

Our Satisfaction and Sustainment are Found in Christ Alone

Psalm 63

Sunday, August 26th, 2018

By Ryan Perry

Psalm 63

*[1] O 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.*

*[2] So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.*

*[3] Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.*

*[4] So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.*

*[5] My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,*

*[6] when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;*

*[7] for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.*

*[8] My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.*

*[9] But those who seek to destroy my life
shall go down into the depths of the earth;*

*[10] they shall be given over to the power of the sword;
they shall be a portion for jackals.*

*[11] But the king shall rejoice in God;
all who swear by him shall exult,
for the mouths of liars will be stopped.*

Pray:

Introduction:

If you were here last week, we explored Psalm 62, and the idea of how we should live and respond in light of the evils and hardships that we face in our lives. We first talked about the need to understand and believe that the world is evil according to Genesis 8:21.

Secondly, we talked about the need to believe that we serve a powerful and gracious God who is for us in Christ and the reality that our God is preparing for us eternal and weighty glory.

Finally, we saw that our response, in light of these truths, should be to rest, trust, and hope in God, through Christ, in the face of evil and tragedy.

I believe that these truths are at the heart of what David was trying to get as in Psalm 62 as he was enduring the attacks of evil men who were trying to overthrow him as king.

But then he writes Psalm 63.

The attacks aren't any less in this Psalm, in fact we now actually know the attacks he was experiencing. This Psalm was written during the period where he fled Jerusalem because Absalom was trying to overthrow him, kill him, and take his place as king (2 Sam. 15-18).

But instead of focusing on his circumstances, David speaks, writes, and sings of truths that go way beyond just merely enduring through trials.

He lays down for us foundational truths that are absolutely essential for us to live and believe if we are going to endure as a Christian.

I would even go so far as to say that if you don't believe these things or are not seeking to have them be a reality in your life, than there is a good chance that you may not be a Christian. **That is how foundational these things are to our life in Christ.**

So I have 3 things that I believe God wants us to see, believe, and live out this morning, and they are all contained within the words of David in Psalm 63.

1. He wants us to see that we must long for and seek after Christ alone (V. 1-2)
2. We must fight to believe that God in Christ satisfies and sustains us alone (V. 3-8)
3. Our response will be a joy-filled proclamation of Christ alone (3-9, 11)

And my hope is that you will leave this morning with a renewed sense and longing for Christ to be your all satisfying and sustaining treasure. That you will want to drink deeply from the well of his word in such a way that your greatest joy, pleasure, and delight would not be in this life, this world, or your circumstances, but in the one who has drawn near to us, and has drawn us near to him through his shed blood.

So with that foundation laid let us look at the precious pearls that God has for us in his word this morning.

1. We must earnestly long for and seek after Christ alone (V. 1-2)

*[1] O 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.*

*[2] So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.*

As I said in the beginning, David at this point is fleeing into the wilderness of Judah from Absalom who is trying to overthrow him as king. We know this is the case because the inscription on the Psalm itself:

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

Now, there are two places in scripture where David spends significant time in the wilderness. One is when Saul is seeking his life and the other is when Absalom is trying to overthrow him so he can become king.

But David, **in verse 11, refers to himself as king**, so we know then that he was fleeing from Absalom. As 2 Samuel 15:23 says:

[23] And all the land wept aloud as all the people passed by, and the king crossed the brook Kidron, and all the people passed on toward the wilderness.

And we also know that David fled Jerusalem quickly, which probably meant that he did not take a lot of food and water with him. As a result, he and those with him, find themselves in a place where they are probably thirsty, hungry, and are weary from the journey. As 2 Samuel 15:14 says:

[14] And the king, and all the people who were with him, arrived weary at the Jordan. And there he refreshed himself.

So when David utters the words:

*[1] O 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.*

He is doing it with a very real understanding of what extreme physical thirst and hunger is like.

Have you ever had that experience? You are working outside in the yard for a couple hours or you're at a sports practice, exercise class, etc... and when you are done you are so thirsty that the first sip of water feels like the best tasting and most refreshing thing you have ever had in your life.

Or you are so hungry that **you become hangry** and you're pretty sure you will fight anyone who tries to get into the refrigerator or food pantry before you. **I'm not sayin' that's happened to me or anything.**

We all know what it is like to be thirsty and hungry, but David was experiencing it in an extreme way as he was walking in this wilderness.

But instead of focusing on his need for food and water, he realizes, in his weakness and weariness, that his greater need was to experience and be refreshed by his God.

For David was a man who knew and had truly experienced communion and fellowship with God. As he writes in verse 2:

*[2] So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.*

And it was David's realization of his intense need for God coupled with his previous experience of his glory and power that becomes the basis of his earnest and intense seeking after God. As he also writes in verse one says: **"...earnestly I seek you."**

In the same way, if you are a Christian this morning you have hopefully not only at times felt that longing for Christ, but you have at times experienced the delight and refreshment of Christ either in prayer, his word, song, worship service, etc...

But isn't it so disheartening how often and quickly our delight in Christ fades, and how easily we can almost become apathetic to the things of God.

Instead our focus becomes finding delight in: Food, drink, sports, kids, significant others, wealth, jobs, leisure, etc... **Have you felt that before? I know I have.**

So why do we so easily turn to lesser things for satisfaction instead of turning to our God?

I believe the answer is that, we don't actually see, feel and believe in our extreme need for him.

We at times become like the Israelites in Jeremiah 2:13 where the prophet writes:

*[13] for my people have committed two evils:
they have forsaken me,
the fountain of living waters,
and hewed out cisterns for themselves,
broken cisterns that can hold no water.*

We fall into the lie that our manmade cisterns of stuff, technology, media, food, vacations, homes, jobs, etc... will satisfy us more than our God who has made us his own through the shed blood of Christ.

We end up drinking from wells that are broken and eventually run dry and can never really satisfy us.

Jesus understood this tendency within us, which is why he said in John 6:35:

[35] "...I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

The crowds were seeking him for physical bread, but many of them were not seeking him as their source of soul nourishment. **In response he points them to their greater hunger and thirst which was a soul longing that could only be satisfied in him.**

But sadly, instead of believing the words of Jesus, many of the crowds deserted him because they didn't see their need of him. They rejected him, as Jeremiah said, *"as the fountain of living water."*

For us today, I don't think many of us are rejecting our intellectual belief in Jesus, but we're not thirsty or hungry for him **because if we are honest we desire physical bread more than we desire Christ.**

As a result, we don't earnestly seek him, we don't run hard after our pursuit of him, and we don't have a robust soul filling and eternally nourishing relationship with Christ.

If this is you this morning I want to identify with you as someone who battles this tendency often in my life, but I also want to call both of us to more.

But it starts with what we believe. This is point 2 this morning.

2. We must fight to believe that God in Christ satisfies and sustains us alone (V. 3-8).

*[3] Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.*

*[4] So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.*

*[5] My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,*

*[6] when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;*

*[7] for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.
[8] My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.*

Now think about who David is and was. Even though he was currently running from Absalom and was weary in the wilderness of Judah, he was a man, who before this, had lived in abundance and security.

He had much gold and silver, he had a palace, a kingdom, servants, an army, and God for the most part had given him victory over all of his enemies. There wasn't much that David could have wanted or needed in a physical sense.

In essence, all the things that we could ever think of wanting in this life David had. And yet, when faced with the physical trials of the wilderness, David's first thought is not for those things.

He doesn't say, **"Oh God I wish I was back in my palace with my money, amazing food, my servants, army, and comfy bed."**

No. He says, God I need you, I long for you, I seek you. **But why is David able to say that? Why does he so intensely feel his need for God?**

Because he wholeheartedly believed verse 3 which says, *[3] Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.*

Or verse 5 which says: *[5] My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,*

And verse 8: *[8] My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.*

He was a man who with his whole heart believed that God's unfailing love, kindness, mercy, grace, really all that God is, was and is better and more satisfying than anything else including his life. It's the same thing that Paul proclaims in Philippians 1:21 when he says:

[21] For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.

Paul is saying, I don't care if I live or die. Why? Because if I live I get to live for Christ and proclaim his kingdom, and if I die I gain because I get to be with Christ.

Either way, the unfailing love of God manifested in and through Christ is by far better than food, drink, entertainment, spouses, kids, etc... **In fact Christ is better than life itself.**

And these bold statements were also grounded in a robust belief that God was powerfully working for them and sustaining them. As David writes ...*your right hand upholds me.*

It is these truths which caused David to long for and seek after God. It is these truths which caused Paul to write in Philippians 3:8

[8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ...

And if you and I are ever going to become people who enjoy the soul satisfying, hunger filling reality of our God and Savior Jesus Christ, if we are ever going to become people who can confidently say to live is Christ, to die is gain, **than we need to be people who believe that our God in and through Christ is the only one who satisfies our every hunger our every need, and is the only one who powerfully sustains our very existence.** (Repeat)

So how do we get there? How do we begin to become people who believe these realities so that our singular longing, craving, delight, satisfaction, would be found in Christ alone? How do we become people who look to Christ alone for our sustainment?

I think David gives us the answer in verses 5-6 of this psalm when he writes:

*[5] My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,
[6] when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;*

See this important connection this morning: David's belief that the unfailing love of God was better and more satisfying than food, life, etc... was fostered and come out of his remembering and meditating on God.

And I would say that the particular thing that the psalms more often than not say should be the source of that meditation is the word of God.

Now, you might be thinking, but I read my Bible all the time and it does nothing for me. But we are not talking about mere reading, but we are talking about deep thinking, beholding and meditating on the truths of who our God is as it is revealed to us in his word.

Now, this doesn't mean that we sit in yoga poses, meditate, and try to find our third eye. No. I love what John Piper says about meditating on God's word when he says:

“What does this meditation involve? The word "meditation" in Hebrew means basically to speak or to mutter. When this is done in the heart it is called musing or meditation. So meditating on the Word of God day and night means to speak to yourself the Word of God day and night and to speak to yourself about it.”

In this way we need to not just read God’s word, but we need to speak the truth of it to ourselves in every situation, we need to pray through it, and ask God to help us believe it.

We need to think about how it actually applies to our daily existence, and we need to put one foot in front of the other and begin to take steps of faith and live our lives as if it is true. **And though this is hard I believe, the ensuing results will be what we see in Psalm 119:15-16.**

*[15] I will meditate on your precepts
and fix my eyes on your ways.*

*[16] I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.*

That meditating and fixing our eyes upon God’s truth will produce a delight in God and his commands that will stick with us. It will be more than a mere passing fancy, but will become a genuine and consistent mark of our lives with Christ.

So this is how we to fight to believe that our God who created and upholds the universe is upholding and sustaining us by his power. And it is also how we fight to believe that our God satisfies our everlasting hunger and thirst through Christ and Christ alone.

Is this easy? No. It’s really hard work that we need to do on a moment by moment basis and we need a lot of help from the Holy Spirit. **It’s hard to remember and apply God’s truths again and again every moment of everyday, right?!**

But I believe two things. One, the pursuit of everlasting joy, even when it is hard is better than continually filling ourselves with the mud pies of this earth that leave us empty...As David said, **“...your steadfast love is better than life.”**

Two that our endurance as a Christian is at stake if we don’t. If we don’t seek to be people that live and believe that we are satisfied in Christ alone than we run the risk of either being a person’s whose work is burned up as Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 3:15:

[15] If anyone's work is burned up, he will suffer loss, though he himself will be saved, but only as through fire.

Or worse, it becomes clear we are the people that Jesus is talking about when he writes in Matthew 7:23:

[23] And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'

So I am calling each one of us to not settle for mud pies, but to pick up the word of God and meditate and speak its truths to ourselves in every situation so that we would become people who believe, crave, long for, trust, and delight in Christ alone.

And when we do this hard work, I believe that we will not only endure as David and Paul did, but it will lead us to a joy-filled kingdom building proclamation of Christ.

3. Our response will be a joy-filled proclamation of Christ alone (V. 3-11)

Listen to David's confident joy-filled and faith-filled responses in this Psalm

Verse 3: *my lips will praise you.*

Verse 4: *So I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands.*

Verse 5: *my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,*

Verse 7: *for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.*

Verse 8: *My soul clings to you;*

Verse 9: *But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth;*

Verse 11: *But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall exult,*

David was a man who believed and was satisfied by God alone, and the overflow of that belief and satisfaction came out in his words and actions. He joyfully and exuberantly praised and proclaimed the truths of who God is, and walked in the confidence that God would take care of him.

If we become men and women who meditate on God and his word, if we earnestly seek after him moment by moment and speak his truths to ourselves daily; then I believe he will make us into a people who are joyfully delighting in him and proclaiming his great name.

Secondly, we will become a people who walk and live with a robust faith that believes that he will take care of us and sustain us in all times and through all circumstances.

The results of which will be a gospel proclamation that will be for the spreading of God's kingdom in our cities and region.

So meditate on God's word. Speak it to yourself daily. Fight to believe that your joy and sustainment are found in Christ alone, and earnestly thirst for and seek after God as your only treasure. And by God's grace and power may God grant us the ability to proclaim and believe the words of Paul when he says:

[8] Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Let's Pray