

# My Soul Thirsts for You

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[ 0 : 00 ] If you have your Bible with you, you can open it up to Psalm chapter 63. Psalm chapter 63. And if you don't have one with you, you can get one right in the seat in front of you.

They're the black covered book. This psalm has long been precious to me.

In fact, it's one of the first sermons I ever preached was on this psalm over 10 years ago in my home church where I grew up in my early 20s. And it's a psalm that speaks of the kind of passionate, intimate, close relationship that we can have with God.

So I'm going to read the psalm for us this morning. Psalm 63. A psalm of David. When he was in the desert of Judah. You, God, are my God.

Earnestly I seek you. I thirst for you. My whole being longs for you. In a dry and parched land. Where there is no water.

[ 1 : 09 ] I have seen you in the sanctuary. And beheld your power and your glory. Because your love is better than life. My lips will glorify you.

I will praise you as long as I live. And in your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods.

With singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you. I think of you through the watches of the night. Because you are my help I sing in the shadow of your wings.

I cling to you. Your right hand upholds me. Those who want to kill me will be destroyed. They will go down to the depths of the earth.

They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals. But the king will rejoice in God. All who swear by God will glory in him. While the mouths of liars will be silenced.

[ 2 : 18 ] So this is a psalm of David. King David. Man who lived about a thousand years before Jesus came. And we don't know if this was a song or just a prayer.

But it's very poetic in the way that it's phrased. And David tells us something of the occasion that he was in.

The situation he was in when this was written. It says when he was in the desert of Judah. Now it's difficult to pin down exactly when in David's life this took place.

Because David had a couple times when he was in the desert of Judah. The first was early on in his life when he was being basically chased and hunted by the king of those days.

Which was King Saul. And he was running for his life. And then the second time was much later in his life. He'd already been king for quite a long time. And then his son Absalom kind of rose up against him and chased him off the throne.

[ 3 : 24 ] And so he found himself fleeing again and in the wilderness running for his life. And there's a few verses in this psalm that kind of fit either one of those quite well.

But at the end of the day we don't know for sure exactly when in his life he wrote this. Usually with these psalms on Sundays in the summer here I've been kind of dividing up the psalm to help us see the structure of it.

And looking at it and working through it piece by piece. But I found it difficult to do that with this psalm. It's only 11 verses and I seem to find six different parts. So rather than dividing it up that way.

We're going to look instead at three of the themes that are woven throughout the psalm. And we'll start by looking at first David's circumstances.

So let's start by looking at these first verses here. We know from the superscription that David is in the desert. And what's it like there?

[ 4 : 27 ] In David's first words in verse 1 he mentions thirst. He says, So there's the idea of weariness or exhaustion.

Perhaps from hunger or thirst or just the heat. He says that he's in a dry and parched land. Where there is no water. So David's surroundings and situation are quite unpleasant at the moment.

He's thirsty. He's weary. He's out in the elements. And there's nothing to give relief. Verse 2. He says, I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

He has seen God's presence and power and glory with his own eyes. But that's not what's happening right now. Notice that this is in the past tense.

I have seen you in the sanctuary. I have beheld your power and your glory. Back then and there God. But right now here in the desert it's implied. I don't see you.

[ 5 : 42 ] Verse 5. David says, I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods. Notice the future tense. I will be satisfied as with the richest of foods.

But here in the present it's sort of implied that here in the desert the richest foods are not what's on the menu. And neither is the satisfaction that goes with it. In verse 7, David is keenly aware of his need for God's help.

In verse 8, he's aware of his need to be sustained and upheld. And so he's clinging to God. In verse 9, he tells us that there's people who want to kill him.

They're out to see him dead. And finally in verse 11, he speaks of the mouths of liars.

There's people spreading lies about him, slander. So these are David's circumstances described in poetry throughout the psalm.

[ 6 : 50 ] He's out in the desert. He's thirsty. He's hungry. He's weary. He's not seeing God visibly as he has in the past. He can't just go to the tabernacle, the sanctuary, because he's out here in the desert.

He's deeply aware of his need for God's help and sustaining. And there are these men who are spreading lies about him and seeking to kill him.

But what's always amazed me and touched me when I read this psalm again is how David desires so much more than just the alleviation of his suffering.

I kept thinking, you know, if I found myself in a situation like this and I was to write a psalm, it would probably go something like this. You, God, are my God.

Earnestly, I want to get out of this mess right now. I'm thirsty for water to drink. My body faints with exhaustion from the heat. There's no water here.

[ 7 : 55 ] Verse 5, I want to get back to eating the richest of foods. Please get me out of this desert right now and deal with my enemies swiftly. Amen. That's more like how we sometimes pray, isn't it?

God, please get me out of this situation ASAP. And so I'm always surprised again and again when I read what David desires most here.

You, God, are my God. Earnestly, I seek you. I thirst for you.

My whole being longs for you. In a dry and parched land where there is no water. There's one thing David wants much more than water, food, an easy, comfortable life.

More than all that, David desires God himself. It's like he's saying, that thirst that I feel in my mouth, that's just a picture.

[ 8 : 58 ] That's just a parable of how I need you, God. Like water would satisfy my thirsty tongue and refresh me and replenish me.

That's what you, God, are to my soul. You are the one that refreshes and replenishes my soul. That deals with that deep thirst and dryness that's in here.

So even though we see that David's situation is somewhat desperate and grim, that's not what David's worried about. It's like he's looking at all this desperation of his circumstances mainly as a metaphor.

It's a picture. It's a parable of how he truly feels in his heart towards God. He's desperate for God.

And if you look down the page in your Bibles, you'll see these first eight verses are all about God.

They're all about David's relationship with God. I just find this so wonderful, so amazing. I mean, we just heard about how bleak David's circumstances are.

[ 10 : 12 ] And yet, glance through this whole psalm. Does David ask God for anything? Is there any specific request that David has for something from God here?

There's nothing. He doesn't ask God for a single thing in this prayer. It's quite a contrast, maybe, to our usual prayers, where most of our prayers are requests.

It's things we want from God. So if he's not asking for things, what is David saying? What is he doing in this prayer? Well, in verse 1, we see already that he's expressing his longing for God. Then in verse 2, he reminisces about God, about a special moment that he had with God. He says, I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

So he's thinking back to a previous encounter with God, probably reflecting on a time when he was in the sanctuary at the tabernacle, perhaps worshiping or praying.

[11:22] And it seems that, from what David says, that God had revealed himself very visibly to David in that moment. And David says, I remember seeing your power and your glory.

This is precious to David. Back then, the tabernacle, the sanctuary, that was a big part of relationship with God. I mean, you came to the tabernacle, the house of the Lord.

You worshipped. You brought your sacrifice. You did your praying and your singing there. But now David is cut off from that. He can't just go there like he's used to.

He's fleeing for his life in the desert. So David does this sort of relational reminiscing out loud in his prayer. I remember back to that time when I saw you in the sanctuary.

I beheld your power and your glory. And he continues on with this. He says in verse 3, Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

[12:29] So he's thinking back on his relationship with God, how things have gone in his life.

And he makes this most wonderful of statements. Because your love is better than life. And that's just the first part. He's going to say a bunch more here.

But let's just stop and think for a moment about that statement right there. Because your love is better than life. Your love, God, is better than life itself.

What a statement. And I don't think David's despairing of his life right now. I don't think he's saying, Well, my life stinks, and so it's easy for your love to be better than my life right now.

I think David valued his life. Sure, it had its troubles and challenges, the same as all of us do. But there's a richness and a beauty to life.

[13:30] Life is a treasure. It's a gift from God. And we all know that. Even if at times we lose sight of it or forget it, life is a treasure. But David says there's something even greater, even better.

Your love, God, is better than life. That phrase alone is worth meditating on.

Do you value your life? How much do you value your life? If I think to our world, our world holds life at the very top as the most valuable thing that we have.

And yet David says, My relationship with you, God, is better. It's more precious to me. More valuable to me. It's the greater treasure.

Knowing your love for me. Experiencing your loving kindness. It's been the ultimate, the best thing of all.

[14:42] I wonder if you can honestly say amen to that in your relationship with God. Have you known a love from God that's more precious to you than life itself?

You can. And amazingly, this reality, David's deep enjoyment of God's love becomes the foundation of five will statements which follow.

We're going to just look at three of them. He says, Because your love is better than life, and then these five will statements. So let's look at a few of them here. Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

So, I'm going to worship you with my mouth, says David. I'm going to declare just how glorious you are. There's a bit of a principle here.

Knowing God's amazing love here in your heart, that's what leads to worship. That's what leads to that authentic, joyful worship.

[16:00] The second one, because your love is better than life, I will praise you as long as I live.

So God's love is so deep, so awesome, so wonderful, that David says, I'm going to worship you till the day I die.

As long as I live. Have you ever had someone tell you about a new product or a new movie? And they really, really liked it.

They really thought it was great. And so they're trying to sell it to you. They're trying to help you appreciate it. And you get your expectations really high and then you go out and you get that product or you go see that movie and you're disappointed.

They got your expectations a little too high. They oversold it. They praised it a little too highly. They talked a little too much good about it. That might happen with products and movies but with God,

David realizes, he sees, he knows in his heart of hearts that he could declare God's praises for the rest of his life and never oversell him.

Never praise him too highly. Never say enough good about him. He's that worthy. He's that good. He's that glorious. A lifetime of praise wouldn't do him justice.

[ 17 : 32 ] And so knowing God's amazing love in here doesn't just lead to worship. It leads to a whole life of worship. A life spent worshipping God.

One more of these will statements. Because your love is better than life, I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods. Says David.

Now there's some translation variants there. More literally, more accurately, my soul will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods. This is one of my favorite parts of this psalm.

Let me ask you something. What's the best food that you've ever tasted in your entire life? Think back to that moment.

Maybe there's one or two or three things that just, man, wow, wow, that was so good. And the whole time that you were eating it, it's just like every single bite was surprise.

[ 18 : 38 ] Again, how can it be that good? What kind of sauce is this? What kind of seasoning? How did they get these flavors all just right and it's cooked to perfection? It's, and just when you think you've wrapped your mind around it, you take another bite and your taste buds go wild all over again.

Wow! Have you ever had a dish or a food like that? There's a conversation starter for you after the service. You can, you can ask each other about it after the service.

King David, no doubt, had some wonderfully rich foods. He ate at the king's table before he became king and then once he was king, I mean, he was king.

He would have eaten all kinds of rich, tasty foods. And so he knew just how deeply satisfying a meal can be. And yet his point here is not about food at all.

It says, because your love is better than life, my soul will be fully satisfied as my tongue is with the richest of foods.

[ 19 : 53 ] It's a simile. It's poetic. What is he saying? He's saying, just as my mouth has been so deeply satisfied with the richest of foods in the past, in the same way, my soul will be satisfied with you, my God.

Because your love is better than life. Can your imagination do this? Go back to that tastiest meal you ever had.

If you can, taste it again. Remember what it did to your tongue in your mouth. God's love can do that to your soul.

Where every new taste of his love surprises you all over again. Every new glimpse of it, it leaves you saying, wow, that's amazing.

How can it, how can he love me that much? And you get another taste of his love and your heart goes wild all over again.

[ 21 : 10 ] Have you known God's love like this? You can. So knowing God's love here in your heart leads to worship.

It leads to lifelong worship and it leads to the deepest satisfaction of our souls. Let's move on to verse 6. David says, on my bed I remember you.

I think of you through the watches of the night. That's a pretty intimate thing to say, isn't it? Not only does David do this relational reminiscing up in verse 2 but he says, I do this all the time.

I'm thinking about you all the time God on my bed all through the night. And we don't know the details here.

Is David having some trouble sleeping? Is that why he's up in all the watches of the night? Well, if he's in the desert probably he doesn't have the best night's rest I'm going to guess. His bed might not be much better than the hard ground.

[ 22 : 20 ] Maybe some of these troublemakers who are seeking to kill him and spreading lies about him have something to do with the fact that he's up through the watches of the night. We don't know for sure, but in these quiet moments on his bed, David says, I think about you, God.

I think of you all through the night. I think of you all things. Now, if you were to say that to your sweetheart, it would light a fire in her heart.

If we think about something a lot, or someone a lot, and often, and all through the sleepless night, it's usually something or someone that matters so deeply to us.

either it's something that weighs heavy on our hearts, a trouble, a deep trouble, or on the positive side of things, someone that's very dear, very special to us.

That's how it was when I first met my wife, Jennifer. I remember I couldn't sleep. I was so excited. [ 23 : 33 ] And finally, I found somebody who put good words to it that explained what I was feeling. It was Dr. Seuss who said it. He said, you know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams.

That's how it was for me. Now, David's not talking about a romantic relationship here with God, but it's obvious, isn't it, that God is supremely precious to him.

as only he can be. On my bed, I remember you. I think of you through the watches of the night. Do you hear the passion he has for God?

The love, the longing. I mean, it's so intense. We get a picture here of a David who just utterly cherishes and adores God.

And this relationship that David has with God, it changes everything. for him in the midst of his troubles. How easily he could be lamenting in this moment.

[ 24 : 39 ] How easily he could be complaining about his circumstances. Asking God for relief. And yet, verse 7, because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.

God for God for Jesus. This is like David's Paul and Silas in the jail moment. He's out in the dry desert, utterly parched for thirst, exhausted and weary, being hunted and slandered.

And yet he's singing songs to the God who has loved him and helped him and upheld him. Isn't that something? Do you have a relationship with God like this?

this is what first drew me to this psalm all those years ago. Not that I had a relationship with God like this, but I wanted one.

And I saw that here in God's word, it's possible. David had it. You can have it. I can have it. It's real. So that's the second theme.

[ 25 : 49 ] We see David's desire for God in the desert which flows out of his delight in God and all of the sweetness that has come in that relationship that he has with God.

Let's look at one more theme here quickly. Then we'll connect this all to Christ and then we'll apply this to ourselves. There's something about these will statements all throughout the psalm that speaks to us.

Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live. In your name I will lift up my hands. I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods.

With singing lips my mouth will praise you. And then we pick it up again in verse nine. Those who want to kill me will be destroyed. They will go down to the depths of the earth.

They will be given over to the sword. But the king will rejoice in God. All who swear by God will glory in him while the mouths of liars will be silenced.

[ 26 : 51 ] That's a lot of will statements. What are we to make of this? All of these statements taken together give us this sense that David is so confident.

It's like he's just sure of how things will be in the future between him and God and between his enemies and God.

And yet at the same moment right now here in the present David's still in the desert nothing's changed. His enemies still want him dead. So David is confident of how it will be even though it's not like that right now.

He's confident of how things will turn out even though that future is unseen. It's invisible to him. He doesn't feel that in his present circumstances.

This is how real faith in God expresses itself. As the author of Hebrews put it so well faith is the confidence in what we hope for.

[ 28 : 03 ] It's the assurance about what we do not see. And there's a powerful lesson for us here. Not an easy lesson but a powerful one. David is showing us here that life may not always go as we wish it would.

At times things can be really hard but even in the midst of that we can rejoice. We can sing.

We can be satisfied in God. God. We must look up to the Lord.

We must look ahead to what he has promised. We must look to see how do all of the things the good promises that God has given how do they touch my present situation.

God. It really is possible to rise above even in the midst of difficulty and troubles and trials.

[ 29 : 12 ] But it happens only through faith. Only through belief. Only through trust in God. It happens only through desiring God and seeking him and coming closer to him to enjoy his love. Believing his promises. All of this David wrote about a thousand years before Jesus came on the scene.

So we want to consider briefly for a moment how does this passage point us to Jesus. I see at least two ways. The first David says that God's love is better than life.

And we might wonder if we're honest some of us in our hearts how can I come to know God's love like that? How do I get that?

I want to tell you this morning that the best place to start, the best place to continue to know God's love is by looking to Jesus. Consider what the author of Hebrews said.

[ 30 : 22 ] Hebrews chapter one verse three. He said the sun, referring to Jesus, the sun is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being.

So Jesus is the radiance. He's the shining forth of God's glory, of all that is good, of all that is great about him. The exact representation of who he is, which means that God's love is most tangibly seen in Jesus, in the person of Jesus, in the things that he said, the things that he did, and who he is.

So if you want to grow in your enjoyment of God's love, look to Jesus, come to Jesus, start with him. And as you do, give special attention to the death of Jesus on the cross.

Romans chapter five verse eight says this, God demonstrates his own love for us in this. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

A demonstration is something that you can see. Paul is saying that God made his own love seeable to us.

[ 31 : 48 ] Seeable to us through the death of Christ on the cross for us while we were still sinners. So look to Jesus, yes, but also look especially to his death on the cross for you.

That's where you'll see the love of God in the fullest intensity. It's the meaning of that. It's the significance of that. It's the gift of that, the grace of that. The second place we see Christ pointed to from this psalm.

David expresses his desire as we heard for God using the language of thirst and hunger. He said, I thirst for you. My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods.

He was confident that his deepest longings would be met in God and in God alone. And then we fast forward to Jesus and what did Jesus say?

Jesus declared, John chapter 6 verse 35, I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty.

[ 33 : 08 ] John chapter 7 verse 37, another occasion. Jesus said this, he said, let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Jesus also used the language of hunger and thirst to describe the desires of the human soul.

But look at what he said. He said, if you want that thirst in your soul quenched, if you want that hunger satisfied, come to me.

Come to me. me. I am the bread of life. I have the water of life. I'm the one who can meet that deepest longing, that deepest need of your soul for God.

So again, look to Jesus, come to Jesus, call out, cry out to him, just like David did in Psalm 63, to Jesus. Jesus. This psalm will always be precious to me, because it describes for me the kind of relationship that I've been growing with God over the years, and it speaks of the still deeper relationship that I can have with him.

It talks of intimacy and passion between us and God. I want to ask you this morning, do you have this kind of relationship with God, with Jesus?

[ 34 : 45 ] Do you want it? Do you want to know God's love deeper, better?

I've already pointed us to Jesus to find that, and to grow in that, but I want to leave us with just one final word of encouragement. Relationships take work.

Most of us have learned that by now. I'm not talking about the exhausting labor kind of work, but the relational kind of work. You know the things I'm talking about. Think about a loved one, a family member.

To have a good, strong, close relationship with that person, it requires relational work. work. It requires that you make the spending time with them a priority.

It requires intentionality, that you initiate with them often. It requires words spoken to them, exchanged with them, feelings expressed.

[ 35 : 49 ] It requires that you listen to them, and really listen. it requires that you ask them questions, to get to know things about them. It requires that you seek to understand their needs and their desires, and how can I meet those?

This is the kind of relational work that we must do to have a good, strong, close relationship with another human being, with a son, or a spouse, or a daughter, or a mother, or a father. In the same way, our relationship with God takes some relational work. These same kinds of things. We have to prioritize time spent with him.

We have to be intentional and initiate with him. We have to listen as he speaks to us and respond. We have to speak to him through prayer. We have to express our hearts and feelings opening up to him regularly and often.

These are the things that we do to draw near to God. I just want to leave us with one simple word of encouragement. This is God's invitation to you and to me.

[ 37 : 03 ] James 4, verse 8. It says, draw near to God and he will draw near to you. Do you want this kind of relationship that David has with God in Psalm 63?

Do you want that with Jesus? It's not complicated. draw near to God, to Jesus and he will draw near to you.

He will let you know the depths of his love for you. Your soul will be satisfied in him. His love really is better than life itself so draw near to him.

It's that simple. God's love. Let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you that you have loved us with such an amazing love.

So much that you sent your son Jesus to die for us. So much Jesus that you endured such awful suffering and shame so that we could have the forgiveness of our sins and be restored to relationship with you.

[ 38 : 13 ] We thank you so much for that. And I pray that each one of us here in this room would see new depths of that love. Today and in this week ahead, fill us with this confident faith, this joy, this hope that was David's, and this closeness that he had with you.

We ask this for your name. Amen.