

Your Grace is Better than Life

A Sermon on Psalm 63

by

Grayson Stewart Gilbert

1. Introduction

2. Determine to Seek God Before All Else (v. 1).

- a. “O God, You are my God; I shall seek You earnestly; my soul thirsts for You, my flesh yearns for You, In a dry and weary land where there is no water” (v. 1).
 - i. The psalm opens with David crying out to God, but the unique thing about this psalm is that he doesn’t make a single request.
 1. Instead, David makes many affirmations about God, and then focuses upon his own obligations in light of who God is.
 - a. You and I might be tempted to gloss over that personal possessive pronoun quite quickly—but the immediate thought of David, is that God is “his.”
 - b. God is not merely the One who is the Creator of all things—He the One who works through covenant, and He fulfills His promises in a deeply personal way.
 2. For David, the central desire of his heart is to find rest and satisfaction in God, rather than anything else.
 - b. Thus, in spite of his circumstances, David’s first inclination is to earnestly seek after God.
 - i. How Hebrew conveys this idea is that the way he will seek God is like the breaking in of the dawn, or the first light of the day.

1. It doesn't necessarily convey time, which is why some of your bibles will translate the word as "earnestly" or "eagerly" instead.
 2. The idea is that there is an intensity and a default reflex with which he will seek after God first and foremost.
- ii. He looks to his surroundings, which don't even provide for his most basic needs, yet he does not say his need is to be removed from this place.
1. Instead, David looks to the thirsting and fainting of his weary soul.
 - a. His present need is not food, water, or safety—even though he could certainly use such things.
 - b. David's all-consuming passion is to be filled up and sustained by God Himself.
 2. Unless we are captivated with God and see Him as our greatest delight, knowing Him as our highest aim, and glorifying Him as our ultimate purpose, we shall find that our souls are never satisfied.
 - a. Yet when God Himself is your joy—you can find satisfaction even in the midst of the worst time of your life.
 - b. You will never come to a point of genuine satisfaction unless you come face to face in some sense with the power and glory of God.

3. Behold God in All His Splendor (v. 2).

- a. "Thus I have seen You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory" (v. 2).
 - i. David begins by remembering the times where he entered into the very presence of God in the sanctuary.
 1. There the Spirit of God dwelt among His people, hovering above the tabernacle, and the power and glory of God radiated in awesome majesty.

2. As David sits in a dry and barren land, his heart begins to remember in even greater detail, as God's people came in for worship.
- ii. Though his life now is filled with anguish and dread—David remembers how he beheld the glory of God in the sanctuary.
 1. The simple act of gathering with the saints is the culmination of how God shows His power and glory.
 2. One of the most important reasons why we gather is to remind each other of who this glorious God is that we serve.
 - a. We sing spiritual songs to one another to remind each other that God is mighty to save and He is faithful to the very end.
 - b. We are always pointing each other back to the one true source of spiritual nourishment.
 - b. Though David is at the lowest point in his life—when he recalls the glory of God, he remembers a vitally important truth: God has always been with him.
 - i. Once again, this testifies to the fact that David had a deeply personal relationship with his God.
 1. David knows God, but he is also known by God. This reality is the single greatest reality in all of time and space.
 2. Some of you may ask then, “How do I know if I know God and am known by Him?” I ask in return: do you know the gospel of Jesus Christ?
 - ii. If you know God and are known by Him, you will always come back to the reality that God shall never leave you nor forsake you.
 1. In the end, the one who finds themselves satisfied during times of spiritual drought is not the one who finds his trials have all gone away.

2. The one who finds themselves satisfied during bouts in the wilderness is the one who has beheld the Son of God in all His glory.

4. Consider the Grace of God in All Things (vv. 3-5).

- a. “Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise you. So I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name” (vv. 3-4).
 - i. David’s prolonged meditation upon his own desperate condition and the days he spent in the sanctuary led him to recognize the all-important truth.
 1. The term in verse 3 that you see as “lovingkindness,” or “steadfast love” is the Hebrew term “hesed.”
 - a. It is much like we understand the word “grace,” where we are freely given the undeserved kindness or favor of God.
 - b. As David reflects on the fact that he very well might die—he then says something alarming to most of us: the grace of God is better than life.
 2. What this implies is that the grace of God is not merely better than life itself, but everything else in life as well.
 - a. Think of whatever is precious to you in this life. The grace of God is better.
 - b. Think of all that is lovely and worthy of praise. The grace of God is better.
 - c. Think of whatever is noble and good, whatever is pure and right. The grace of God is better.
 3. There is nothing in this life, even life itself as David says, that is better than the grace of God.
 - a. The question is not if this is true, but if you and I actually believe it.

- ii. The result of David dwelling richly upon the grace of God is that he says, “my mouth offers praises with joyful lips” (v. 5).
 - 1. The inevitable result of meditating upon God and His Word is that it will lead to praise.
 - a. Notice how David moves from reflecting upon God to praise throughout this psalm.
 - b. One of the most natural reflections of our study of the Word should be that we come to a place of worship.
 - 2. Theology without proper doxology, or worship, is the essence of dead religion; doxology without proper theology is the hallmark of empty emotionalism.
 - a. It is not merely enough that the student of the Word must read the Word, he must dwell upon it.
 - b. And yet all this tasting and savoring of the Word of God is to no effect if the man of God is not moved to worship of God.

5. Dwell Upon the Goodness of God (vv. 6-8).

- a. “When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches, for you have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I sing for joy” (vv. 6-7).
 - i. In verse one, we learned of David seeking God earnestly before all else, yet now we see him at the close of the day, still meditating deeply upon the truth of God’s Word.
 - 1. Whether David lays down at the end of the day, or he stands guard, his practice is to think deeply on the things of God.
 - 2. Meditating on God’s Word and finding our satisfaction in God is not a passive act, but a conscious decision that must take place at all times of the day.

- ii. The reason why David has made this his daily practice is simple: God has been his help and under the care of God, he sings for joy (v. 7).
 - 1. Notice how tight the connection is between dwelling upon God both day and night—and David’s satisfaction and joy being bound in God here.
 - 2. Because he dwells upon God and His Word, David sees that the grace of God permeates every single aspect of his life.
 - a. God has been his help in every time of need and cares for him tenderly.
 - b. All of this is due to the Father’s faithful, covenant love towards him, and so he praises God once more for His protection.
- b. Therefore, David says, “My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me” (v. 8).
 - i. In all his desperation, David has not abandoned his love for God—yet more importantly, God has not abandoned his love for David.
 - 1. Though David is afflicted in every way, he clings to God, and will not let go.
 - 2. Yet greater than this is the preserving love of the Father, who will not let His children go.
 - a. On one hand you see the perseverance of man—he clings to God.
 - b. Yet on the other hand, you see the providence of God—God holds David safely in His hand.
 - ii. Though you may not see it, this same reality is true for all who are in Jesus Christ.
 - 1. You and I are called to persevere in the midst of affliction. We are to cling to God with all our soul and remain in the love of God.
 - 2. Yet more than this, we should undoubtedly see the providence of God on full display, where He ensures we are safe forevermore in His hands.

- a. The whole reason we are to cling to God is because we are safe in His grasp. Simply consider John 10:28-29:
- b. “I give them eternal life and they will never perish; and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to Me, is greater than all; and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.”

6. Remember the Protection of God (vv. 9-11).

- a. “But those who seek my life to destroy it, will go into the depths of the earth. They will be delivered over to the power of the sword; they will be a prey for foxes. But the king will rejoice in God; everyone who swears by Him will glory, for the mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped” (vv. 9-11).
 - i. The contrast in these final three verses is clear: there is a decisive outcome for both the wicked and the righteous.
 - 1. In every single way that the righteous find their satisfaction in God, the exact opposite is the case for the wicked.
 - a. The wicked will be destroyed, but the king will rejoice in the salvation of God.
 - b. The mouths of the righteous will praise God, but the lips of the wicked shall be shut, and their lies will never see the light of day again.
 - 2. Whatever power they seemed to have will melt away, as the sovereign God protects His people.
 - ii. However, for David, this day has not yet come. He is still in the wilderness, hiding away from his own son and countrymen.
 - 1. He is still weary. He is still thirsty and hungry. He still longs to be back in the presence of the Lord. He still has to keep watch at night.

2. Yet he knows the sovereign Lord will act in justice and the powers of darkness cannot prevail.

7. Conclusion

Benediction: Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 15:13).