

Psalm 63

Title: The Thirsting Soul

Author and Date: David

Key Verse: Psalm 63:1

Type: Trust

Outline

- A. The thirsting soul (verses 1-4).
- B. The satisfied soul (verses 5-7).
- C. The dependent soul (verses 8-11).

Notes

Title: “A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.” The setting of this psalm may be when David was “in the wilderness of Judah” during his run from Saul (1 Sam. 24:1), or during his escape from Absalom’s rebellion (2 Sam. 15:13-23).

Summary: Psalm 63 continues the thought found in Psalms 61-62 of confident trust in God. The psalmist has a strong desire and yearning for God in times of trouble and trial (verse 1). He wants to see God’s power and glory (verse 2) and experience his mercy (verse 3). He wants to bless God (verse 4) and be satisfied with God (verse 5). The psalmist remembers God throughout the night (verse 6) because God helps and protects him (verse 7). The psalmist clings to God and is upheld by God (verse 8), but his enemies are destroyed and brought down by God (verses 9-10). The mouth of the psalmist rejoices in God and glorifies God, but the mouth of the liars is stopped (verse 11).

Verse 1: The psalmist seeks God and longs for him with his “soul” and his “flesh”; with his entire being. To “thirst” for God is to have a strong desire for – a yearning for – a right relationship with God (Psa. 42:2; 84:2; Mt. 5:6). The psalmist’s thirst for God was strong like a man desperately looking for water in a parched desert; a “dry and thirsty land” (Psa. 143:6). David may have composed this psalm while “in the wilderness of Judah” (see title).

Verse 2: The “sanctuary” may be at this time the tabernacle in Jerusalem (Psa. 20:2).

Verse 3: God’s mercy is “better than life” because without God’s mercy there would be no life for the psalmist while on the run in the wilderness.

Verse 4: The psalmist will lift up his hands in prayer (Psa. 28:2; 141:2).

Verse 5: “Marrow and fatness” (KJV) refer to a sumptuous and satisfying feast or banquet.

Verse 6: The “night-watches” (KJV) are the four watches or divisions of the night: 6-9 PM, 9-12 PM, 12-3 AM, and 3-6 AM. The psalmist meditated on God all throughout the night when it was quiet.

Verse 7: For “shadow of thy wings” (KJV), see the notes on Psalm 57:1.

Verse 8: Instead of “followeth hard” (KJV, ASV), other versions have “cling” (NIV, ESV, NASV, etc.). The Hebrew word is *dabaq*, meaning to “cling, cleave, or keep close”.

Verses 9-10: The destroyers (the psalmist’s enemies) are destroyed. These verses and the latter part of verse 11 are similar in language to the imprecatory portions of the psalms.

Verse 11: The “king” may be a reference to King David speaking of himself in the third person (Psa. 21:1; 61:6).

Questions

1. What does the psalmist do with God (verse 1)?
2. What does the psalmist want to see (verse 2)?
3. What is better than life (verse 3)?
4. What does the psalmist do to God (verse 4)?
5. What does the psalmist say about his soul and his mouth (verse 5)?
6. When does the psalmist remember God and meditate upon him (verse 6)?
7. What is God to the psalmist (verse 7)?

8. What does God's right hand do to the psalmist (verse 8)?
9. What happens to those who seek the psalmist's soul (verses 9-10)?
10. What does the king do (verse 11)?
11. What happens to those who speak lies (verse 11)?

Applications for Today

1. Our dedication and devotion to God should be strong, determined, and earnest. Our soul should "thirst" for (long for) God (verses 1, 5, and 8). What are we to hunger and thirst after (Mt. 5:6)?
2. God's mercy is better than life (verse 3). What did Paul say was his life (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21)?
3. Make some quiet time in your life to meditate upon God and his word (verse 6). How often do the righteous meditate upon God's word (Josh. 1:8; Psa. 1:2)? What do wicked people meditate upon (Psa. 2:1; 38:12)?
4. When times are bad, you still have a God, you still have a song, and you still have joy (verse 11). What did Paul and Silas do in jail (Acts 16:25)? What did Paul write about when he was in jail (Phil. 4:4)?