

The Living God – Psalm 42, 3 – 4 – September 14, 2025

The basic idea of my church sermon today can be found in the third and fourth verses of Psalm 42: "My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God? My tears have been my bread night and day, while they say to me all day long, 'Where is your God?'"

On the brightening horizon of the dawn of history, man ponders and ponders and asks himself the question: who and what kind of God is He? My God, who gave me life, holds me in his hand, guides me, moves at my cry, bends down to lift me up to himself.

Who is God, what is God like, where is God? The greatest questions that man has asked himself since the moment of self-awareness, and since then they have been born every day and are making their way in millions and millions of human souls. These questions have been asked since the dawn of human consciousness, and they will never cease as long as man lives on earth. These questions contain the stamp of our humanity, our sonship, man's unquenchable thirst for God. On the millennial journey of the human soul, even amidst its painful experiences and disappointments, they speak of its great calling, of its being a child of God. Wherever they are spoken once, their echo always remains in the soul, and man only rests when he has answered these questions for himself. The quality of our answers speaks of the direction and quality of our life.

These are the questions that man raised at the dawn of life, stammering and trembling: on the tops of great rocks, on the banks of rivers, by springs and in all those places where he suspected the presence of God. These were uttered in the former

places of worship, so-called holy places, and are still uttered today in the sanctuaries and pulpits of millions of churches built in honor of God: Who and what is God like? Where is my God?

The most apt answer to these questions – according to our belief – was given by Jesus: God is our loving Father. For humanity, God as Father was discovered by Jesus. His whole life is filled and permeated by the blissful, unconditional power of the Father's love. Everything is dwarfed, loses its significance in comparison to him, and for him the experience of God that permeates and blesses his whole life becomes a reality: the presence of the Father. His soul is so attuned to the will of God that he completely identifies with Him: "I and the Father are one," he teaches. He cannot and does not want to live without Him. The gospel of God's fatherhood became a life force in Jesus. The blissful consciousness that the Father is with him accompanied him throughout his life. This consciousness gave strength to his prophetic work, and it prompted him in the inevitable hours to make this declaration: "I am not alone, for the Father is with me." His life is intertwined with that of his heavenly Father, and this sacred bond not only sustains him but also draws him closer and closer to God.

Reading the Gospels, I discover in the fatherhood of God the inexhaustible goodness, love and life. The fatherhood of God dispels the feeling of fear and smallness in me. How wonderful it is to think that my Father is personally interested in my life. How wonderful to know that God is the God of the universe, but at the same time my Father, who loves me, cares for me, takes care of me.

There are times when, like a misty mountain peak, the face of God disappears from the horizon of man, only to then –

like the sky cleared after a storm – stand before us even clearer, brighter, more inviting.

In the biblical verse that served as the basis for my church speech, the Psalmist formulated in personal form the eternal truth that the human soul feels mutilated, abandoned, lost without God, that the thirst within us for God is unquenchable: “My soul thirsts for God, for the living God: When shall I come and appear before God?”

We are the bearers of God's spirit, and therefore we cannot live without Him. The hard struggle of life, its thousand worries, sometimes make us forget God, but then we realize again that we cannot avoid Him on the paths of the world, we stumble upon Him at every step, because heaven and earth are full of His presence. The starry sky, the swaying sea of grain, the rising sun speak of Him, our intellect, our emotions, the deepest and most solemn suspicions of our soul speak of Him. In the soul, in our soul, we carry the source of faith in Him. Just as a person cannot deny his parents without soul mutilation, so he cannot deny God without damaging his spiritual life. Life is only a whole life, a person is only a whole person, if he constantly feels his connection with God.

This is also spoken of in the confession of one of the great medieval theologians, Bernard of Clervaux: “You ask, then, how did I know that God was present? He is life, life itself! And as soon as he entered, he shook my sleepy soul, moved, softened, and wounded my hard, sick heart. When he left, a certain languor and coldness began to take its place, like when the fire is taken away from a boiling pot.”

There are times in life when our souls are seized with a stormy force by the desire to answer the great questions of our lives: where did we come from and where are we going? What

is our belief about God, man, and the world? What is our purpose and what does life actually mean to us? Especially in great, rich, sensitive souls, the thought is born with compelling force that these questions must be answered, and they do answer: with their creations and their lives.

A great connoisseur of life, the world-famous Russian writer Leo Tolstoy, feverishly seeks answers to man's great, eternal questions in his writings: what can be the right goals of our lives? What is the meaning of life? There was a critical period in his life when he was much concerned with the idea of suicide. At that time, he wrote the following: “During this whole year, while I was almost incessantly asking myself how to end my sadness, whether with a rope or a bullet, all this time, along with all the movements of my ideas, my heart was filled with another longing desire. I cannot call this anything other than a thirst for God.”

It took Tolstoy three years to find the help of the “helping Someone.” “I remember one day,” he continues, “in early spring, I was alone in the forest. My thoughts returned to what had occupied me constantly during those three years: the search for God, but how did I come to the idea of him, I asked myself. And with this thought, a happy longing for life arose in me again. Everything awakened in me and made sense. Why do I search any longer? A voice asked me. He is here. He without whom man cannot live. To acknowledge God and to live are one and the same thing. God is what life is. It is well then: live, seek God, for without him you will have no life.”

After long contemplation and struggle, Tolstoy found his God, and with it, his life. Just as the horizon emerges from the misty grayness of the morning in the light of the rays of the rising sun, so the great realization is born in his soul: without

God the road leads nowhere, without God it is impossible to live.

My dear Brother! Sooner or later, every person finds himself faced with the thought of clarifying his relationship with God. All the beauty of nature, the shining brilliance of the sun do not satisfy you, because your soul needs other beauty and light. You can have everything on this earth: fame, name, glory, wealth, but if you have lost your God, you are still poor, nothing. All the treasures of the earth, all the pleasures of the flesh do not satisfy your soul, because there is something in you that does not find satisfaction, that cries, yearns, thirsts for God. “As a plant on the earth, so man rests on the bosom of God, an inexhaustible well nourishes his life,” says the famous American Unitarian, Ralph Waldo Emerson. If the veins that connect us to this inexhaustible well become clogged and broken, our life will become a barren desert. Life only grows whole, man only becomes a whole man within us, if we find God, if our whole life is permeated, filled with the blissful consciousness that we live with Him, through Him, and in Him. Amen.

