

Psalm 63 Down, But Not Out

This is another Psalm of David at a time of conflict in his life. Most likely, it was penned down at a time when David was fleeing the uprising in Jerusalem led by Absalom and David's lifelong confident and friend, Ahithophel. David has left Jerusalem, the city of his heart. He is lonely and hurt. One of the greatest spiritual pains one can feel is the pain of betrayal. What Absalom and Ahithophel did to David even hurts me when I think of it. How can your oldest son and your chief counselor betray you? I have never been there, but I almost have.

63:1-2

O God, thou art my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is: 2 To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

David is serious in his relationship with God. David never “played Christian” as many do. The most serious and devoted of the Lord's followers start their day with a meeting with God. I recall how the father of faith, Abraham, arose *early* in the morning to awaken Isaac for the trip to the mountaintop to meet God at the altar. Why did David arise early? It was because he went to bed thirsty. In verse 1, he tells us *my soul thirsteth for thee*. David was an addict. Sunday morning for a couple of hours was not enough for him. He thirsted for the things of God around the clock. He may very well have dreamed of God at night.

David's relationship with God went further than his *soul*. He tells us in verse 1 that his *flesh* longed for God. Somehow, we as Christians have come to a place where we think God only resides somewhere in the deep, darkness of our soul. He is to rest at ease unless we need him, and then, we will call him. We fail to realize it is God's desire to have his way in our body. We so often use the excuse “Well, I know my flesh is not saved, so I have a license to sin occasionally.” God hates every sin that any inhabitant of this universe has ever committed. He hates my sin, and he hates your sin.

This may sound strange, but it is possible for God to take over your flesh. Paul recorded in Romans 6:13 *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.* To yield this body to God is indeed difficult. In addition to your body, he wants your mind: Philippians 2:5 *Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.* The soul is safe, sealed, and secure. The flesh is living and must be crucified daily for Paul wrote in I Corinthians 15:31 *I protest by your rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily.* I once heard Brother Roloff say “a person should dig a 6-foot hole beside their home, jump in it every morning, and stay for a few minutes to remind the flesh of its’ need to die.”

David learned a lot as he grew in his walk with the Lord. Looking back on his life, he must have realized at some time how much the foolishness of his flesh had cost him when he took his neighbor’s wife. Now, at this stage of his life, all that seems to matter in his body, soul, and spirt is the presence of God. David grew into a spiritual giant. He ceased going to bed with the neighbor’s wife.

Just what was this water David thirsted for? Were there no wells where he was in this time of fleeing? He was away from his home. He was away from his horses and chariots. He was away from some of his family. Some of his friends he had left behind. He was away from his throne and his palace. However, these were not the things he longed for. David thirsted for the sanctuary, verse 2, *To see thy power and thy glory, so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.* David was away from the *sanctuary* in Jerusalem. He missed it dearly. Not having it gave him a thirst that could not be satisfied. It was in the sanctuary that David met with God in a special way. He missed the sanctuary so badly that he had a craving, not only in his spiritual being, but in his physical being as well. For sure, he was addicted to the presence of God.

Take a look at II Samuel 15:24-29. In this passage we learn Zadok, the priest, and the Levites grabbed the ark from the sanctuary as they were fleeing Jerusalem with David. I suppose they had good intentions in doing this. They may have said to David “look, King

David, all is not lost. We have brought with us the ark from the sanctuary.” David was not impressed or pleased with this gesture of good intentions. David ordered them to return it to the sanctuary in Jerusalem. David wanted all of God, not just a religious symbol. He wanted more than a cross around his neck. One may say “look God, I have a Bible, and this Bible is all I need or want from you. Look god, I am wearing a cross around my neck.” This must displease God. David wanted *all* of God. He wanted the ark, he wanted the golden candlesticks, and he wanted all that pertained to God, God’s power, and God’s presence.

How many folks in the kingdom of God are satisfied with just a taste, just a token of all that God really has for them? David wanted all God had, not just a token or a portion. He wanted the power and glory of God.

63:3

Because thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise thee.

Most everyone has a desire for kindness. An act of kindness toward someone is vitamins to the soul. There have been times in my life when a stranger has bestowed an act of kindness unto me. This may have happened to you as well. Even an evil person may occasional bestow an act of kindness on someone. I am thankful for God’s kind of kindness. It is unique. It is not given to form friendship. It is not giveng to gain favor. His kindness is *loving* kindness. What he does for his children is done as an act of love. He knows me and you, and he loves us. Loving kindness, says this verse, *is better than life*. God’s kindness is heavenly and difficult for human beings to comprehend. Though I cannot comprehend the precious things God gives me, I am still grateful. I also love his *tender* mercies and the *everlasting* life he gave me. All that God has is special and comes from him out of his love for us.

63:4

Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name.

The word *thus* that begins this verse ties it back to verse 3. Because of God’s *lovingkindness*, David felt compelled to offer to God with

his *hands*. The hands can be lifted in praise toward Heaven. The hands can also be used in labor for the Lord. I can tell from my experience in the Lord's work, it is 90 percent labor. There is much work to be done. There is Gospel to be spread. There is a meeting place to be maintained. There are tracts to print and distribute. Every person has a calling. If you are not busy, please ask God to give you an assignment.

63:5

My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips:

Please pay attention to the progression of verse 4 and verse 5. Verse 4 spoke to us about our *hands*, that is, our work for the Lord. Following our work for him with our hands, we find the *soul* benefits for we see the words *My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness*. Your *soul* can never be fat and satisfied until your hands go to work for God. Surely, all God's children desire to have a vibrant soul. It cannot happen as long as one sits comfortably on the sideline and does not participate with the *hands* in the Lord's work.

Notice the next progression. We started in verse 4 with the work of the *hands*. Then, the *soul* got fat in verse 5. Now, the *mouth* gets involved: *my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips*. I do not understand silent religion. It is not found in the Bible. Over-and-over, the mouth is found praising God in the Scripture. Someone made a statement that they wish they could rejoice. Well, it starts with the *hands*. Then, the *soul* becomes so fat it must spill over. Then, the *mouth* starts to get involved.

Let us pause for a moment to reflect on David's current situation. He is in exile. He is fleeing the opposition. He has left family, friends, his home, his throne, and the sanctuary. How can David rejoice in such a time? Could you or I rejoice under such circumstances?

63:6

When I remember thee upon my bed, and meditate on thee in the night watches

Have you ever gone to bed with God? David went to bed with God. I sometimes go to bed with *troubles of life*. I have gone to bed with *despondency*. I have gone to bed with *discouragement*. I have gone to bed with *frustration*. I have spent a few nights with *quit*. All these make bad bed-buddies.

What wonderful advice these verses give us for curing insomnia. *Night watches* mentioned in verse 6 makes me believe David may have stayed awake all night meditating on the Lord. God is so big and has done so much our thoughts of him are inexhaustible. For sure, if one should lie awake all night in meditation of the Lord, it would not be possible to exhaust our thoughts toward him.

63:7

Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.

The ark lid was called the mercy seat. Perched on the mercy seat were two cherubim. Their wings were spread. The cherubim looked intently downward to the mercy where the shed blood was applied.

Thanks to the shed blood of Calvary, you and I can draw nigh unto God. We can come into his presence. We can place ourselves beneath the outspread wings of the cherubim and be in the very presence of Almighty God. David went into the shadow of God's wings, and so can you and I that are redeemed. Thank you Jesus for your shed blood.

63:8

My soul followeth hard after thee: thy right hand upholdeth me.

I stand amazed at the manner in which folk will follow their favorite sports team. Folk follow, with great zeal, their favorite racecar driver.

If we were to make an in-depth study of the two words *followeth hard*, we would find ourselves back in the book of Ruth. Naomi bade Ruth to remain in Moab with her own people while she departed back to her home in Bethlehem. She would not regard the advice of Naomi. Ruth *followeth hard* Naomi, even declaring that she wanted to go with her to death and be buried with her.

Thank God for his *right hand*. Though I was very young, I can remember my strong father lifting me up and carrying me when I could not navigate the path.

63:9-11

But those that seek my soul, to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth. 10 They shall fall by the sword: they shall be a portion for foxes. 11 But the king shall rejoice in God; every one that sweareth by him shall glory: but the mouth of them that speak lies shall be stopped.

David was not very fond of his enemies. The *lower parts* of the earth refer to Sheol, the Hebrew word for the place of the departed dead. He was likely thinking of his chief enemies: Absalom, Ahithophel, and King Saul. He did not want them captured, but David wanted them dead.

As this Psalm is written, the battle has not yet begun. One may read of the readiness of the battle in II Samuel 18:1-8. We read in verse 8 of this passage that even though the sword was instrumental in slaying some of the enemy, the wood devoured more than the sword: *For the battle was there scattered over the face of all the country: and the wood devoured more people that day than the sword devoured.* This is amazing.

Verse 10 describes how the remains of the fallen may be eaten by the foxes. A wild animal eating a human corpse? This is terrible, but so is the thing done unto David by his enemies. It is inhumane, but David was treated in an inhumane manner by Absalom and Ahithophel. We recall Jezebel was eaten by the dogs in I Kings 21. She died by the wall of Jezreel, the very place where she had Naboth killed. In the final battle Armagedon, fowls of the air will eat the remains of those slain by the sword of the King of Kings, Jesus Christ.

Can we agree that David was not kind to his enemies? I think the enemy he thought the least of was *them that speak lies*, verse 11. Nobody likes a liar, or, at least I know of no one who does. It is just too easy to tell the truth, it makes lying seem vulgar, dirty, disrespectful, offensive, and a lot of other objectionable things.

David's goal is victory as he states in verse 10 *But the king shall rejoice in God*. David is no fool. He knew God had anointed him the day Samuel poured the anointing oil on his head.

Stay with God, and he will stay with you. If you are saved, you are one of God's anointed. There will be disappointments. There will be trials. Family and friends may turn you away, as was the case for David. Rest assured, one day you will rejoice, and sing the song Victory in Jesus.