTS US TO WANT HIM……AND……BECAUSE HE WANTS US TO WAIT ON HIM.

(C) And God also wants us to WORSHIP Him.

Verses 4, 5  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. 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 MY GOD.

Sometimes our worship of God gets stagnant. We go through the motions, but our worship lacks sincere passion and enthusiasm. Nothing will awaken a true spirit of worship within us than to go through a time of “spiritual drought.”

In times of “spiritual drought” we throw out all the “religious cliches and righteous sounding phrases” and genuinely cry out to God……

*God I feel so empty!  
*God I am nothing without You!
*God I need You!  
*Please help me God!

Nothing fancy! Nothing put on! Just genuine, heartfelt worship!

You see, GOD allows us to go through “spiritual droughts” for good reason!

Spiritual droughts cause us to WANT GOD!
Spiritual droughts teach us to WAIT ON GOD!
Spiritual droughts bring out our true WORSHIP OF GOD!

Truth #3: Times of Spiritual Drought Eventually Come To An End (verse 11)

Verse 11 Why are you so downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and my God.

1. While David uses the same wording in verse 11 that he did back in verse 5, I believe there is a different tone.

Verse 5 (downbeat tone) Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me?

Verse 11 (upbeat tone as though David is “cheering up” his heart and soul)

“Why ARE you so downcast, O my soul?  
Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in GOD For I Will Yet Praise Him, my Savior and my God.”

2. David has reached the “moment of truth.” And that is He knows and believes in His heart that God will not let this “spiritual drought” go on forever.

3. When you and I go through our own times of “spiritual drought” we must have the FAITH and HOPE that in
HIS TIME and in HIS WAY God will one day bring the "spiritual drought" to an end.

-Perhaps the “drought” will not end until we have learned the valuable lessons God has been trying to teach us.

-Perhaps the “drought” will not end until we give up our independent spirit and yield our lives to the control of God’s Holy Spirit.

-Perhaps the “drought” will not end until we learn to slow down our pace in life and stop getting ahead of God.

-Perhaps the “drought” will not end until God has fully prepared us for the task He will call us to do.

4. One thing you and I can be certain of is that when the “spiritual drought” does come to an end, “the showers of God’s richest blessings” will come pouring into our lives.

CONCLUSION

She was simply known by her initials, “L.B.” ……L.B. Cowman.

From 1901 to 1917, L.B. Cowman worked as a pioneer missionary with her husband Charles to form the Oriental Missionary Society. For sixteen years, Mr. and Mrs. Cowman worked tirelessly to take the gospel of Jesus Christ to lost souls in Japan, Korea, China and the Island of Formosa.

When Mr. Cowman’s failing health forced the couple to return to the United States, Mrs. Cowman turned her attention to caring for her ailing husband until his death six years later.

During those six years, Mrs. Cowman went through many “spiritual droughts” where she wondered if God still loved her and cared for her.
Little did Mrs. Cowman realize it at the time, but God was using those times of “spiritual drought” to prepare her for a far greater work. You see, it was from her time of trials and heartache, L. B. Cowman wrote one of the best devotional books of all time, a book entitled: “Streams In The Desert.”

*He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater,*  
*He sendeth more strength when the labors increase;*  
*To added affliction He addeth His mercies,*  
*To multiplied trials His multiplied peace.*

*When we have exhausted our store of endurance,*  
*When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,*  
*When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,*  
*Our Father’s full giving is only begun.*

*He love has no limit, His grace has no measure,*  
*How power no boundary known unto men,*  
*For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,*  
*He giveth…..and giveth…..and giveth again.*

*Annie Johnson Flint*