

Soul Satisfaction in the Wilderness | Psalm 63

David, in the wilderness, seeks God earnestly and expresses trust that God's steadfast love is better than life. He says God satisfies his soul, upholds him, and will preserve him.

Automatic Shownotes

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Long Summary

Psalm 63 | Psalm 63 YYYY-MM-DD• Pastor• Psalm 63 Main Point: David seeks God in the wilderness with desperation, meditation, and confidence that God will satisfy, uphold, and vindicate him. Outline: 1. Desperation (vv. 1) - David is in the wilderness of Judah, away from Jerusalem, the tabernacle, and the ark. - He is distressed by exile, danger, and the broken relationship with Absalom. - In this need, he does not mainly ask for relief, but says, "O God, you are my God. Earnestly I seek you." - His soul thirsts for God as in a dry and weary land without water. 2. Meditation and Soul Satisfaction (vv. 2–8) - David remembers seeing God's power and glory in the sanctuary. - He says God's steadfast love is better than life, so his lips will praise God. - He commits to blessing God as long as he lives and lifting up his hands in worship. - He speaks of being satisfied as with rich food, showing that God alone can fill spiritual hunger. - He remembers God on his bed and meditates during the night watches. - He recalls past help, sings in the shadow of God's wings, and says his soul clings to God while God's right hand upholds him. 3. Vindication and Victory (vv. 9–11) - David expects God to judge his enemies and preserve him. - Those who seek to destroy his life will go down to the depths and be given over to the sword. - The king will rejoice in God, and those who swear by him will exult. - The mouths of liars will be stopped. 4. Application and Christ - The psalm calls believers to seek God in distress, not only relief. - It is connected to Jesus, who faced the wilderness, suffered outside Jerusalem, and trusted the Father. - Jesus is presented as the greater King through whom God's steadfast love and presence are known.

Brief Summary

Psalm 63 | Psalm 63 YYYY-MM-DD• Pastor• Psalm 63 Main Point: David seeks God in the wilderness and trusts him to satisfy and preserve him.

Tags

Psalm 63, David, wilderness, seeks God, trusts, satisfy, preserve, Psalm, Main Point, Pastor

Transcript

[0:32] Because of the death of a singer and songwriter recently, I've been thinking about cover songs.

Cover Song and Psalm 63

[0:41] A cover song is a new performance of a song that was originally written and performed by somebody else. And sometimes the cover song is not so good, not nearly as good as the original. The words are the same, but somehow there's no connection between the heart, and the voice. The words and the music and the lived experience of the songwriter, something's off.

David in the Wilderness

[1:16] The text for this morning is Psalm 63. It's an emotional, intensely personal, passionate appeal to God written around 3,000 years ago.

[1:30] And because God's word is living and active, we too can enter into the lyrics and feel the words, enter into the same emotions as the original writer, David, to connect our heart and mind with this beautiful song. So let's pray before we begin. Father, we come to you asking that you would help us, that we would know Psalm 63 better. Pray that we would engage our minds and hearts to let the Word be planted deep within us. We pray that your Word would impart a joy and truth as we search your Scriptures and you search our hearts. Help us to grow even more in your likeness, and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[2:28] Please have your Bibles open as we look at each verse. Please also notice in your bulletin there's an outline.

David's Desperate Cry

[2:35] Let's look at the first point, desperation. We see David's desperation in the superscription and in verse 1. The superscription says, A psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah. There were two seasons in David's life when he was in the wilderness, fleeing for his life, chased by

enemies, camping out in the desert in the arid wilderness. And the episode that seems to make the most sense is when he was being chased by the rebel forces of his son Absalom, his own son. You can find this painful episode in 2 Samuel chapters 13 through 18. And these are difficult chapters about horrible family drama.

[3:36] With the result being, Absalom was claiming to be king and amassed a huge army against his dad, King David. King David fled outside Jerusalem with his men, but David was in danger. He was living in exile. He left the comfort and the security, the protection of life as king in Jerusalem. He was away from the tabernacle. He was away from the Ark of the Covenant. He was desperate because of his location. He was desperate also because of this toxic, interpersonal, broken relationship with his own son, the son that he loved. He was grieving not just that he was estranged from his son, that his son let him down, or that his son was wayward or difficult or ungrateful. His son was actively undermining him and his kingdom and ultimately trying to kill him.

[4:44] David was desperate because his calling as a king was in question. His kingdom could falter at any moment. He was uneasy and unsure of whom he could trust.

[4:58] So that was the heartbreaking context and why David was desperate. And yet, even in this anguish, we see David's confidence in God. Let's look at verse 1.

Thirsting for God

[5:14] O God, you are my God. Earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you. My flesh faints for you. As in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

[5:28] David knows who to turn to in distress. He cries out to God, recalling covenant promises. O God, you are my God. I am your people. I'm your person. You made me king. Remember those promises? It says, earnestly, I seek you. And I can't help but wonder, maybe David was thinking about Moses' warning to the people of Israel. Moses warned that Israel would be driven out of the land in tribulation because of their sin and idolatry. But Moses promises. Deuteronomy 4, after being driven out, you will seek the Lord your God and you will find him if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul. For the Lord your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you, or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them. Could it be David was claiming these promises? You are the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and you're the God of David. I've been driven out of Jerusalem, but I'm earnestly seeking you.

[6:50] Earnestly I seek you. The King James Version and many translations say, early shall I seek you. Because the Hebrew word there for earnestly or early is from the noun, the dawn. Sometimes used as early, sometimes used as earnestly. It speaks of an urgency, a priority.

[7:20] Recently, well, a couple of years ago now, we were on vacation and we ended up at a hotel and we told the girls, you know, the pool, the hotel has a pool, but it was late. And so we all went to bed

exhausted. And at the crack of dawn, we were awakened by our daughter standing over us with the towel around her neck and the goggles on saying, wake up. Let's go swimming. And we had to say, Ellie, the pool doesn't open until nine. This is the picture of earnest desire. Let's go. Let's get it started. Right here, right now. And what was David so earnestly seeking?

[8:15] Please see that David wanted God. There's no petition here. The whole psalm there's no petition he didn't ask for victory or comfort or to return to Jerusalem he didn't ask for God to fix anything or change anything, or even to hear his list of grievances, he just wanted God body and soul God was his desire he was feeling emotionally parched his soul was Thirsty.

[8:53] Like the arid land around him. His body was weak and weary. He was disturbed and uneasy, and there was no rest or relief in sight. He wanted God. He wanted to know God's favor. He was desperate. He wanted to know that God was with him and for him. Might be a good question for us When we face desperation or distress, what or whom do we seek? Another opinion? A distraction? Do we seek more attention or some sympathy? We might ask God for an immediate remedy. But do we ask for God himself? Thank you.

[9:53] Would it be the worst thing in the world, in our desperation, to be still and know God's presence? I've been wondering this week, wondering about our devotions, my devotions, our little cozy quiet times. I have an office that I love to come to in the morning. It's very quiet and I'm very alone there. But I'm wondering, do we love our devotions, our quiet times with the Lord, because it's quiet and comfortable? Or is it because it's there that we meet with God in prayer and in the Word? How often do we get in our cozy place, hot tea, slippers, blanket, put the Bible on the table to spend a half an hour mindlessly scrolling on our phones.

[10:56] It is a wonderful thing to be disciplined, to have devotions in the morning early, to have a daily routine, to seek God earnestly. Praise God. But what happens when the routine is interrupted, when there's no quiet or there's no comfy space? Can we still seek God? What about in the wilderness? Or in the confusion and pain of family drama or personal trauma. David's life was turned upside down and shaken. So he drew near to God to meditate on God's character and God's past faithfulness.

Meditating on God's Love

[11:43] Point one is desperation. Point two is meditation. It's found in verses two through eight. And we see even in his distress and desperation, David confidently sought God. Even when nothing was going right, he drew near to the God in heaven, just like he used to in the holy place, back home in Jerusalem. Verses 2-8 show us how David found soul satisfaction in the wilderness.

[12:17] This meditation was not David emptying his mind, but filling his mind with the promises of God, remembering God's faithfulness in the past.

[12:31] He considered God with confidence, that God is still sovereign in the present, even in the desert, and, considered that he would continue to be in the future. He meditated on God's power and glory and love. Look at verses 2 and 3. So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. Verse 2 starts with a sort of confusing so. Seems to be an adverb of explicit comparison, not of consequence. So it could be translated, just as, just as I have looked upon you in the sanctuary. As if he were saying, I had this longing before.

[13:35] It was so good that I beheld your power and glory in the tabernacle, in corporate worship. Show me that now in the desert. I know you're omnipresent. I know that you are near. I know you are the God who sees and hears, and you are glorious and powerful, and you are a God of steadfast love. You have a present, faithful, continuous love that's better than life.

[14:11] Interesting, now that his life is in danger, now that his life could end at any moment at the hand of his enemies, he makes a quick evaluation, a quick estimate of the value of his life. And you'd think he'd be saying, what is more important than staying alive?

[14:33] Instead, he says, you know, God's steadfast love is better than even life itself. Better than the best things in life. Those things that people so earnestly seek. It's better than gold. God's love is better than positions of prominence. Better than comfort and security. And it seems to me, to say such a thing that God's steadfast love is better than life, that, David must have had some understanding of eternal and everlasting life with God.

[15:19] His response to this meditation was with his mouth, My lips will praise you. Even as his own fate was uncertain, and the future of his kingdom was unknown, he was confident of this. I will bless you as long as I live. Verse 4, in your name I will lift up my hands. He knew that for the remainder of his life, however long that life might be, he would bless God. He would be praising God. I wonder if you've considered this in planning for your future, for your five-year goals. In five years or ten years, will you be in church praising God? When you retire and for as long as you live, will you love to be in God's presence with His people singing praises?

[16:25] David responded to this love with his mouth and with the lifting up of his hands in worship as an outward expression of an uplifted heart. Also suitable would be the lifting up of our hands in surrender, mercy, or lifting up our hands to direct our prayers to him. Or even lifting up your hands to get God's attention, showing our continuous dependence on his kindness, depending on him for food for our souls. David was confidently anticipating a spiritual feast for the future. Look at verse 5. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips.

[17:28] There is soul satisfaction, a contentment available, even in the wilderness. Just like when we experience physical hunger and we eat a meal that's full and rich and we're satisfied physically, when we have a spiritual hunger or thirst, We can seek God and seek his kingdom, and there is full spiritual satisfaction available. I'm not sure if David actually experienced hunger during this exile as king, but

it's curious. His soul gets the food while he fills his mouth with praise and has joyful lips. He was anticipating a banquet for his soul, to no longer feel empty, to no longer feel queasy, just satisfied, at peace, at rest, knowing that that day is coming. How is your appetite for God?

[18:41] Is it spoiled because you've filled up with all the junk food of the world? Have you tried to satisfy that spiritual yearning, that spiritual hunger with physical things? With actual food? Or drink? Or new technologies? That spiritual hunger can only be filled by God himself. Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.

Remembering Through the Night

[19:16] Don't forget God. Verse 6, I remember you upon my bed and meditate on you in the watches of the night. I'm not sure what his sleeping arrangements were in the wilderness, but it says when he was on his bed, whatever that bed might look like.

[19:42] He remembered God. He meditated on God alone with his thoughts, in the quietness of his own cogitations, just a man without his royal crown. When no one was looking, when no one was listening, he considered God's past faithfulness. He remembered God in the watches of the night. When he woke up in the middle of the night, he didn't replay all of the stupid things he said. He didn't replay all of his regrets. He wasn't overwhelmed with worries and problems that he was trying to solve.

[20:26] He remembered God, meditated on his word and his promises. He thought about how God had been so good to him in the past. He was confident for the present and for the future. Verse 7 and 8, For you have been my help. In the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to you. Your right hand upholds me. David remembered the past and was reminded of how many times God had helped him and rescued him and kept him and empowered him and worked things together for his good. He knew it was all by God's help and God's protection. It says, in the shadow of your wings, I will sing for joy. The picture here is of a mother bird protecting the little ones from predators or wind or rain or storm. But it's funny, it doesn't say, when I feel your feathers, I sing for joy. Just the shadow is enough.

[21:47] Just knowing that God is present and above us, watching over us, protecting us is a reason to sing for joy. Look at verse 8. It says, My soul clings to you. This word, for cling is the same word in Genesis chapter 2, where Adam cleaves to his wife, that they would be one flesh, united. David doesn't want any space between him and his God. He wants to be united in union with God.

[22:31] This word for cling and cleave, it's the same one that's used in Ruth chapter 1. If you remember, Naomi's husband died, and her two sons died. And Naomi's daughter-in-law, Orpah, left Naomi. But Ruth, it says, Ruth clung to Naomi. And Ruth pled with Naomi, don't send me away. I don't want to leave you. Where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people. Your God is my God. Where I die, where you die, I will die. And this could be David's cry as well. God, you

are my God. Don't send me away. I don't want to leave you. I'm clinging to you forever. Your people are my people. There's no plan B.

[23:37] There's no other God I want. I want you. My soul follows hard after you. Because David says, while I'm clinging to you, your right hand upholds me. God's right hand of sovereignty was upholding David, holding David in his hand.

[24:03] I love the refrigerator magnet verse from Isaiah chapter 41. It says, Fear not, for I am with you. Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you. I will help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. And let's admit that we need some upholding by God. We need some stabilizing, some support. Praise God, we can lean on his everlasting arms because we're all a little bit shaky, a little bit wobbly, prone to wobble. Lord, I feel it. What are we trusting to hold us up? What are we leaning on? I'm not sure why we think it's funny. But there are lots of funny channels of videos of people slipping and falling. Why do I think that's so funny? I saw a.

[25:16] Video I didn't think was funny. And it was of an older man who was unsteady on his feet. And he reached out for support for a banister that itself was wobbly. And down went the banister and down went the man and down went the groceries. And this is not funny. But what a picture for us of us leaning on and finding support in idols that can't hold us up. Idols that will only let us down.

[25:58] Couldn't handle the weight, couldn't handle the pressure. But God will hold us up. It says, trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock. Lean on God. God is our present help, our stable rock of refuge. In his desperation, David was confident that he could come to God in his weak and thirsty spiritual condition. In his meditations, David was confident in God's faithfulness in the past and that the character of God would continue, that his glory and power and steadfast love wouldn't run dry. And he knew that soul satisfaction found only in God, and he trusted he could enjoy it forever. He remembered God's help in the past. His ongoing protection is sustaining grace,

[26:59] in his life to uphold him and keep him. And that brings us to point three, vindication.

Vindication of the King

[27:07] David was confident that he would be vindicated. Even though things had turned sour for a season, and it looked like perhaps the enemies of God would win, he trusted that God would make things right. He knew that he was so aligned with God that God's enemies were his enemies, and his enemies were God's enemies. Therefore, God would uphold him. But look at this contrast in verse 9. Your right hand upholds me, but those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth. They shall be given over to the power of the sword. They shall be a portion for jackals. He's not here asking for this. He just knows that's how it's going to play out. This is what God's going to do. And don't you know, that's what happened. Joab, one of David's commanding officers, killed Absalom with his javelin. And Absalom's forces were also defeated. Over 20,000 men were defeated in what, must

have been like a vast wasteland of corpses. And surely many of those deceased were not given a proper burial with mourning.

[28:33] No, they were probably eaten by birds of prey or scavengers, such as jackals. His enemies shall perish, but the king, verse 11, but the king shall rejoice in God. All who swear by him shall exult, for the mouths of liars will be stopped. The king shall rejoice in God. And who's the king? Not that pretender, Absalom The usurper.

[29:07] Even though David was away from the throne in the wilderness, he was still king. And those who give their allegiance to God will exult. His people will have great joy because of his victory and his success. They will open their mouths to sing praise with joyful lips. But the mouths of liars will be shut, stopped. But will you speak lies as spiritual descendants of the father of lies? Or will you swear in allegiance to the father of all creation, the God of all truth?

[29:55] David was confident, even in the wilderness, even in his distress, because he enjoyed fellowship with God. His worship of the living God transformed this time in the wilderness, into a place of great spiritual nourishment and joy, abundance.

Jesus Sings the Psalm

[30:17] I wonder if you can have this same confidence. Can you sing along with these words honestly? Do you hunger and thirst for God and His righteousness? Do you earnestly seek God when you're in distress? Like David, we should seek God now in the sanctuary so that when we enter into that difficult season with confidence, we can remember Him and experience soul satisfaction. Even when family drama comes, or when comforts or privileges, joys are taken away.

[31:07] When our idols are sovereignly removed, like a binky plucked from our mouths, will we be yearning and thirsting and fainting for a replacement idol? Or will we realize we didn't really need that idol after all? There's a saying, I'm sure many of you know it, I try to like it. It goes like this, you won't know that God is all you need until God is all you have. It reminds me of Paul the Apostle who faced so much danger and hardship and shipwreck and imprisonments. But he wrote, I have learned in whatever situation to be content. I know how to be brought low and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance. I've learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need. I can do all things through him who strengthens me. Seems to me Paul would have, I'm sure he did, enjoy Psalm 63. Paul could have sung this psalm with equal intensity as David.

[32:36] You know, there are some cover songs that end up being more powerful and more popular than the original.

[32:47] The new performer takes the song and the lyrics as their own, and it becomes something even more incredible. And that's how I imagine Jesus enjoyed this psalm. He sang it better because he lived it better. When Jesus started his ministry, he was brought to the desert, to the wilderness, to be

tempted by the devil. While he was fasting and praying, his intimacy with God, his use and knowledge of the scriptures sustained him in the desert. He overcame the evil one, victorious on our behalf over temptation. It's easy to imagine Jesus meditating on Psalm 63 in the earliest days of his ministry and in the final day of his ministry. Imagine the intensity of emotion Jesus experienced before his death on the cross. The King Jesus was forcibly removed from Jerusalem him to suffer outside the gate in order to bear the reproach of his people, to sanctify them by his own blood. Yet Jesus confidently trusted the eternal plan of God and the justice of God.

[34:16] Jesus, the king of the Jews, the promised heir of David, his life was destroyed. Jesus went down into the depths of the earth, but rose victorious so that he would be crowned king forever, victorious over death, so that we wouldn't be dependent on an, unstable king with a sinful nature in the temple of a fixed location in one country. No, our place of worship, our holy place, our sanctuary is a person.

[35:01] The Christ, Jesus, our Lord. And by the Holy Spirit and through the word, we can behold his power and his glory and know his steadfast love, which is better than life, which lasts longer than this life, into eternal life. Even in this present worldly wilderness that we live in, that is so antagonistic to God and his Messiah, even 3,000 years after this psalm was originally performed, and after 2,000 years, 2,000 years after Jesus perfected this psalm We too can celebrate and live out a new rendition of this song today And we can praise God with joyful lips As long as we live Let's pray.

[36:01] Our Father, we seek you. We're grateful for your gifts. We're grateful for your benefits. We're grateful for all that you've given us. We're grateful for all that you've done for us, and we are grateful for you. Help us to not forget you. Help us to cling to you, even as you uphold us. I pray that this psalm would be personal, that we too would know and declare, God, you are my God. I pray that we would experience and so cherish and delight in your, steadfast love and forgiveness that our lips would every day confidently praise you saying, your love, O Lord, is better than life. And we pray in the name of the victorious King, Jesus. Amen.