Shalom AZ Ministries

In Pursuit of Israel's Redemption

"Hope in the Wilderness"
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Devotion and Discussion Questions

Key Texts (TLV): Psalms 63, 3, 33; *Ps. 1–2; Is. 43:1–2; Is. 61:3.*

There are seasons when life feels like a wilderness. Everything around us seems dry, the pressures keep coming, and the questions multiply faster than the answers. We lie down at night, but our minds keep running through the problems we cannot resolve. Where do we find peace and rest when the storm is still raging around us?

David understood that tension. Psalm 63 places a young David in the wilderness of Judah, fleeing from Saul. Later in his life, Psalm 3 finds him fleeing again, this time from his own son Absalom. Yet these psalms show us something extraordinary: the promises of God ***and*** the real suffering of those who trust Him can both be true. His promises do not immunize us from pain, confusion, or threats. Rather, they point us toward the One we are to turn to in the middle of them. Psalm 33 reminds us why we can rejoice while we wait.

1. IN THE WILDERNESS, SEEK THE ONE YOUR SOUL THIRSTS FOR (PS. 63)
David begins with a declaration: *"O God, You are my God, earnestly I seek You."* (Ps. 63:2). The Hebrew word for "earnestly seek" communicates intense desire and is closely related to the word for the dawn. David is in a dry and weary land where there is no water, and his soul is thirsty. But notice what he is asking for. More than a change of location, more than an escape from Saul, he longs for ADONAI Himself. His yearning for God is like parched earth longing for water. Are we simply asking God to change our circumstances, or seeking His presence?

David recalls encountering God's power and glory in the sanctuary. While his present circumstances have not changed, his memory redirects the focus of his heart. He remembers the *chesed*—the lovingkindness—of ADONAI, which is better than life, and the mouth that began dry and dusty becomes filled with praise. Even on his bed, during the vulnerable watches of the night, he meditates on the One who has been his help. *"My soul clings to You—Your right hand upholds me."* (Ps. 63:9). The word for "clings" suggests being joined closely, almost welded together. David clings to ADONAI, but ADONAI goes before him and upholds him. We do not need to find our way through the wilderness alone. We need to stay attached to the One who leads.

2. WHEN THE TROUBLES MULTIPLY, TURN YOUR CONVERSATION TOWARD ADONAI (PS. 3). Psalm 3 begins almost shockingly after the assurances of Psalms 1 and 2. In Psalnm 1, we have heard that the one who delights in the instruction of ADONAI is like a tree planted by streams of water, and in Psalm 2, that God has established His King. Then suddenly Psalm 3 finds David is running for his life. This time the enemy is his own

son. Three times he speaks of the "many": many foes, many rising against him, and many saying there is no deliverance for him in God. Trouble comes, and soon our thoughts begin echoing it: There is no way out. God is not going to help. This will never change.

But then David turns the focus of his internal conversation: *"But **YOU**, ADONAI, are a shield around me, my glory and the lifter of my head."*(Ps. 3:4). "But You" turns his attention away from the multitude of troubles toward the LORD who is more than enough. He does not merely talk about God; he talks *to* God. He cries out, and then comes an astonishing declaration: *"I lie down and sleep. I awake—for ADONAI sustains me."* (Ps. 3:6). The enemies remain, but David rests because ADONAI is his support. He asks God to arise and intervene, knowing that *"Deliverance belongs to ADONAI."* (Ps. 3:9). Peace is not the absence of conflict. It is confidence in the One who sustains us in the midst of it.

3. WHILE YOU WAIT, WEAR PRAISE AND TRUST HIS FAITHFULNESS (PS. 33)

Psalm 33 begins with an invitation to rejoice because praise is fitting for the upright. "Fitting" describes something as beautiful because it is exactly where it belongs. Think of a garment that looks lovely on a hanger but comes alive when it is worn. That is what praise looks like on those who belong to ADONAI. Praise fits us like a hand and a glove! It is what we should be wearing. We give thanks and sing a fresh song. Not because life is perfect, but because He is worthy. His Word is upright; His works are done in *emunah*—faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice, and the earth is full of His *chesed*.

Consider the contrast the psalm makes. ADONAI speaks, and creation stands firm. He frustrates the plans of nations, while the purposes of His own heart stand from generation to generation. No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior is delivered by his strength. A horse, however powerful, is a false hope for victory. Today we may trust resources, influence, technology, or our plans, but none can replace ADONAI. He sees humanity, and He understands what is happening inside every heart. His eyes are on those who fear Him and wait for His lovingkindness. So we can say with the psalmist, *"Our soul waits for ADONAI—He is our help and our shield."* (Ps. 33:20). We wait with hope because the One we trust is faithful.

CONCLUSION

These three psalms show us one steady truth from three different angles. In Psalm 63, David is thirsty in the wilderness, and he seeks the presence of ADONAI. In Psalm 3, he is surrounded by enemies, and he turns his conversation toward the One who is his shield. In Psalm 33, the worshiping community looks beyond earthly strength and shifting plans to the enduring counsel and faithful character of God. Seeking, trusting, and praising belong together when our hope is in ADONAI.

Perhaps the wilderness has not ended. Perhaps the threats have not disappeared, and the answer you have been praying for has not yet come. David's psalms never ask us to deny that reality. Instead, they call us to remember who God has been, to speak to Him

about what is happening now, and to rest in who He will always be. The God who upheld David is not overwhelmed by your troubles. His plans endure beyond what you can see today. So seek Him earnestly, let Him lift your head, and clothe yourself in praise. There is hope in the wilderness because ADONAI is there.

Maybe you have been listening more closely to the voices of fear than to the promises of ADONAI. Maybe your soul has grown dry, and your first instinct has been to search everywhere for relief except in His presence. Today, the invitation is simple: turn toward Him. You don't need to pretend that you're strong—that you're not weary. Bring Him the thirst, the fear, the unanswered questions, and even the thoughts you have been afraid to say aloud. He is the One to whom you can cry out. Call out, "There may be many, many, many troubles and conflicts and struggles… **BUT YOU**, ADONAI," right in the middle of whatever is confronting you. Ask Him to be your help, your shield, and the lifter of your head. Follow Him even when you cannot see the path. Deliverance belongs to ADONAI, and His lovingkindness is worth waiting for.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does David's thirst in Ps. 63 reveal about the difference between seeking relief from difficult circumstances and seeking ADONAI Himself?
2. Where in your life are the "many" troubles or anxious thoughts becoming louder than your confidence in God? How might "But You, ADONAI" change your prayers this week?
3. Why is David's ability to sleep in Ps. 3 such a powerful expression of trust, even before his enemies are removed?
4. What modern sources of security—money, influence, planning, or personal ability—are you tempted to trust more than ADONAI? What would it look like to put those in their proper place?
5. According to Ps. 33, how do God's faithfulness, justice, lovingkindness, and enduring purposes give us reason to praise while we wait?

CLOSING PRAYER

ADONAI, You are our God, and earnestly we seek You. When our souls are dry and weary, remind us that Your lovingkindness is better than life. When many troubles rise up against us, turn our hearts from the noise of fear toward Your voice. Be our shield, our glory, and the lifter of our heads. Teach us to lie down and rest because You sustain us. Forgive us for trusting in our own strength and in things that cannot save. Fill our mouths with fresh praise, because Your Word is upright and all Your works are done in faithfulness. Help us cling to You, follow where You lead, and wait for Your *chesed* with confident hope.

B'Shem Yeshua, In the name of Yeshua, amen.