

Week 1: Chapters 1 and 2

Chapter 1: General Consideration

1. Cf. Ps 42:5, 11; 43:5. “The Psalmist is unhappy and in trouble” (9).
 - a. ESV: Psalm 42:5, 11

⁵Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation....

¹¹Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God.
 - b. KJV: Psalm 42:5, 11

⁵ Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and *why* art thou disquieted in me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him *for* the help of his countenance....

¹¹ Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in God: for I shall yet praise him, *who is* the health of my countenance, and my God.
 - c. Perhaps “he was prevented from joining with others in public worship” (9)
 - d. “He was clearly being attacked by certain enemies” (9–10).
2. Depression is a problem for people in the Bible. This is a problem for people today.
3. Our Approach
 - a. Principles (teaching) first – surveying the topic in general and then looking at things in detail. Just as a doctor gives precise instructions to cure an ailment, so also shall we as we doctor our souls.
 - b. Illustrations second

4. Why this study?

- a. “It is very sad to contemplate the fact that there are Christian people who live the greater part of their lives in this world in such a condition. It does not mean that they are not Christians, but it does mean that they are missing a great deal, missing so much that it is important that we should enquire into the whole condition of spiritual depression outlined so clearly in this psalm, if only for their sake” (11).
- b. “For the sake of the Kingdom of God and for the glory of God.... A depressed Christian... is a very poor recommendation for the gospel” (11). What appeal does a discouraged believer have to an unbeliever looking for eternal joy?

5. A General Survey

- a. Cf. Ps 45:5, 11 again. This man is miserable. He wants God (42:1–2). He weeps and cannot eat (42:3). He cannot worship (42:4). His enemies taunt him (42:9–10).
- b. Misery manifests itself in the face. Looking at the face of God is the cure (KJV).

6. What are the causes?

- a. Temperament: “characteristic or habitual inclination or mode of emotional response” (MWCD, 11th ed.). Temperament does not affect salvation, but people are simply different from one to the next. This fact is true in our build, diet, exercise, metabolism, etc. Some are introverts, others extroverts, etc.
 - i. The Introvert: “there is a type of person who tends to be always analysing himself, analysing everything he does, and worrying about the possible effects of his actions, always harking back, always full of vain regrets” (17). The flaw is “morbidly and introspection” (17).
 - ii. “We cross the line from self-examination to introspection when, in a sense, we do nothing but examine ourselves, and when such self-examination becomes the main and chief end in our life” (17). This then leads to morbidity, “the quality or state of being morbid,” which is to be “abnormally susceptible to or characterized by gloomy or unwholesome feelings” (MWCD, 11th ed.)
 - iii. Examples: “Jeremiah, and John the Baptist and Paul and Luther and many others. A great company!” (18).

- b. Physical Conditions
 - i. Temperament may stem in part from physical conditions. Spurgeon had gout and suffered at times from spiritual depression.
 - ii. “You cannot isolate the spiritual from the physical for we are body, mind and spirit. The greatest and best Christians when they are physically weak are more prone to an attack of spiritual depression than at any other time and there are great illustrations of this in the Scriptures” (19).
 - c. “A reaction after a great blessing, a reaction after some unusual and exceptional experience” (19). E.g., Elijah in 1 Kings 19.
 - d. “The devil, the adversary of our souls” (19).
 - e. “The ultimate cause of all spiritual depression is unbelief” (20). Cf. Ps 42. The psalmist turns back to God when he had been looking elsewhere.
7. A Survey of the Cure: “The main art in the matter of spiritual living is to know how to handle yourself. You have to take yourself in hand, you have to address yourself, preach to yourself, question yourself. You must say to your soul: ‘Why are thou cast down’—what business have you to be disquieted? You must turn on yourself, upbraid yourself, condemn yourself, exhort yourself, and say to yourself: ‘Hope thou in God’—instead of muttering in this depressed, unhappy way. And then you must go on to remind yourself of God, Who God is, and what God is and what God has done, and what God has pledged Himself to do. Then having done that, end on this great note: defy yourself, and defy other people, and defy the devil and the whole world, and say with this man: ‘I shall yet praise Him for the help of His countenance, who is also the health of my countenance and my God’” (21).

Chapter 2: The True Foundation

1. Joy is fleeting from those who define themselves by deeds and not by Christ. This is particularly true of those raised in the church. E.g., also the Jews. Justification by faith is the “great doctrine” (26) from which “we can really hope to have peace, and to enjoy the Christian life” (27).
2. “There are certain simple principles about which we must be quite clear before we can ever hope to enjoy this Christian salvation” (27).
 - a. “The first is conviction of sin” (27). Only this can “drive a man to Christ and make him rely upon Christ alone” (28). Cf. Rom 3:10, 23. No one lives up to Mark 12:30–31. We judged ourselves by Scripture and not by other men.
 - b. “The second thing the true Christian realizes is God’s way of salvation in Christ” (32). Cf. Rom 3:24–26. God punished sin in Christ and thus forgives us in Christ. Christ also fulfilled the Law, and His righteousness is to us by faith.