

still waters

home church studies

Psalm 42

[Worship]

1 As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you, O God. 2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God? 3 My tears have been my food day and night, while people say to me continually, 'Where is your God?' 4 These 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. 5 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. My soul is cast down within me; therefore I remember you from the land of Jordan and of Hermon, from Mount Mizar. 7 Deep calls to deep at the thunder of your cataracts; all your waves and your billows have gone over me. 8 By 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.

Consider:

[Words]

The Hebrew scriptures for this week deal with this world—living and dying and all the problems caused by living and dying, leaving one's home and returning to it, the ties that bind, and new possibilities for life. It is this world to which they attend; in this world God works God's purposes out with faithful people.

The lesson from the Hebrew scriptures is the lovely story of two remarkable women—Ruth and Naomi. These two brief excerpts

set the stage of Naomi's misfortunes and the birth of her grandson, Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The story should be read in its entirety. Two women in the face of devastating odds work out their salvation with fear and trembling. Naomi, emptied of all promise, goes back to her home, and Ruth refuses to let her go alone. Naomi uses the traditions of her people to secure life for Ruth and herself. Ruth, trusting her in all things, wins a place in salvation history.

The psalm eloquently captures the sorrow and the faith triumphant of the women: "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."



[Scripture]

Ruth 3. 1-5; 4.13-17

3.1 Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, I need to seek some security for you, so that it may be well with you. 2 Now here is our kinsman Boaz, with whose young women you have been working. See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3 Now wash and anoint yourself, and put on your best clothes and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 When he lies down, observe the place where he lies; then, go and uncover his feet and lie down; and he will tell you what to do." 5 She said to her, "All that you tell me I will do."

4.13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the LORD made her conceive, and she bore a son. 14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel! 15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him." 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. 17

The women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.