

Psalm 42; Matthew 9:18-26

“Cobwebs of Sadness”

Tonight’s sermon is based on both the Gospel and Psalm 42. The title of the sermon is: Cobwebs of Sadness.

What about a drop of rain? It doesn’t do much in a draught. But in this part of the country, we’ve all experienced hurricanes and know how devastating too much water can be.

Let’s think about the weight of one piece of paper, one drop of water, one disappointment. And then another and another. What happens to us when they add up? Those little griefs. A missed call, an unkind word, a disappointment at work. Suddenly they are just too much to bear. You want to just put your head down and give up. What do you do next?

In our psalm today, the deer pants for streams of water. Not a taste. Not even a mouthful – streams of water to fill one’s mouth and heart to overflowing.

In truth, sometimes it seems that the hits just keep on coming.
The death of friends.
Unreasonable restrictions on the most personal aspects of our lives.
War

If you go to a bookstore there are multiple shelves of self-help books. I’ve seen estimates that over 10 million self-help books are sold each year.
This is not a casual inquiry into an interesting topic.

People are truly panting for help for their anxiety.

For a solution to their sadness

For a way out of their darkness

For a quick fix for what ails them

For a companion on the road.

The psalmist says, “By day the Lord directs his love, at night his song is with me – a prayer to the God of my life.”

And so in the midst of the lament of the psalm – we find the answer – we have a helper, a solution and a companion in the Lord.

The Bible assures us that the Lord is always with us and walks beside us whether we know it or acknowledge it.

Psalm 55 says, “Cast your burden on the Lord and the Lord will sustain you.”

And Matthew says, “Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens and I will give you rest.”

In tonight’s Gospel reading – there are two people carrying heavy burdens. Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, who tells Jesus that his daughter has died and the nameless woman who has suffered from hemorrhaging for 12 years. Those two people could not have been more different. An important religious official and a common woman. Yet Jesus had compassion on them both. He touched the child and she was healed. The woman who was ill touched Jesus and she was healed.

They were both panting for help.

They were yearning for an answer to their heartbreak.

And Jesus walked with them in their anguish. He felt their suffering and he healed them.

One of my favorite movies came out in 1977 and starred John Denver and George Burns. Denver played the part of Jerry Landers, a young assistant manager in a supermarket. He receives a visit from God (George Burns) who appears in the form of an old man. God wants Jerry to spread the word about God’s visits to earth.

It’s a great movie – funny, warm and thought provoking. At the end, God, having fulfilled his mission and convinced Jerry to spread his message of love of everyone – leaves to return to heaven.

Jerry is heartbroken that his one-on-one connection to God is over and he won’t have God to talk to anymore. In that poignant moment God says, “You talk, I’ll listen”.

And that’s the thought I want you to remember this evening.

God is always there.

God will always hear you.

Prayer doesn’t have to follow a format.

Prayer can be silent.

Prayer can be written.

Prayer can be murmured or shouted.

When you share your burdens, worries, concerns, they feel lighter.

I remember listening to a Children’s sermon on Ash Wednesday. The pastor described life as a house with cobwebs here and there – seen and unseen. He suggested Lent as a time to sweep up those cobwebs and make way for the Light of Easter.

Are there cobwebs of sadness and anxiety that darken your life? Let prayer and the presence of God help to sweep them away and open your life to light and joy and Easter.