

## Psalms 63

This evening - we're continuing our overview of the Old Testament book titled Psalms.

With this as our focus - let's open our Bibles to Psalms chapter 63 - and as we make our way to the 63rd Psalm...

...I wanna begin by first pointing out that this Psalm was written by David - during the days when he was hiding in the wilderness of Judah.

And while it's possible that he wrote the lyrics of this song - when he was hiding from King Saul...

...it's more likely that he wrote this Psalm - during the days when he was hiding from his son Absalom.

It was 34 years after ascending to the throne of Israel - when a messenger came to David and informed him about Absalom's insurrection.

And after learning that the armies of Israel were on Absalom's side - David fled from Jerusalem...

...but not before ascending the Mount of Olives - where he not only wept...

...but it was there on the Mount of Olives - where he also worshiped the Lord.

With this in mind - we can see how King David sang the praises of the Lord - as he fled from Jerusalem.

Not only that - but - he also sang the praises of the Lord - as he hid from his son - there in the wilderness of Judah.

And as we consider the lyrical content of this Psalm - we should take a moment to search our own hearts by asking...

...are we following in the footsteps of King David - as we worship the Lord in troublesome times?

Or - have we become fair-weather worshippers - - who only sing the praises of God...

...when times are good - and our troubles are behind us?

With this question in mind - let's consider the lyrical content found here in the 63rd Psalm.

Look with me beginning there at verse 1 - where King David writes...

Psa 63:1      A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah.  
O God, You are my God;  
Early will I seek You;  
My soul thirsts for You;  
My flesh longs for You  
In a dry and thirsty land  
Where there is no water.

Here in the beginning of this Psalm - we find King David - acknowledging the supreme sovereignty of God.

And he did this by declaring: "O God, You are my God"

Now - as we consider this simple statement - we must not fail to remember that...

...King David was hiding in the wilderness - after fleeing from the insurrection - led by his own son Absalom.

And while David could've allowed that situation to fill his heart with doubts about the sovereignty of God...

...he didn't - no - instead - he simply submitted himself to the authority of the Almighty.

With this in mind - I should take a moment to remind you that - the Lord had already informed King David - about the insurrection of Absalom.

It was 15 years before David fled to the wilderness of Judah - when the Lord sent Nathan the prophet...

...to rebuke the King - for his decision to kill Bathsheba's husband - Uriah.

Here's how the prophet Nathan put it - in 2nd Samuel chapter 12 - beginning at verse 9 - he began by asking...

2Sa 12:9        'Why have you despised the commandment of the LORD, to do evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword; you have taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.

2Sa 12:10       'Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me, and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.'

2Sa 12:11       "Thus says the LORD: 'Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun.

2Sa 12:12       'For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.' "

As we consider this promise of punishment - presented by the prophet Nathan...

...there should be no doubt that King David knew that the insurrection of Absalom...

...was the punishment that he deserved - for having Bathsheba's husband killed on the battlefield.

And it's for this reason that David began this song of praise...

...by acknowledging that God was his God.

In light of his example - we'll all do well to realize that - God is always God - - and we are NOT.

And listen - those who think that God owes us an explanation - for when He allows the Absaloms of this world to ruin our day...

...I encourage you to remember that God ALONE is God...

...and yes - even when He chooses to chasten His children - according to His loving correction.

It's possible that you find yourself - hiding from Absalom in the wilderness of Judah.

And if so - then it's also possible that you're mad at God for allowing the trials and the troubles that you're currently enduring.

As a result - you don't really care to sing His praises - and the reason why is because...

...you don't want to submit to a God - Who chastens His children.

If this sounds like your struggle - then I encourage you to realize that...

...the loving correction of the Lord is for our benefit.

Let's consider how Paul put it - in Hebrews chapter 12 - it's verse 11 - where he declared...

Heb 12:11 Now no chastening seems to be joyful for the present, but painful; nevertheless, afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.

That's right - the chastening of the Lord is most certainly painful to endure.

And it's sad to say that there are many Christians who become bitter - - as they blame God for their situation.

If this sounds like your struggle - then I encourage you to remember that - God is God - and we are not.

That being the case - we should worship Him in the good times - and in the bad.

With this as our goal - let's consider how King David sang the praises of God - there in the wilderness of Judah.

Look with me again - there at verse 1 - where David declared....

Psa 63:1 O God, You are my God;  
Early will I seek You;  
My soul thirsts for You;  
My flesh longs for You  
In a dry and thirsty land  
Where there is no water.

As we take another look at this verse - we must not fail to notice how King David began his day - seeking the Lord - early in the morning.

That word - early - was translated from a Hebrew word - which was used in reference to the morning dawn.

And while this word was used of the coming of daylight - - it was also used of a person's earnest diligence.

What this means is that - King David was not only seeking the Lord - early in the morning...

...but - he was seeking the Lord in the early hours - with earnest diligence.

We should also consider the way that David compared his diligent search for God...

...to a parched person who was searching for water in a desert.

Now - I don't know if you've ever been in a situation where you're dying of thirst - and you have no water...

...if not - then - let me assure you that - the search for water becomes your only goal.

This was the way that King David was diligently searching for the refreshing grace of God.

He was prayerfully seeking the goodness of God — like a person in a desert - dying of thirst - in search of water.

And in light of his example - we should take a moment to consider the time that we spend...

...prayerfully searching for the leading of the Lord.

Do we diligently seek our Savior - - as if our life depends on it?

With this question in mind - let's consider how Paul put it - in Hebrews chapter 11 - it's verse 6 - where he declared...

Heb 11:6 ...without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Do we diligently seek the Lord - in the early hours of the day?

Are we earnestly endeavoring to connect with our Creator - at the first light of dawn?

And if not - then - the chances are - you've become thirsty - for all the wrong things?

With this as our focus - let's continue to consider the lyrical content the 63rd Psalm.

Look with me - beginning there at verse 2 - where King David declared...

Psa 63:2      So I have looked for You in the sanctuary,  
To see Your power and Your glory.  
Psa 63:3      Because Your lovingkindness is better than life,  
My lips shall praise You.  
Psa 63:4      Thus I will bless You while I live;  
I will lift up my hands in Your name.

Here in these verses - we find King David - describing the way that he sought to connect with God - in the sanctuary.

It was for this reason that David brought the Ark of the Lord - to Mount Moriah...

...and it was there where he placed the Ark in the tabernacle that he created for this very purpose.

And it was there at that makeshift sanctuary - where king David sought to see the power and the glory of God.

Fast-forward 24 years - and King David found himself - far away from the sanctuary - after fleeing from the anger of Absalom.

And while it's true that David was no where near the sanctuary of the Lord...

...it's also true that he still sang the praises of God - and the reason why was because he realized that...

...the lovingkindness of the Lord is better than life.

Now - think about that for a moment - - the lovingkindness of the Lord is better than life.

That word - lovingkindness - was translated from a Hebrew word which speaks of the the merciful favor of the Lord.

The same word was also used in reference to the goodness of God...

...that leads the Lord to have pity upon sinners - who trust in Him.

With all of this in mind - let's take a moment to consider what David meant - when he declared: "Your lovingkindness is better than life..."

You might not know this - but - the self-preservation of life - is the first law of nature.

In other words - all living things prioritize their own survival above all else...

...and it's for this reason that those who are rational - will do what is necessary to stay alive.

With that being the case - let's consider what David was saying - when he declared: "Your lovingkindness is better than life..."

If I understand him properly - then - King David was helping us to understand that...

...the reception of the Lord's lovingkindness is more important...

...than the earthly priority of self-preservation.

I like the way that Spurgeon explained it in his commentary on this text - when he wrote...

To dwell with God is better than life at its best; life at ease, in a palace, in health, in honor, in wealth, in pleasure; yea, a thousand lives are not equal to the eternal life which abides in Jehovah's smile.

That's right - there is no comparison - between the life we have here in this world...

...and the life that we will enjoy in eternity future - where we will rest in the lovingkindness of the Lord.



Here's how the Psalmist summed it up - in the final verses of the 84th Psalm - where he declared...

Psa 84:10 ...a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.  
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God  
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Psa 84:11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;  
The LORD will give grace and glory;  
No good thing will He withhold  
From those who walk uprightly.

Psa 84:12 O LORD of hosts,  
Blessed is the man who trusts in You!

Now - listen - I'm not suggesting that it's wrong to enjoy  
our life - here on Earth.

And so - if you're basking in the glow of God's grace  
- and you love to sing his praises...

...then - by all means - - rejoice in the blessings  
of God - as glorify his name.

What about those who are hiding in the wilderness of  
Judah?

What about those who are struggling to sing the  
praises of God...

...because - they're dealing with the toughest  
trial they've ever faced.

If this sounds like your situation - then I encourage you to  
put your pain into a proper perspective...

...by remembering that those who surrender to the  
sovereignty of our Savior...

...will begin to discover that the lovingkindness  
of the Lord - is better than life.

Let's consider again how King David explained it - here in our text today - look with me again beginning there at verse 3 - where he declared....

Psa 63:3 Because Your lovingkindness is better than life,  
My lips shall praise You.

Psa 63:4 Thus I will bless You while I live;  
I will lift up my hands in Your name.

Now - remember - David wrote the lyrics of this Psalm - when he was hiding in the wilderness of Judah.

And while I have no doubt that this was one of the toughest times of his entire life...

...he was still able to sing the praises of the Lord - and the reason why was because...

...he focused his faith on the lovingkindness of God.

In similar fashion - the apostle Paul was also able to sing the praises of our Savior - while he was sitting in a Roman prison.

For example - Paul wrote the epistle to the church in Ephesus - while chained to a Roman guard.

And it's in the second chapter of Ephesians - where Paul praised the Lord by declaring...

Eph 2:4 God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us,

Eph 2:5 even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved),

Eph 2:6 and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,

Eph 2:7 that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Rather than complaining about his situation - - Paul sang the praises of the Lord...

...by simply refocusing his faith on the future - when the Lord will reveal...

“...the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.”

In light of these examples - I encourage every Christian who is struggling with the trials and troubles of this world...

...to shift your focus from the situation that fills your heart with sorrow...

...so that you can set your mind on the lovingkindness of Christ Jesus.

And in this way - we can bless the name of the Lord - as we sing the praises of our Savior.

With this as our goal - let's consider how King David was able to fix his focus on the lovingkindness of the Lord.

Let's pick up our study of the 63rd Psalm - beginning there at verse 5 - where King David declared...

Psa 63:5      My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness,  
And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips.

Psa 63:6      When I remember You on my bed,  
I meditate on You in the night watches.

Psa 63:7      Because You have been my help,  
Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.

Here in these verses - we find David - describing the way that his Soul was more satisfied in the presence of the Lord....

...than if he had just enjoyed a huge feast - filled with marrow - and fatty meats.

And while it's my guess that David and his men were struggling to secure the sustenance that they needed...

...king David still found great satisfaction in the presence of the Lord.

And it's for this reason that David praised the Lord - with joyful lips.

Compare this to Mick Jagger - who has a net worth of \$600 million dollars - - and yet - still can't get no satisfaction.

He's tries - - and he tries - and he try try try try tries - - and yet - he still can't get no satisfaction.

And listen he's not the only one - - as a matter of fact - there's a recent Gallup poll that helps us to see that...

...only 44 percent of respondents said they are "very satisfied" with their personal lives.

This is actually the lowest level since Gallup started asking the question - back in 2001.

As we consider how the majority of Americans are less than satisfied with their personal lives...

...we must not fail to remember that - we live in one of the wealthiest countries in the world.

According to the research of James Agresti - from the Foundation for Economic Education...

...the poorest 20% of Americans are richer on average than the people in most European nations.

Agresti summed it up in this way - and i quote...

The fact remains that the privilege of living in the US affords poor people more material resources than the averages for most of the world's richest nations.

Sadly - this doesn't stop people from sharing their dissatisfaction - online...

...from their thousand dollar iPhone - while sipping on their 10 dollar coffee.

Please trust me when I tell you that - the masses here in the USA aren't dissatisfied - because they're poor.

No - instead - Americans are struggling to be satisfied - - because - they're focused on all the wrong things.

And in order to explain my point - let's consider how King David was satisfied...

...while he was dwelling in the wilderness of Judah.

Notice with me again - beginning there at verse 6 - where David declared...

Psa 63:6 When I remember You on my bed,  
I meditate on You in the night watches.

Psa 63:7 Because You have been my help,  
Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice.

Here in these verses - we find King David - describing the way that he spent time meditating on the goodness of God.

And if I had to guess - David was taking the time to consider how many times the Lord had protected Him from every enemy.

The Lord protected David from the giant named Goliath - when he was still a young man.

And the Lord protected David from the jealous rage of King Saul.

The Lord protected David from the king of the Philistines.

And the Lord protected David from the Moabites, the Ammonites, the Arameans, and the Edomites.

And as David took the time to meditate on all the ways the Lord had already protected him in the past...

...He was filled with faith - as he realized that the Lord was also able to protect him from Absalom.

In light of his example - it seems to me that - those who will meditate on the goodness of God...

...will also learn how to be satisfied in every situation - - and in this way...

...we can sing the praises of our Savior - - even when times are less than satisfactory.

Let's consider how Paul put it - in Philippians chapter 4 - it's verses 8 and 9 where he declared...

Phl 4:8 Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things.

Phl 4:9 The things which you learned and received and heard and saw in me, these do, and the God of peace will be with you.

Rather than fixing our focus on the situations that fill our hearts with sorrow...

...Paul encouraged us to meditate on those things that are true - noble - just - and pure.

And while it's easy to spend time focusing on everything that could cause us to become dissatisfied...

...Paul encouraged us to meditate on those things that are lovely...

...as well as those things are of good report -  
virtuous - and praiseworthy.

Please trust me when I tell you that - those who are dissatisfied with life -  
- are failing to meditate on the goodness of God.

And if this sounds like something you struggle with - then I  
encourage you to stop thinking about everything that is wrong...

...and start meditating on the lovingkindness of the Lord.

And as you do - your heart will rejoice - as you rest in the  
shadow of our Savior's wings.

Not only that - but - those who walk by faith with the Lord - will also rejoice in the  
glory of God.

Let's consider how King David put it - here in the final stanza of this psalm -  
look with me beginning there at verse 8 - where he declared...

Psa 63:8      My soul follows close behind You;  
Your right hand upholds me.  
Psa 63:9      But those who seek my life, to destroy it,  
Shall go into the lower parts of the earth.  
Psa 63:10     They shall fall by the sword;  
They shall be a portion for jackals.  
Psa 63:11     But the king shall rejoice in God;  
Everyone who swears by Him shall glory;  
But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped.

Here in the final verses of this Psalm - we find King David - rejoicing in  
the Lord - - and for a few reasons.

First of all - he rejoiced in the fact that - the right hand of God was  
upholding him.

And while this is not to suggest that God has a literal right  
hand...

...you might like to know that - the right hand of God was symbolic of His infinite power...

...as well as His almighty authority.

And while it's true that King David rejoiced in knowing that God was able to uphold him by His infinite power - and His almighty authority...

...it's also true that David rejoiced in knowing that God was able to stop those who were seeking his life.

And with all faith in God - David looked forward to the day - when the Lord would destroy his enemies.

He not only rejoiced in knowing that the mouth of those who were spreading lies about him - would be silenced...

...but - he also rejoiced in knowing that everyone who trust in the Lord - will sing His praises - forevermore.

And for all of these reasons - King David rejoiced - - and yes - - even before these things were fulfilled.

What this means is the - David was able to rejoice - as he sang the praises of the Lord...

...at a time when His enemies were living in his kingly palace.

And yes - he rejoiced in the Lord - when his enemies were spreading lies about him.

In light of his example - I encourage every Christian to realize that those who truly trust in the Lord - should rejoice - always.

Let's consider how Paul put it - in Philippians chapter 4 - it's verse 4 where he declared...

Phl 4:4 Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!



Now - listen - this is not to suggest that we can rejoice about everything.

We most certainly shouldn't rejoice about the corruption of this wicked world.

And yet - I do believe that Christians have been called to rejoice in the Lord - always...

...and yes - even in troublesome times.

Let's consider how Paul put it - in 1st Thessalonians chapter 5 - it's verses 16 thru 18 - where he declared...

1Th 5:16 Rejoice always,  
1Th 5:17 pray without ceasing,  
1Th 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

Christian - listen - - it's God's will for us rejoice - always!

And while I realize that there is a long list of reasons for why this makes no sense...

...I encourage you to prayerfully give God thanks - for the lovingkindness that He has poured out on us...

...and as we do - our minds will recall the reasons for why we can rejoice - always.

And as we rejoice in the goodness of our Redeemer...

...our lips will sing the praises of our Savior - - as we bless the beautiful name of our almighty God.