

PSALM 63

As you prepare to open this extraordinary section of God's Word ask Him to speak to you and give you "ears that hear."

The title given to this passage places King David "in the desert of Judah" but his actual circumstances aren't told. It's believed David wrote these words quite late in his life, when his son Absalom raised an army against him and he was forced to flee from Jerusalem into the wilderness. In an earlier Psalm 3 study, II Samuel 15-17 told the story. If this prayer is connected with Absalom's treachery, then it is also connected with the painful family history leading up to that event. Scan II Samuel 13; 14:23-33.

1. As a backdrop to this psalm, read II Samuel 15:23-26 and 29-30, a scene from David's flight out of Jerusalem. What do you think David's real question or concern is at this time?

Read Psalm 63 two times. Notice the constant use and interchange of the words *I, my, me* with the words *You, Your*.

2. As we begin observing verse 1 note that opening words are significant and foundational. God has already been speaking to His troubled servant. What is David doing as he makes the statement, "O God, you are my God?"
3. Almost in the same breath David adds *earnestly (or early) will I seek Thee*. Both *earnestly (or early)* and *seek* have the same root, referring to *the breaking of dawn*. They evoke the idea of one watching in darkness for morning light to break through.
 - a. The king takes us deeper as he continues: "my soul _____ for _____, my body _____ for _____, in a _____ and _____ land where there is no _____." ("Body and soul" used together mean the true, entire self, the whole person.)
 - b. Think about the role water plays in our lives. Why do you think David chose this word picture?

We might expect to find David seeking God's deliverance from his foes and trials, as in Psalm 3. And God's constant invitation is "cast all your cares upon Him." But as the king experienced the barren, water-starved desert in both his physical surroundings and his painful circumstances, he discovered an even deeper and more crucial thirst. And this turned out to be God's call to His dear child. His call is *come*: "Come, all you who are thirsty..give ear and come to Me" and, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to Me and drink"(Isaiah 55, John 7). God's invitation is to a constantly growing, deep, intimate communion with Him—it's a call to *life*.

Read Psalm 63:2 where David is reminded where water for his soul is available and found. First of all, he remembers that this is done by *going before God, looking at and seeing Him*—truly learning who He really is.

4. David is doing his seeking of the Lord out in the desert, not in the sanctuary.
What truth is he remembering (Psalm 16:8)?

5. Anywhere you are, God is there, desiring to be known. What are some ways we can look at Him and see Him for ourselves, individually and/or together with others? (Need ideas? See Luke 24:27, Psalm 119:27, Psalm 40:10.)

As we gaze upon our God in these ways we, like David, see His *power* and His *glory* . The word *glory* speaks of the immense weight and fullness of His worthiness, and the complete *shining out, demonstration* and *display* of His holy, eternal qualities.

6. Take some time to look upon your God and catch just a glimpse of His revealed power and glory. As time permits, scan/comment on the following:
Colossians 1:16-17, Psalm 33:5-11

Psalm 145:3-9, 13-20

Isaiah 53:2-6, 11-12

Revelation 3:20

7. From this time of beholding your God, note two insights you most need to remember today.

8. Ultimately, *God has been leading* David to know and count on one final, fundamental truth which the king shares in Psalm 63:3a. Write out what he says.

This Hebrew word *love* (in the NIV) is so rich in meaning, it is translated in many ways: lovingkindness, steadfast or unfailing love, compassion, mercy. This love of God is not in the least affected by what we do. It's infinitely beyond any human love--vast, unwavering, understanding, tender and loyal. And it is based solely upon God's promise and perfect devotion. Not only that, but the One who formed us for Himself knows our constant need to be reminded of His boundless love. He uses every means, even time in the wilderness, to make that love known to our thirsty hearts.

9. a. Remember again David's circumstances. It is out of one of the lowest moments in David's life that this deep understanding arises. As you consider his words, what are your observations?

b. What are some ways (large and small) that the Lord has used to make you aware of His great lovingkindness toward you?

10. Remember verse 1? Now verses 3-5 reveal God's desire; this pictures an ever-deepening walk with Him. Tell what you see here.

As we go on to read verses 6-8, note that different versions divide this passage in different ways. This lesson will follow the NIV choice which has verse 6 beginning a new paragraph with these words: "On my bed I remember you..."

11. In this section we see the king in his desert encampment facing "the watches of the night." What can we find ourselves experiencing at these times of wakefulness in the dark?

12. These are times when we're truly "in the trenches." But David has been building up a treasury, or an arsenal, of deep knowledge of His Lord for these very times. What has God taught this battle-tested warrior to do (verse 6)?
13. a. Verse 7a can be read as both "Because Thou hast been my help.." and "Because you are my help." Meditate for a moment on what those words mean to you. Note your thoughts.
- b. In verses 7b-8, David's response is given to us in beautiful word pictures of God's making. Write them here; underline what you particularly enjoy.

Remember, the enemy wanted to overpower David and drive him from God's call to rule Israel. Now read Psalm 63:9-11.

14. The account we read of the king's retreat from Jerusalem showed David's condition then. But God has brought him a long way! How would you sum up his present conviction from verses 9-11?

As II Samuel tells us, God gave complete victory over Absalom's forces, returning David to the throne. But the more crucial battle was fought and won out there in the desert when, by God's grace, David dared to cry out to His God and once again seek His wonderful face. The fact is that any time we call out to the Lord it is because His love has been pursuing and calling out to us. He loves us and desires relationship with us so much He "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross!" Delight yourself in your beautiful Savior and Lord. *Delight Him* as you confess "Because your love is better than life, my lips shall glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands!"

You did not wait for me to draw near to You, But You clothed Yourself with frail humanity;
You did not wait for me to cry out to You, But You let me hear Your voice calling me.
And I'm forever grateful to You, I'm forever grateful for the Cross;
I'm forever grateful to You: that You came—to seek and save the lost.

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