

Our Eternally Satisfying God

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[0 : 00] You may be seated. Well, this morning we're going to be in Psalm 63, so if you have a Bible, pop that open.

If you don't, there's one in the back of your pew. Feel free to use your phone app if you need to use that. I won't be offended. Psalm 63.

I don't know if you have a list of movies or videos that you could just watch and re-watch and re-watch, but for me it's Planet Earth.

It's a nature documentary by the BBC. Anybody seen it? Oh, full hands. Yeah. It's just like a visual display of God's beauty and creativity and power.

I love watching that. And recently I sat down to watch an episode of Planet Earth with my kids, and the focus of this episode was deserts.

[1 : 00] And the one thing that you had to grab from this episode, you couldn't help but understand, was that in the desert, everything revolves around where creatures find their water, or how they find their water.

Without water, no creatures. So, for example, there's this little beetle in the Nabib Desert in Africa that has a very interesting way of finding its water.

It climbs the sand dunes every morning. It's the equivalent of like 10 Everests for us. I mean, this gigantic sand dunes, this little tiny beetle going up to the top of the sand dunes. And he does it before the sun rises.

And he does it because there's this fog that blows in pretty consistently from the nearby Atlantic Ocean, miles away. And once he gets to the top, he does a little handstand.

And he stays like that for a long time. And he just stays still at about a 45-degree angle, head down. And what happens is the water droplets from the fog stick to his back.

[2 : 10] And eventually, more and more little tiny water droplets stick to his back. And they become bigger water droplets. And they get some gravity moving on them. And then eventually, the water droplets move down his back and through little channels on his head and into his mouth.

Isn't that brilliant? Our God is so creative. That's how this beetle gets his water in the desert. And there's this chameleon that snags the beetle.

And that's how the chameleon gets his water in the desert. It's pretty great. Little buggy eyes. If you're in the desert, you will do whatever you have to do to get water.

You might be thinking that this morning in this hot sanctuary. Notice I'm preaching in shorts. You long for water. You pant for it.

Because it's the only thing that can satisfy you. And David, the author of our psalm this morning, is in the desert.

[3 : 14] And he is longing. He is thirsting. But his thirst is not for water. Let's read this psalm together.

Psalm 63. A psalm of David when he was in the wilderness. Literally, the desert of Judah. Oh God, you are my God. And 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. So, literally, in this way, I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and your glory.

Because your steadfast love is better than life. My lips will praise you. So, I will bless you as long as I live. In your name, I will lift up my hands.

My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food. And my mouth will praise you with joyful lips when I remember you on my bed. And meditate on you in the watches of the night.

[4 : 22] For you have been my help. And the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to you. 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. But the king shall rejoice in God.

All who swear by him shall exult. For the mouths of liars will be stopped. So, David is in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

But his soul thirst is even more than his need for hydration. He is thirsting for the living God.

It's hard to miss how, as we kind of move through this psalm, he starts off in verse 1, longing, thirsting. But by the time we get to verse 5, he is talking about being satisfied.

[5 : 26] So, he moves from this psalm from a place of thirst and parchedness of soul. And he moves and he is able to be satisfied in God's presence.

And that's the big idea of this psalm. God satisfies those who thirst for his presence. God satisfies those who thirst for his presence.

But what does it mean to be satisfied in God? What does that look like? We can't put God into a glass and drink him. We can't see him. What does it look like for our soul to be satisfied in God? Well, as we go through this psalm together, I want us to think about it as a four-piece puzzle. And each puzzle piece is going to give us a clearer, more complete picture of what it looks like to be satisfied in God.

Little snapshots that are going to give us a picture of what that looks like. And at the end, we're going to tie it together and see how it kind of hits us right where we're at in our here and now in 2018.

[6 : 28] So, let's dive in. The first puzzle piece is this. Being satisfied in God means thirsting for God. Being satisfied in God means thirsting for God.

It's a bit of stating the obvious. But you can't be satisfied unless you have a desire that needs to be satisfied. You can't experience the ah of a long, cool drink of water unless you've been working up a thirst that needs to be quenched.

To be satisfied in God means you have to know that you need Him. And that's where David is at. He knows that he needs God desperately.

Look at verse 1. Three verbs. He gets it again and again and again.

This passionate yearning for God. Earnestly seeking. Thirsting. Fainting. He's like a man desperate for water in the Sahara Desert. He's stumbling his way toward God and hoping it's not a mirage.

[7 : 38] It affects him inside and out. Body and spirit. Notice his soul inside thirsts for you. But my flesh, my body faints for you. It's an all-consuming desire, not for water, for the living God.

Now, it'll be helpful for us to know just a tad bit about why David's in the desert. He's most likely, it could be when Saul was pursuing him before David became king.

There's probably more likely it's when David is being pursued by Absalom, his son, who is revolting against David and trying to take the kingdom from David. And this forced David out of his capital city of Jerusalem because Absalom is marching an army from Hebron to basically kill David and overthrow the city.

And so David and his faithful followers flee to the desert for safety. So not only is he in a desert where there is little water, he's also unsure of how he and his followers are going to survive there. His soul is in turmoil. His own son has revolted against him. Everything that had been certain in his life is now coming unglued. He had no idea if he would remain king, if the people would remain loyal to him.

[8 : 55] Everything is up for grabs for David. And it's in the midst of this uncertainty and this danger that David's true character comes out. He composes this poem right in the middle of this chaos.

And he tells God how desperate he is. But not desperate for a resolution to his problems. He tells God how desperate he is for God.

For God himself. You are my God. Earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you. My flesh faints for you. There is in every human soul a longing.

It is a deep set longing. It's hard to put words on it. But it's a thirst that accompanies our every thought, our every motive.

We were made to know the living God. Not to know about him. Not to nod to certain truths about who he is.

[10:00] But to know him personally. To have a real satisfying relationship with him. Because we bear his image. He stamped on us his very image.

We can't help but thirst for him. Every human being has this longing. And I bet you felt this before. I bet you felt this thirst before. Maybe it was like after a great triumph or a success.

And you're in the midst of celebrating good things. But then in the back of your mind there's this whisper of, is that it? Tom Brady, famous quarterback for New England Patriots, was once quoted in an interview more than 10 years ago after he won his first three Super Bowls, of basically saying, yeah, I've arrived.

Is that it? The guy's on top of the world. The guy has everything that our culture says is it. And he's like, there's got to be something else.

Or maybe it's when you behold the night sky. And you get this little glimpse of the grandeur, the mystery, the greatness.

[11:15] And you've got this thirst that gets awakened inside of you of, I want that something more. You and I were meant for the ultimate greatness of knowing and experiencing the unshielded glory of the living God, and we can't help but thirst for it.

And we chase it down. We chase it down in the pleasures we pursue, the successes we strive for, the relationships we foster. We're looking for it. The ultimate joy, the ultimate security, the ultimate love that only God can actually give.

But we tend to look in the wrong places. We are hardwired to be satisfied with the glory of God, but our rebellious hearts turn away from it.

Our hearts twist and they corrupt this thirst into a thousand counterfeit longings. Just like Jeremiah said, God said through Jeremiah, my people have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and they have hewed out, carved out, broken cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water.

We tend to trade the real thing for the cheap things that don't satisfy. So here's the question that God's word is confronting us with this morning. What are you thirsting for?

[12:41] Where are you seeking satisfaction? If you would be truly satisfied, God and God alone is the only one who's able to provide that.

David knew that. So he was yearning, desperately panting for the living God. With that on our minds, let's move to the second puzzle piece of verses two to four.

Second puzzle piece is this. Being satisfied in God means treasuring him as he has revealed himself. Treasuring him as he has revealed himself.

So David turns a corner from his expression of thirst for God and starts recalling how he had beheld God in the holy temple in Jerusalem.

Look at verse two. That so there, she's really literally in the same kind of longing way. It's kind of what that so stands for. I have looked upon you in the sanctuary.

[13:47] So in the past, David has drawn near to God where God could be found because God has always been a God who dwells with and resides with and reveals himself to his people.

And in this time period, for David, it was in the tabernacle, a special tent that God had set up with the Ark of the Covenant. It's a place that God's concentrated glory dwelled with his people. And David, because he loved God, he wanted to be with God, he would be there.

He would constantly go to the temple to behold God, to get as close as he could through offering of sacrifices, through the help of priests to mediate God's presence to David.

He would want to be there. So verses 2 and 3 tell us that David had seen and come to know and treasure at least three things, three aspects, three facets about God, beholding, verse 2, your power and your glory, and then verse 3, because your steadfast love is better than life.

So there's these three facets of God's valuing that David just latches onto. And he sees it and he beholds it.

[15:04] And what was David's response to that? Look at verse 3. He treasures God more than life itself. He's seen God as God has revealed himself and he is treasuring God more than life itself.

This is an astounding statement. Look at verse 3. Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you. Better than life?

That statement should just smack us. We just can't move past this too quickly. David values and treasures God's steadfast love more than the breath in his lungs.

More than the sweetness to the best of friendships or the feeling of sunshine on his face or watching his children play. David is saying, if you take all the joys and pleasures and good things of this life and you stack them on one end of the scale and then you put God's steadfast love on the other end of the scale, it's no contest.

David would prefer death than to lose out on the steadfast love of God. It's astounding. Man, how could that be true?

[16:27] What could be better than living, than life itself? Isn't anything preferable to death? Not according to David. Knowing and treasuring the God who reveals himself by grace and who dwells with his people by grace is better than life.

And in response to this three-fold vision of who God has declared himself to be, his power, his glory, his steadfast love, David pours out three pourings, verbal proclamations of praise.

He says in verse 3, my lips will praise you. Verbally, he's praising you, but not just verbally, but with his life. I will bless you as long as I live. In your name, I will lift up my hands.

It's this bodily expression of saying, God, you're worth more than life itself. So with all of David's being, he's saying, I treasure you more than anything else.

Praise is an overflow. When you delight in something, you can't help but praise it. And to use one author's words, praise completes the enjoyment of something.

[17:41] Hopefully, we don't praise God because we have to. Because what we do on a Sunday morning, we praise God because we have come to know and treasure him as he has revealed himself and we can't help but say, yes, that's true with my whole being.

This expression of devotion should just shake us to our core. It's been doing that to me all week. Do I know God like that? Do I treasure God like that?

Do I seek him in the place he has revealed himself and treasure him more than life itself? But more than just kind of shaking us up and helping us see our priorities, it should also stimulate our faith because if this is true, just think about it, if this is true, then we worship a God and we know a God and we treasure a God who is literally better than life.

Which is why Christians don't have to flinch in the face of death because we are going to our eternal reward. It's better. Jesus is better in this life and in the next.

There's a greater joy, a greater satisfaction, an ultimate delight in goodness that goes beyond all the hard, difficult things and even goes beyond all the fleeting, temporary good things of this life.

[19:02] It goes beyond it. It's all a feather on the scale compared to the weighty joy of knowing God now and forever. Do we believe that?

Do we believe that? Let's move to the third puzzle piece, verses five to eight. Being satisfied in God means thirsting for Him.

Being satisfied in God means treasuring Him as He has revealed Himself. Thirdly, being satisfied in God means striving to savor His sufficiency. Striving to savor His sufficiency.

Pastor Mike was talking about savoring the love of God in communion. We're going to talk about savoring in this point. We can't help but see it. I've got a weakness for Pixar movies.

Anybody with me? One of my favorites is Ratatouille. Anybody like that one? It's this great movie about Remy who's a rat in France who instead of eating garbage has developed a taste for fine French cuisine and he learns how to cook it.

[20:12] And there's this one scene where he's trying to teach his brother Emil how to savor food. Emil is rather large and he likes to just stuff food in his mouth as fuel.

But Remy's like, no, no, no, no. Slow down. He tries rather unsuccessfully to try to combine flavors in the palate for Emil and to perceive the beautiful music they make together on the palate.

And David is doing some savoring in this section. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food. And my mouth will praise you with joyful lips. We could translate fat and rich food into succulent filet mignon. The finest of foods.

David is sitting down at a fine feast. He is slowly chewing, enjoying the flavors and he's praising with words of joy what he is tasting but he's not chewing on food.

[21:20] He is remembering God. He is meditating on God. Meditating, you shouldn't be scared of that word. It's just the art of savoring who God is.

Mentally chewing on the truth we know about God. And David's doing that right here. But it's hard work. It takes striving. It takes fighting to turn your thoughts toward God.

And David is doing that. He is on his bed. Remember, he is in the desert running for his life. What kind of thoughts are naturally coming to his mind?

Anxiety, fear, maybe depression, despair. And instead, he's taking those thoughts and he's putting them aside and he's turning his eyes and he's saying, no, I will chew on the truth about what I know who God is.

And then he begins to find his soul satisfied. And we know what he's chewing on. It's high, savory thoughts of God's sufficiency.

[22 : 30] Look at verse 7 and 8. For you have been my help and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to you and your right hand upholds me.

So God has been and is presently David's help. And he uses this beautiful picture of a baby bird being sheltered under the shadow of his mother's wings.

So he's resting in the parental and affectionate care of God who is his help. And it's in his most vulnerable, private, exposed moments where his mind could go anywhere else for comfort and shelter.

He goes to God. And he's singing for joy because his soul has arrived at the place of savoring high thoughts of God's sufficiency.

sufficiency. And it's not just because God shelters him from danger, not just because of what God does for him, but because he is near to God like a baby bird is near his mother.

[23 : 33] And God is all he needs. God is all he wants. God is his full sufficiency and David is satisfied. And David's anxiety is turned into joyful satisfaction in the process of striving to savor the sufficiency of God in his most vulnerable moments.

In our age, not only do we have our anxieties and our fears to occupy our minds, we also have a thousand distractions.

They tend to get flashed at us on screens, whether big or small, and they can easily occupy our thoughts until kingdom come, if we let them.

we must strive as God's people to be satisfied with high, savory thoughts of God's sufficiency.

We must, we must strive to aim our thoughts at him in our most private moments, whether it's driving in the car or laying in bed. Where do you turn for satisfaction?

[24 : 45] What do you meditate on to bring contentment to your soul, to quench your thirst? Let's move to the last puzzle piece, verses 9 through 11.

The last puzzle piece is this, being satisfied in God means joyfully anticipating his promised deliverance. Joyfully anticipating his promised deliverance.

You see, he changes tone in verses 9 and 10. He starts talking about his enemies, those who are seeking to destroy his life, but it's interesting that it's taken him so long to get to his enemies, isn't it? David's been so caught up with his intense longing for and satisfaction in God that just now is he bringing his danger to the foreground of his thoughts.

His eyes are so focused on God and he's utterly confident that God will deliver those who trust in him and those who long for him.

He knows that the tables are going to be turned. He knows that for those who trust in God, there is deliverance. He's running for his life now, but he knows that ultimately it's his enemies that will be delivered over death and given over to the sword.

[25 : 58] And just as God is satisfying his deepest longings, ironically, he also is going to satisfy the longings of some hungry jackals who are going to feast on the flesh of his enemies.

It's a little gruesome, but it's this vivid expression of confidence that God will ultimately be seen to be just and right at the end of the day.

That God will deliver those who trust in him. And those who are bent on evil will eventually be on the receiving end of the evil they seek to perpetrate.

So one day, lying lips will be stopped up. Evil will cease. God is ultimately in control and because God is good and because he is just, he will punish evil and he will make all things right.

And this causes David to just rejoice all the more in verse 11. But the king shall rejoice in God. But not only David, all those who are loyal to God and to the king.

[27 : 01] In other words, all of God's people who seek to satisfy their deepest longing in God will ultimately rejoice at the end of the day. God will bring about his ultimate deliverance.

He is our only and he is our ultimate hope. That things will be set right. So our puzzle is complete. God satisfies those who thirst for his presence.

We've seen what this looks like for David in Psalm 63. Thirst for him, treasuring him as he's revealed himself, striving to savor his sufficiency, joyfully anticipating his promise, deliverance. But where does that hit us today? How does that meet us where we are in 2018? Well, I'm sure we've all felt the weight of this psalm. It's a joyful weight, but it's a bit of a sober weight. As we've walked through it, we feel the tension in this psalm of like, yeah, I want that, but I'm not really there. Or I strive for that, but I fall short of seeking to quench my thirst fully in God like David is here.

[28 : 07] here. It's like, am I joyfully aiming all of my longing at God? Well, kind of. My best moments, or maybe not really.

I know I tend to value my own precious life and all of its temporary promises more than the electric experience of knowing the steadfast love of God that is better than life.

we are guilty of putting our ultimate confidence in and seeking our ultimate longing in other things. This psalm exposes our deepest longing, but it also reveals our most grievous failure to satisfy that deepest longing in the only place that it can be satisfied.

And this has been our problem, humanly speaking, from the beginning, right? Adam and Eve in the garden were utterly content in God's presence.

They were the only two who had experienced the unshielded glory and favor and pleasure of the living God, and yet they made the conscious choice to find their delight in their own self-sufficiency.

[29 : 21] You will be like God. And they bought the lie, and we do too. We dig broken, muddy, empty cisterns for ourselves instead of going to the fountain of living waters.

But what's astounding is that our God still says, come. Flip over to Isaiah 55 for a second. Isaiah 55. It's not too far away from Psalm 63 to the right. Isaiah 55. God still says, come. He's beckoning.

And in Isaiah's day, he's beckoning to an unfaithful covenant people who are constantly going all over the place except for seeking the living God. And he still tells his unfaithful people, come.

Come to me. Isaiah 55, verse 1. Come, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters. And he who has no money, come, buy, and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without price.

[30 : 29] Why do you spend your money on things that which is not bread and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen diligently to me and eat what is good and delight yourselves in rich food.

Incline your ear and come to me. Hear that your soul may live. Do you hear the echoes of Psalm 63 there? It's this invitation.

God's beckoning. Come, satisfy your thirst in me. You can't earn it. You can't buy it. It's all of grace. Just respond to the invitation. Drink deeply of the living God.

Eat the food of my living word. Don't spend your money on cheap invitation stuff. And God makes good on this invitation.

He makes good on the invitation to find ultimate satisfaction in himself when he sat next to a well on a hot, dusty day, not unlike today, outside an unimportant Samaritan town talking to a nameless Samaritan woman in John chapter 4.

[31 : 37] And we overhear him say, everybody who drinks of this water in this well will be thirsty again. But whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never be thirsty again.

The water that I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. Or listen again to God the Son speak in John chapter 7.

On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, if anybody thirsts let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.

Only in Jesus, only in Jesus can we know the thirst quenching satisfaction that comes from knowing the living God and experiencing his presence.

Only in Jesus has God fully and finally revealed himself. Only in Jesus can we fully know the steadfast love of God. Only in Jesus can we know what it means to take shelter under the wings, under the blood that he shed for the forgiveness of our sins so that we can be in God's presence unafraid.

[32 : 54] And this is true of us now if we are in Christ. If you are in Christ, you can really and truly know God through Jesus by the power of his spirit.

That reference that Jesus was making to the rivers of living water was pointing to God's spirit. Who is God's very living and active presence dwelling in and amongst the people of God.

We don't have to go to God's temple anymore to be near his presence. We have God the spirit indwelling us. Working in us. Shaping our affections and our longings to be more and more aimed at finding our satisfaction in him through Jesus.

Listen to how Paul, the apostle in Philippians 3, listen to how the spirit of God produces this longing, this thirst, and this joy in finding satisfaction in Jesus. He says, Indeed, I count everything as a loss compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things. I count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ and be found in him. That I may know him and the power of his resurrection and share his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, that by any means possible I may attain the resurrection from the dead.

[34 : 17] If Jesus is that satisfying, then any loss of any earthly thing, it's easy compared to the ravishing joy of knowing him.

And one day, by God's grace, this partial reality will be gloriously complete. Because the rivers of living water find their source, their headwaters in the new heavens and the new earth in the unshielded glory and presence of the living God and of the Lamb.

In Revelation 22, there's this beautiful picture. It says, the angel showed me the river of the water of life in the city of God, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city.

One day, we will participate and partake of the joyous presence of the living God and we will drink it deep forever without ceasing and we will be satisfied in him and we will see his face.

We will literally behold him in his holy place and we will be satisfied. satisfied. So how should we respond to this? Well, first, if there are competing joys and pleasures in you that are taking the place of the God who can alone satisfy you, then repent.

[35 : 48] Repentance is a beautiful word. It's the only way by which we find joy in the living God is from turning from things that don't satisfy and turn to the only one who does satisfy.

So search your heart. Ask God to search your heart. Where am I finding joy and satisfaction?

Ultimate joy and satisfaction, not in you, Jesus. Whether it's an affection or approval of other people or in success or comfort or control of your circumstances, whatever else you're trying to find your satisfaction in, turn away from it.

Turn to the one who can ultimately only satisfy you. Secondly, there are good things in this life to enjoy. Many of us are going to sit out here and enjoy the Fourth of July parade.

Good things. We shouldn't be afraid to enjoy good things. So we need to ask God to give us wisdom and discretion to put legitimate joys and pleasures and good gifts that he gives us in their proper place.

It's good to experience a long, cool drink of water and be satisfied. That's nothing wrong with that. But we, you and I both know the difference between seeking our ultimate longing in something and enjoying a good gift with gratitude.

[37 : 04] And that's what God wants us to aim at. So let's ask him for wisdom. If there are things that are pulling at your heart, then repent of that. But then ask him for wisdom to enjoy him through these good gifts he gives.

Thirdly, sometime today, this week, take a step of faith toward God, toward Jesus as your ultimate joy.

When you open your Bible this week, take a step toward him and say, satisfy me. You know my longing for you. Satisfy me. Take a step toward him and ask him to satisfy you with his steadfast love.

If you pray this evening, ask him to delight your soul with savory thoughts of his sufficiency. Go to him in a step of faith. It doesn't always feel natural.

It doesn't always feel really easy. But take a step. Or maybe it's in your most private moments.

Maybe it's in the car. Maybe it's in lying in bed. And ask, satisfy me in your steadfast love.

[38 : 12] Maybe it means a step of faith of fasting. Fasting is the putting aside of a good, legitimate thing like food and saying, I'm going to put this aside for a moment and I'm going to seek my real satisfaction in God.

But take a step of faith and obedience this week. Just enjoy and be satisfied in God. And lastly, if you've been listening and you're aware that there's, you have not tasted and seen that Jesus is the all-satisfying one, then come down after service and we'd love to pray with you that you would find

your satisfaction and find your deepest thirst quenched in the living God.
Let's pray. Amen. Father, thank you for sustaining us by your presence in your word.
Thank you, Father, that in you we find our only satisfaction. Help us now to turn to you in song and
with steps of faith and obedience to find our greatest joy and satisfaction in you and you alone.
In Christ's name, amen.