

THE DESIRE OF A SOUL THAT SEEKS GOD

Take your Bibles and turn once again to Psalm 63; please follow along as I read all 11 verses. I want to again **read** a quote that I read to you a few weeks ago from **F. Wagstaff**: “Let us regard the Bible, not merely as a **fruitful field** where we can quickly thrust in the sickle and **reap upon the surface**, but also as a **rich mine**, in whose **deep recesses lie hidden many a costly gem...**” (Bible Hub, Sermon on Heb 6:1)

Psalm 63 most certainly qualifies as a “rich mine” with “many a costly gem.”

--It is a Psalm that can **bring comfort** when we dwell on such thoughts as found in the beginning of vs 7 “Because thou hast been my help” ...and the end of vs 8 “...thy right hand upholdeth me” ...and vs 9 “But those that seek my soul to destroy it, shall go into the lower parts of the earth.”

--But it is also a Psalm that **brings conviction** because we don’t always **have in us** the hungering and thirsting we see David having in vs 1 ...or David’s faith that says God’s “lovingkindness is better than life” as he states in vs 3 ...or the determination to praise God as David did in verses 3, 4, 5, and 7.

So it is a Psalm that we are **attracted to** because of its comfort—but also **want to avoid** because of the conviction that it brings. We dare not avoid it, though, because this Psalm shows us the **desire of God’s heart**—through David’s heart—**regarding our heart**. God **wants us**—not just David—to seek...and thirst ...and follow hard after Him the way that David did.

Before we get to “mining” some “**new**” gems, I want to review some of what we looked at last week.

BACKGROUND: Many of your Bibles have a title to this Psalm that reads something like: “A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.” Most commentators believe the background for Psalm 63 is when David **fled from Jerusalem** because his son Absalom was leading a rebellion against him. He was forced to leave the comforts of the palace and Jerusalem—as well as the ark of God—and was now in a desert place.

Last week we noted from verse 1 **David’s declaration** – “O God, thou art my God...”

When David declared **to God** that God was **his** God, I believe he was acknowledging two things. First, he was admitting his **need for God**.

David is speaking **to the God** of heaven—not to a golden calf or a piece of stone or wood. He was saying to the **true** God...the **only** God...the maker of heaven and earth and the Judge of all the earth—that he **needed** a Comforter...and a Counselor...and a Friend...and a Father...and a Guide... and a Protector...and a Provider.

That’s not all he was saying, though. To declare that God was **his** God, I believe he was also saying that he was going to **treat** God as God in his life. What do I mean by **treating** God as God? Far too many people think of God as a “genie in a bottle” that they can **get things from**—but who they don’t have to **give anything to** in return.

David’s attitude was not like that! He told God that because God was his, he was going to seek Him (vs 1) ...and praise Him (vs 3) ...and be satisfied in Him (vs 5) ...and meditate upon Him (vs 6).

What about us? Do we look at our relationship with God as only **one-sided**—what we **can get from** Him? Should not we ask ourselves the question found in Ps 116:12 “What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?” What does **God want** from us? The same things David **gave**: affection ...and allegiance... and love...and praise...and service.

Simply put, David **gave himself**—and that is what God **wants us to give!**

And based on God **wanting us**, David **made a decision** that all of us should make. **What** was David’s decision?

To **seek God** early: “...early will I seek thee.” Does that mean **early in the day**? Yes—and all day long!

Ps 55:17 “Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud: and He shall hear my voice.”

Does it mean **early in life**? Yes—and all throughout our lives!

It also means earnestly and diligently—not half-heartedly!

That’s it for last week’s review. The next “gem” we are going to look at—and the only one we are going to look at this morning—is **David’s desire**. What is it that David desired? On one hand, we already know—David desired **God!** And yet, we see in verse 2 he gets more specific: he wanted to see God’s **power** and **glory**, “so as I have seen thee in the sanctuary.”

Before we dig into that, though, I want us to think a little more about... **1. The strength of David’s desire**

How **strongly** did David desire God’s presence? In vs 1, we see that his **soul** thirsted—and his **flesh** longed for. By using both “soul” and “flesh,” I believe it emphasizes David’s **entire being**. In vs 8, we see he “followed hard” after God. It was **not** something he could “take or leave;” it was **not** something he could do without.

It was something he absolutely **had to have**—like water in a dry and thirsty land. Steven Cole in his sermon on this Psalm gave the following illustration:

“A young man ran after Socrates, calling, ‘Socrates, Socrates, can I be your disciple?’ Socrates ignored him and walked out into the water. The man followed him and repeated the question. Socrates turned and without a word grabbed the young man and dunked him under the water and held him down until he knew that he couldn’t take it any longer. The man came up gasping for air. Socrates replied, ‘When you desire the **truth as much as you seek air**, you can be my disciple.’ (Psalm 63: Seeking After God; Bible.org).

That certainly got the point across, didn’t it?

Some of you might be thinking, “Does God really want us to seek Him as much as we **seek air**?” I’ll answer the question with a question. If you are forced at gunpoint to deny Christ—like what happens in **some** countries and could happen in **ours** someday—would you choose Christ...or “air?”

Let’s consider next... **2. The specifics of David’s desire**

We know from vs 2 that David’s thirsting and longing was to see God’s **power** and **glory**, “so as I have seen thee in **the sanctuary**.” Maybe I’m digging a little too deep into the weeds, but there are 2...or 3—different parts to David’s desire. 1) He wanted to see God’s **power**; 2) he wanted to see God’s **glory**; and 3) he wanted to see both God’s power and glory as he had seen God **in the sanctuary**.

The sanctuary, by the way, was a tent used to house the ark of the covenant during David’s reign.

I want to focus first on... **A. The significance of the sanctuary**

Why was David insistent upon seeing God’s power and glory as he had seen Him **in the sanctuary**? Why didn’t he desire to see God as he had seen Him **in the wilderness**?

--After all, David had seen God’s power in the wilderness when as a young man he had killed both a lion and a bear while protecting his father’s sheep.

--And David had seen God’s power in the wilderness when God protected him from King Saul who was chasing him all over the countryside trying to kill him out of jealousy.

--David had also seen God’s power on the battlefield when he killed Goliath with a stone and a sling. Not only that, but David had had a **horrible experience** in connection **with the sanctuary** when first trying to move the ark back to Jerusalem. Remember what happened to Uzzah? God **struck him dead for touching** the ark because Uzzah thought it was going to fall off the cart that the ox was pulling!

So again I ask: “Why did David want to see God as he had **seen Him** in the sanctuary?” On the one hand, we can’t be dogmatic because we aren’t told! But we do know this—the sanctuary was a place set aside for the worship of God. It is a place where God’s presence dwelt “between the cherubim.” And it is the place where there were reminders of God’s power and glory.

B. What David saw in the sanctuary

What did David see in the sanctuary that would remind him of God's power and glory? Four hundred years before this, Moses was given very specific instructions regarding how the tabernacle was to be made ...and the furniture that was to be in it ...and the instruments that were to be used in carrying out the sacrifices.

Were all the instructions given to Moses being carried out by the priests during **David's time**? We don't know, but we do know this—there were two things David would most certainly have seen in the sanctuary. What were they? An altar and the ark of the covenant. Let's think about **how** these two things would have reminded David about the power and glory of God.

i. The altar

What was the altar—and what was it used for? During our invitation time at the conclusion of the service, Art often says, “If you want to come up here to the altar and spend a little time in prayer with the Lord, please do”—or something to that effect. But is this what **David** saw—a **platform** we stand on while leading the service—and a place we can kneel by at the end of the service?

No; **this is obviously not** the altar that David would have seen in the sanctuary!

According to the instructions given to Moses from God in Exodus 27, the altar was sort of like a table that was roughly 7-1/2 feet wide by 7-1/2 feet long and 4-1/2 feet tall. It was made of shittim wood and overlaid with **brass**.

--What was the altar used for? Killing and burning animals as a sacrifice to God!

--**How** would the killing of helpless, innocent animals point to the **power and glory** of God?

The **glory** of God—His **awe-inspiring holiness and majesty**—is demonstrated by the reality that sinful man cannot approach God in his sin. His sin must be forgiven and in order for it to be forgiven, it must be paid for. How? Hebrews 9:22 reminds us that “without shedding of blood is no remission”—meaning forgiveness of sin. And so, in an act of faith, God's people would “transfer” the punishment that they deserved onto an innocent animal by placing their hands on the animal's head. The animal, then—usually a bull, goat, or lamb—would **die** in the person's place.

Next, let's consider ... **ii. The ark of the covenant**

What was the **ark of the covenant**—and what was it used for? We actually talked about this back in May—and I even handed out a picture at that time! Since you all still have the picture—as well as a photographic memory—I won't need to say too much 😊!

On a more serious note, the ark was a “box”—for lack of a better word—that was roughly 4 ft long x 2-1/2 ft wide by x 2-1/2 ft deep. It was made of shittim wood and covered inside and out **with gold**. Inside the ark were the 10 Commandments—given to Moses by God. On top of the ark was a cover—called the mercy seat—on which two angelic beings (made out of gold) “guarded” the mercy seat and ark.

Notice on your outline God's original instructions to Moses found in **Exodus 25:22** “And there **I will meet with thee**, and **I will commune** with thee from above the mercy seat, **from between the two cherubims** which are upon the ark of the testimony, of all things which I will give thee in commandment unto the children of Israel.”

So how would the ark remind David of the power and glory of God? We don't have to wonder because we actually have David talking to God about God's power and glory while in the sanctuary!

Notice on your outline David's words to God after finding out that Solomon—and not David himself—would be the one to build the temple. **II Sam 7:23** “And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to Himself, and to make Him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt, from the nations and their gods?”

What is David referring to? **The exodus**, right? God—through Moses—taking the children of Israel out of the bondage of Egypt and making them His own people. **God's power** was obviously displayed in the 10 plagues—and drowning Pharaoh's army in the Red Sea! And with His power **came glory**! There was a fear of

God—and God’s people—because of what God had done to the most powerful nation in the world at that time!

Again, much more could be said, but in the way of application I want us to consider...

3. Seeking God in our “sanctuary”

If there is one thing we should be convinced of as we study this Psalm, it is this: David **longed for God!** But we should see more than that. We should also see that the **heart of God** is for us to long for God the way Dvd did!

A. The purpose for seeking God

Why should we seek God? How much time do you have, right?

--We should seek God because, like David, we are **wandering in the wilderness**. This world is not our home—we are just passing through. We seek for a city whose builder and maker is God.

--We should seek God because, like David, we are in a **dry and thirsty land**, where no water is. Spiritually speaking, God seems to be absent in a lot of places. Hearts are hard; there is a dryness and barrenness all around us.

--We should seek God because, like David, we **have needs** that only God can meet.

--We should seek God because, like David, we **have enemies**—namely our sin nature and the devil—that are after us.

--We should seek God because only God **can fill the vacuum**—the emptiness—in our lives.

--And we should seek God because **our eternal destiny** counts on it! If we do not seek Him—and find Him—in this life, **we will not have Him** in the next life!

B. The place of seeking God

We don’t have to go to a **particular place**, do we? We don’t have to **come to the church** building each time we want to seek God. We can seek Him **wherever we are**—and whenever we want. That’s not to say that we shouldn’t have a place and time set aside to seek God. Based on Jesus’ words about entering **into the closet**, I believe **we should** have a place.

But if we can’t get to that **special place**, we can still seek Him and meet Him **wherever we are**. And if we miss our **special time**, we can still “show up late,” so to speak. The receptionist will not say, “Sorry, you missed your appointment. You’ll have to come back another time!”

C. The possibility of seeking God

How is it that sinful man can approach a holy God? How can we come into the presence of the one whose name is holy (Is 57:15) and who is of purer eyes than to behold evil? How can we appear before one who “canst not look on iniquity” (Hab 1:13) and who dwells “in the light which no man can approach unto?” (I Tim 6:16). Because of the power and glory of God!

David looked at the ark and the altar—we look at Christ and the cross!

--David was amazed that God called a nation **out of slavery** to be His people.

--We should be more amazed that God calls us **out of sin** to be His sons and daughters!

--David was amazed at the power God demonstrated in His **defeat of Pharaoh**.

--We should be more amazed at the power God demonstrated when He **defeated death** itself!

--David was grateful that He could approach God because a **lamb was sacrificed** for him.

--We should be more grateful because The **Lamb of God**—Jesus Christ—was sacrificed **for us!**

Hebrews 10:4 “For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”

Hebrews 10:12 “But this man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

Hebrews 10:19 “Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,”

Our access—our ability to approach God and enter into His very presence—is because Jesus shed His blood for us!

Lastly, let's consider... D. The privilege of seeking God

Not only is it a **possibility** for us to be in God's presence—it is a **privilege** we should seek. A week or so ago I was sitting in my porch enjoying a cup of coffee while talking to the Lord when I noticed a spider web. It caught my eye for a couple of reasons. One was that it stretched for quite a distance—probably 10 feet from a tree to a gate of our fenced in back yard. Another reason it caught my eye was because it was not straight—there was a very significant bow in it—probably caused by the wind.

And then I had this thought—that spider wasn't very smart to attach a web to a gate that I would be opening. The gate would open, the web would break, and Mr. or Mrs. Spider would have to start their project all over again. And while thinking of this, I remembered there was a verse in Proverbs about a spider.

So...I went into my office and opened up my on-line concordance and found a verse in Proverbs about a spider. I was surprised to see what God said about the spider. I thought of the spider as "dumb"—but God called the spider "**wise**."

Proverbs 30:24-28 "There be four things which are **little upon the earth**, but they are **exceeding wise**: ²⁵ The **ants** are a people not strong, yet they prepare their meat in the summer; ²⁶ The **conies** [badgers] are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks; ²⁷ The **locusts** have no king, yet go they forth all of them by bands; ²⁸ The **spider** taketh hold with her hands, and is in kings' palaces."

Why does God call the spider wise? Because it dwells in the palace—and in the presence of—a king! Is not our privilege—to dwell in the **presence of the King of Kings** and Lord of Lords—much greater than that?

But are we wise enough to take advantage of our privilege? We have access to God because of the blood of Christ. Let's follow the example of David to seek God—and the exhortation of the writer of Hebrews to come boldly to His throne.

Hebrews 4:16 "Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

So what would God have us do in light of His word?

1. David was a seeker of God because he wanted to see God's power and glory. The greatest display of power the world has ever seen was not God taking His people out of Egypt—it was God coming to earth in the form of Jesus, dying for our sin, and conquering death by coming out of the grave. That is a historical fact—but does you no good unless you receive the gift of forgiveness for yourself. Have you come to Christ?

2. What about you, child of God? God is your God—but do you "treat" Him as God? Do you seek Him? That's what He wants—and that is what He deserves!