

Psalm 63

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[0:00] Well, good morning. If you would kindly take your Bibles and turn to Psalm 63. Have you ever had times in your life when it felt as though all of life was coming in! crashing in on you and made you feel like your life was completely in shambles?

I'd like you to imagine for a moment that a newborn son of yours lay deathly ill and that you spent a week fasting and praying and begging God for healing and yet that child died.

Then sometime after this you get the news that your beautiful daughter has been raped by her brother and you're really angry about it. But you don't want to do. Then not too long after that you hear the word that your son has just been murdered by his brother. And now that son is out to kill you. What would your reaction be? Lord, what in the world is going on? What did I do wrong in the raising my family and all? And then it hits you. That adultery that you had a few years ago opened the door for bringing these kinds of shambles into your life and that of your family. You realize that this chain reaction begins to sit right there on your doorstep. You're responsible. How would a tsunami of events like that affect you? What would you be thinking? What would you be feeling? Would you be beside yourself? Totally devastated?

Even suicidal? Do you think that you would be able to find comfort, strength, satisfaction in God? Well, I believe that you could because what we're looking at today is a psalm that was written by King David, who had experienced these very things in his life. So if you would and if you can, kindly stand as we read God's word together.

[2:55] Huh? Oh, there we go. A psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah. Read with me, church. Oh 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.

So 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. For you have been my help. And in 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. You may be seated.

[4:33] The background of this psalm is the tragic life or I would say the latter life of King David.

He wrote this psalm while he was fleeing from his son Absalom who was seeking to murder him and take over his kingdom. We see this from the title.

A psalm of David. When he was in the wilderness of Judah. Which could be either he was fleeing from King Saul or from his son Absalom.

But if you look down at the text of verse 11 it makes reference to David being the king. Who will ultimately rejoice in God. Now when David committed adultery with Bathsheba back in 2 Samuel chapter 11.

He opened the door for sin to come in and ravage his family and even the nation. Not only had he committed adultery that would have been bad enough.

[5:40] But when he found out that Bathsheba was pregnant. He called Bathsheba's husband Uriah from the battlefield. It tried to entice him to spend the night with his wife.

Even got him drunk. For two nights that happened. But Uriah loyal to his general Joab. As well as to the men that were out on the field refused to do that.

So David understanding that he isn't going to be able to have this plan work. He came up with plan B. And plan B was to write a note to Joab. Give it to Uriah to carry to Joab.

For Joab to put him in a place of battle that he would die. Ouch. After he died and after his wife went through a period of mourning.

And most feel that it was about 30 days or so in their culture. David took Bathsheba to be his wife. And she bore him a son about 6 or 7 months later.

[6:48] Pretty obvious to the nation what went on. Now as we go on in the scriptures in 2 Samuel 12.

We find that God was very displeased with David. And he sent his prophet Nathan to confront him. And said you are the man. And this man after God's own heart.

Who had been tortured in his soul. For these months up to this point. Because you see that in Psalm 32 and 51. Immediately dropped all defenses. And came clean and confessed.

That he had in fact sinned against God. Now while God spared him. Of the death penalty twice over.

He did in fact declare judgments on him. His family. And even the nation. And almost immediately these judgments began. With the severe sickness and death.

[7:49] Of his son and Bathsheba's. As you move on in the next chapter. The 2 Samuel 13. It tells us after this.

David's oldest son. Ammon. Fell in love. With his sister. Tamar. And in fact raped her. And wanted nothing to do with her.

David was furious. But for whatever reason. Didn't do anything. Well in contrast.

Tamar's brother. Absalom. Seeing that the king was not going to execute judgment. For that terrible rape. Took vengeance upon himself.

And killed his brother. Ammon. During this time. We find that. He had been plotting.

[8:46] And eventually pulled it off. And then fled. To his grandfather's house. Helmai. The king of Gersher. And he stayed there. For three years.

During that time. The Bible says. That David's heart. Longed. For Absalom. So much so. That eventually. Joab.

Finagled. A particular scene. In such that. David agreed. To go ahead. And bring him back.

However. He didn't speak to him.

He didn't do anything with him. For two years. Until finally. It's recorded that Absalom said. It would have been better for me. To never have come back. Embittered.

Over his father's inability. Or lack of interest. To rectify. That broken relationship. You find Absalom beginning. To undermine.

[9:49] The kingdom. Of David. He began to attract. Various leaders. Until finally. They gathered around him. And proclaimed him king. When that happened.

David fled Jerusalem. Not wanting to have. Some kind of massacre. Take place there. And he crossed over the Jordan. And began to flee.

You find also. During the same time. That. Absalom. Comes into the city. He sets up his headquarters.

He begins to. Ravish. David's concubines. That were left behind. He begins to draw. All the men. Of Israel. Into his army. And then sets out.

To go. Capture. And kill his father. David was distraught.

[10:50] He was destitute. If you can picture again. Not just his son. Trying to kill him. He'd been. Hunted down. Many times in his life. But he had all this. Guilt. In many ways.

Hanging over him. Because of his life. And his life choices. And he realized. That all this stuff. Was happening. Largely because. As a consequence. For his choices. And so he was really.

Really really down. In fact. He wasn't even sure. Whether or not. God was on his side. At this point. When he was leaving Jerusalem. And there were those. That were cursing him. And throwing dirt at him. And various things like that. One of his soldiers. Said let me. Lop his head off. And David said no. This. He's. He's doing this. Because God has directed that. And he says. If God. Is pleased. To take note. Of the. Harm. And the. Things that were done. To me now. He can protect me.

[11:48] He'll come back. Alongside me. But right now. This is. This is. Of God's plan. For me. Well. One of the things. That takes place. Is that.

You get to the end. Of 2 Samuel 17. When. Absalom was coming after him. And it says there. It's really. Really neat. It says. There were some men.

That had brought some food. And provision. To David. And his family. And the soldiers. And it says there. Because. The people were hungry.

And weary. And thirsty. In the wilderness. And many scholars believe. That it was at this point. That David.

Began to write this psalm. As he began to take courage. That God had taken notice of him. Again. Well let's begin. With David. Describing his sense.

[12:45] Of devastation. And that's. Oh I'm sorry. I already gave the background. Okay. Verse 1.

He says. Oh God. You are my God. Earnestly. I seek you. My soul thirsts for you. My faint. Flesh faints for you. As in a dry.

And weary land. Where there is no water. We find that. David. I'm sorry.

There we go. David. David was thirsty for God. There was a deep longing and thirst in his soul. He was hurting terribly.

His own son was seeking to kill him. And to make matters worse. He knew that it was largely a consequence for his choices.

[13:45] His sinful choices. And perhaps even his guilty conscience. Which explained why he didn't do anything about his son raping his daughter.

He was like a man dying of thirst. In the desert. And he's thirsting for God. And he's. He's describing his thirst for God. In that which was physical for many of his men.

Secondly. David. Has a deep longing. For God. In his soul. To the point where he's even feeling faint. David's life was falling apart.

He was fleeing for his life as a fugitive. He says there. Oh God. You are my God. Earnestly I seek you.

Some scholars believe that David made himself physically sick. So to speak. Faint for God. That was his intensity. For God. And when I read that.

[14:54] I wonder how many of us. And how often. Find ourselves. Sick. With faintness. Towards God. Because we desire him so much.

The third thing we find from that verse. Is that he was spiritually dry and weary. Says in a dry and weary land. Where there is no water. David looks out over the barren. Desolate.

Dry. Wilderness. There of Judea. And he thinks. That's what my soul is like. I'm here God.

I'm dying. I'm so thirsty. And dry. I'm so thirsty. Have you ever noticed. If you found yourself in a time of.

Desperate trouble. Or devastating seasons. That you kind of feel. Spiritually dry. And empty. Somehow. We just can't feel God's presence.

[16:01] At those times. We may even pray. And we don't. We feel like our prayers. Don't even get above the ceiling. In the midst of all.

That is happening here. In David's life right now. He's devastated. He's lonely. He's longing. For the sense of God's presence. And I hope that.

None of you here today. Have experienced that kind of devastation. In your life. But I suspect that. Many of us. Have experienced. Some kind of trouble.

Or devastation. Whether it's the death of a loved one. A parent. A spouse. A child. Whether it's the breakup of a marriage. Or a household. Whether it's the loss of a job.

Or health. And you realize. That you've just been. Told that you have. Cancer. Or something like that. Maybe you found out. Most of you are.

[16:59] Too young for this. But. For some of us. Folks would gray hair. You find out that your. Your child. Is living in. Terrible sin. Wants nothing to do with God.

Where did I go wrong? And like David. We find ourselves. In a spiritually. Dry and weary land. Devastated.

Longing. For a sense of God's presence. And thankfully. David did find. God. God. And his satisfaction in him. In the midst of his life's wreckage.

We see this. In the next verse. Because. And this is important. Because we as well. Can experience that. We need to.

See how we do that. By. Taking our eyes. Off of our situation. And. Focusing on God. There. There.

[18:07] He says. When I remember you. Upon my bed. And meditate. On you. In the watches of the night. In other words. David.

Made time. He didn't find time. He made time. To focus on God. As opposed to his problems. And difficulties. And I want you to notice.

That David focused on God. When? At night. I don't know about you. But. I have found for myself. And many people I've talked to. That. At night time.

Things seem. Larger. And more awful. They're intensified. If we're dealing with. Say physical pain. Backache. Leg pains.

Whatever the case. They're worse at night. Or if there's emotional problems. Whether it's because I've lost a job. Or there's something else that's going on. It seems more.

[19:02] Vivid at night. Robs us of sleep. But we find here. That David. Rather than succumbing.

To those natural tendencies. At night. Puts that aside. And focuses. On God. He uses those. Wakeful hours. To commune.

With his God. A second thing that we find. Is that he focused on.

As he focused on God. This is where he found. True. Soul. Satisfaction. He says. My soul will be satisfied. As with fat. And rich food.

And my mouth will praise you. With joyful lips. David's drawing a comparison here. Between. How you feel after a wonderfully great. Sumptuous meal.

[20:02] And. What it's like to be in the presence. Of God. Have you ever had an occasion. Where. I know that's probably not true.

For any of us. Really. But. You felt like you were starving. And. You can't eat. Right now. Like maybe. You went over someone's house.

With a bunch of people. And they're going to have a. A time of fellowship. And things like that. And you could smell the food back there. And you haven't eaten all day. And you are really hungry. But everyone's talking.

Having a good time. And you're starving. It's. It's that much more. Exaggerated for you. But finally. They bring the meal out.

And it's magnificent. It's sumptuous. And you partake of it. And you have good fellowship. And everything just seems better now. That's the feeling.

[20:58] In some ways. That David's describing here. In the text. In the text. You'll notice it says there.

That he. Having. Gained that soul satisfaction. He wants to praise God for it. And. That's not too dissimilar. From what we might do.

If. Somebody cooked a wonderful meal. Don't we usually. Praise the cook afterwards. That was really great. Well David wants to praise God. For giving him. That sense of soul satisfaction.

He praised God. And he lifted up. The Lord's name. And in so doing. Interesting enough. It lifted up his spirits. Have you ever come to church.

Really down. In a real funk. And you gather together. With the saints. And the folks up front here. Are leading us. In music praise. To our God.

[21:58] And about our God. And you feel. So much better afterwards. It's good. To praise our God. And when we do.

We will usually feel. A lot better. Because in meditating. On God. And his promises. It gives us perspective. Even as we sang. Some of the songs. Today here.

I began to think. In terms of. Not only. My current situation. But. In light of eternity. And my spirits were lifted. And hopefully.

That was true of you. As well today. But what was it about God. That David focused on. We said. You need to focus on God. Rather than your problems.

What should we focus on. As well. I want to list just a few of them. The first thing is. Focus on what God has done for you.

[22:54] That's in verse two. So I have looked upon you. In the sanctuary. Beholding your power. And your glory. David's remembering. The rich times.

Of fellowship. That he's had. With God. Whether in the sanctuary. Or even. Everyday life. As he was the sweet psalmist. Of Israel. And communed with him.

He enjoyed. Close fellowship. With God. In those early years. He had seen. God's power. And God's glory. Can you think of a time.

When he may have seen that. One of those early years. When he was face to face. With Goliath. Wow. No one could believe it. My friends.

We need to focus on God. And the things he's done for us. We need to remember. The good times. The great times.

[23:52] The blessed times. That God has. Acted in our life. Not the least of which. Really it should be. The most importantly. How we experience his grace. Love and mercy.

When he called us to himself. And made us a child of his. Forgave us of all of our sins. Past, present, and even future. Do you ever think. How often do we think about that?

It can change. Our perspective on things. But then remember. The difficult times. That God has taken you through. As perhaps you. Again. May have lost a job.

You may have lost. Someone in your family. You may have experienced. A really serious sickness. You didn't know what to do.

And you saw God. Carry you through that. Can you remember those things? A second thing.

[24:53] Is. Is spend time. Focusing on his steadfast love. We read there. In verse three and four. 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. David. David. Focused.

On God's. Steadfast. Covenant love with him. God had entered into covenant with him. And was not going to let him go. There may be times.

He would chastise him. But. God was going to be faithful. To his covenant with him. And David said there. That such knowledge. Of that covenant love.

Of God. Was better than life. In fact. David didn't want to live. If he wasn't going to have. That relationship with God. We want to remember.

[25:54] That you and I. Who have put our trust. And faith in Jesus. Have in fact. Entered into. A covenant love with God. He has promised.

Never to leave us. Never to forsake us. And no matter what your experience right now. God is there for you. To build you up. He's at work.

In our situations. That even when we can't sense him. He's promised us in his word. That God causes all things to work together for good.

For those who love him. And are called according to his purpose. That's a promise. From our God. And we need to focus on his steadfast love.

For us. Who's at work for you. No matter how you feel right now. For your good. And I want to focus on God.

[26:53] As your help. We read there. In verse 7. For you. Have been my help. And in the shadow of your wings.

I will sing for joy. I'm going to rejoice. In you. God had. Delivered David. Out of all kinds of dangerous situations. The lion.

The bear. The giant. Then there were times. When the king of Israel. Saul. Was after him. He threw a spear at him. A couple times. He ended up chasing him. Around the countryside.

He in fact. Entrapped him. On a mountain. One time. And just as he was closing in. David escaped. Why? Because Saul. Got called away.

I think God. Had something to do with that. God. Had protected him. And even now. Where Absalom. Was out to kill him. David. Purposed.

[27:48] To get under the wings. Of God. His protective wings. And rejoice. God. So too. We need to focus. On God. As our help.

As well. I like you to think about the times. When he's helped you. Through difficult things. Having a journal.

Can be of great help for that. I admit. I don't have a very good memory. Susan can confirm that. Need to write them down. And if you have a journal.

And you start going back through those things. You say. Oh yeah. I remember that. I remember that. God was offered in my life then. We need to focus on that.

And remember that God. Was our help then. And will be our help now. For whatever we're going through. And then focus on God.

[28:47] As your sustainer. He says. My soul clings to you. Your right hand upholds. Or sustains me. David held on to God.

For dear life. But it was really God. Who was holding on to him. David knew. As perhaps most of us could.

Attest. That our soul is prone to wander. Kind of move away from the God. That we love at times. David was tired.

He was weary. He was ready to. Throw the towel in. Because of the mess he made of his life. But he knew.

His God. Was faithful. And would keep him faithful. Through this. He did. All he could.

[29:41] To hang on to God. But in reality. He knew. Was his God. That was hanging on to him. Even through the difficult times. Even through the times of chastisement.

His God was there for him. We need to focus on our God. As our sustainer. It was God. That upheld him.

Even through the tough times. Even when. Say we trip. Stumble and fall. May we remember. David. And his life. And God didn't let him go. You remember Peter. There are examples in scripture. And we could give more.

If there were time. Of where they fell terribly. And yet God was there for them. So don't give up on yourself. Just because you've gone through something. You say. Oh God will never forgive me on that.

[30:37] That's not so. Focus on God. Who is. Going to uphold you. In your times of devastation. And focus on God.

As your protector. And we see this in verses 9. To 11. David had focused. On God. And the fact that.

God began to show. Favor towards him. At least visibly. As I mentioned earlier. There. When he was fleeing. Jerusalem. He thought God.

Was all done with him. As he continued on. And they found a place. Where they could settle for the night. There were people. That God raised up. To find David. To bring him food.

And provisions. So that he and his people. In that dry. And weary land. Could be refreshed. That was God. Working there.

[31:33] And if you look at that story. You realize. There were other things. That God was doing. To protect David. David was convinced. At that point.

That God was watching over him. And he believed. God would protect him. So as. Absalom comes his way. With an enormous army.

That's going to engage him. In battle the next day. You find David. David declaring in faith. 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. Will exult.

For the mouths of liars. Will be stopped. And friends. That's exactly. What happened. The next day. If you read the text. Absalom. With all the men of Israel.

[32:27] So to speak. Got soundly defeated. By David. And his men. And the interesting thing. Is not. Not only were they defeated. But in 2nd

Samuel.

18. 6. And you might just note that. This gives commentary. To God's protection. For it says there. And the forest. Devoured more people.

That day. Than the sword. Is God watching over us. Oh you bet he is. And in the same way.

We need to focus on God. As our protector. At times. Times of trouble. When we're under spiritual attack. We need to recognize. That Satan. Is our sworn enemy.

And he doesn't rest. He's given over to. If there's anything. That we could say. I don't know if I'd say. Positive about Satan. Is that. He never gives up. He's steadfast.

[33:22] Immovable. Always trying to. Up. End. The things of the Lord. He's persistent. But praise God. We have a God.

Who is able to speak. But the word. And he has done away with. In our lives. We want to remember the fact. That we have.

A great God. A great protector. A refuge. For our souls. And when we do. We're going to develop. That deep.

Inner satisfaction. Of the soul. That David speaks of here. Even in the midst. Of things. Not going so well. Around us. While I could wish.

That we could spare. You. And me. Of times. Of devastation. We need to recognize. That in this world. Each and every one of us.

[34:20] Is going to experience. Those times of trouble. We're not going to get away from it. Maybe it's going to be in the middle of night.

Maybe it's going to be when we least expect it. But it will come. And we're going to find ourselves. Feeling like we're by ourselves. Alone. And that's when we need to remember.

Who God is. And what he has done for us. We need to remember. His steadfast love. The lover of our souls. We need to remember.

That he is our helper. He is our sustainer. He is our protector. He's for us. Some of you may have heard.

Of the missionary. Hudson Taylor. Who was a pioneer. In China. Back in the 1800s. He knew what it was like. To experience devastation.

[35:18] On the field. One time in particular. This occurred right after. The birth of his son. During that time.

His wife had. Contracted. Collier. And she was so. So sick. That she couldn't nurse. Her baby. And one week later.

That baby died. I can think of that. Intellectually. And say that was awful. But I suspect. Many of you.

Who were mothers. Can feel. The devastation. That she must have felt. That their. Newborn son. Had died. Because she could not feed him. Well. Well.

Mrs. Taylor. Was devastated. Not only by. The death of her son. But she all. She having that cholera. Got weaker. And weaker. Such that. Within a few weeks.

[36:14] Hudson Taylor. Was saying goodbye. To not only his son. But also his wife. He was utterly devastated.

I don't know how I would have. Worked through that. I don't know how you would work through that. Because we're not there. But I'll share with you a little bit. What Hudson Taylor.

Wrote. Heart. He wrote to his mother. And said. God. And God only knew. What my dear wife was to me. He knew how. The light of my eyes.

And the joy of my heart. Was in her. And soon after. He became sick. And he was confined. To his room. And sometime later.

He wrote. In his journal. How lonesome. Were the weary hours. Confined to my room. How I miss my dear wife. And the voices of children.

[37:12] Far away in England. Then I understood. Why the Lord had made. The passage so real to me. Whoever drinks. Of the water that I give him. Shall never thirst.

20 times a day. Perhaps. As I felt the heart thirsting. Come back. I cried out to God. Lord. You promised. You promised. That if I would never thirst. And whenever I called.

By day. Or by night. How quickly. He came to my sorrowing heart. My friends.

David. Found soul. Satisfaction. In the midst. Of his devastation. By focusing on God. And his word.

And his promises. Hudson Taylor. Found soul. Satisfaction. In the midst. Of his. Devastation. By focusing. On God.

[38:10] And his word. And his promises. promises. And I believe. That God. Gives us. These examples. So that we. Might know.

That if we choose. To focus on God. And. His word. And his promises. That we. That we also. Might find. True soul. Satisfaction.

In him. So I want to exhort. Myself. As well as you today. To purposely. Decide. Right now. Know. That you're going to. Focus on God.

I don't know where you're at. What kind of problems. Struggles you're having right now. But to set those aside. And focus on God. Read his word. Claim his promises. Praise his name. And begin to see.

How God will work. In and through you. And my desire for you. Is that as you focus on God. And his steadfast love. For you.

[39:07] That he will be. Better. Than life. And you'll experience that. Reality. Within your heart.