Are You Thirsty For God? (A Sermon on Psalm 63)

Summary: David, who thirsted for God during his wilderness exile, foreshadowed Jesus Christ by longing to worship God in the midst of his suffering, by expecting protection and rest in the midst of his suffering, and by hoping in God’s glorious judgment and salvation.

   a. Wealth and Power. “God is on everyone’s side—and in the last analysis, he is on the side with plenty of money and large armies.” Jean Anouilh
   b. Labor. “It is only through labor and painful effort, by grim energy and resolute courage, that we move on to better things.” Theodore Roosevelt
   c. Influence. “He who influences the thought of his times influences the times that follow.” Elbert Hubbard
   d. Knowledge. “Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young.” Henry Ford
   e. Fame. “The charm of fame is so great that we like every object to which it is attached, even death.” Blaise Pascal
   f. Getting high. “Better living through chemistry.” Dow Chemical slogan
   g. Love. “My most brilliant achievement was my ability to be able to persuade my wife to marry me.” Winston Churchill
   h. Sex. “Of the delights of this world, man cares most for sexual intercourse. He will go to any length for it—risk fortune, character, reputation, life itself.” Mark Twain
   i. Nothing. “Meaningless! Meaningless! Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.” Ecclesiastes
   j. God. “Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.” St. Augustine

II. Background and Context
   a. Inscription: A Psalm of David, when he was in the Wilderness of Judah.
   b. Possible historical context: David fled from the wrath of King Saul. Saul was trying to kill David, so David and his loyal band of followers became refugees wandering in the wilderness of Judah. See 1 Sam 22:5; 23:14, 24-25; 24:1.
   d. Conclusion: The psalm is written in language that makes its use and application unbound by the specific occasion that prompted David to compose it.

III. How did David satisfy his thirst?
   a. Worship and Longing in the Suffering of Exile (vv. 1-4)
      i. V 1. Imagery: David (in both body and soul) longs for God as a thirsty man desires water in the desert. The righteous earnestly thirst for God. Cf. Ps 143:6; 42:1-2; 78:34-35.
         1. David missed the presence of God and worshiping in the sanctuary.
         2. Application: Attended a Nationals game to see the L.A. Dodgers. On the way to our seats I bumped into a high school baseball teammate
whom I hadn’t seen in 16 years. This got me thinking about yester-
year and put me in a nostalgic mood. In our seats we were surrounded
by a large community of spirited Dodger fans. I was able to, for the
first time since childhood, chant with the crowd “Here we go,
Dodgers, here we go!” The experience was great fun and gave me a
tangible sense of community in a setting that felt like a sort of “home
away from home”. The point is I felt an emotional sadness of not
being able to frequently cheer on my favorite team with likeminded
fans. In an analogous way, David missed worshiping God in his
presence. He thirsted for God in a parched land. Do you miss God
like that? If not, perhaps it is because you don’t view God’s love like
David did.

iii. V 3. David will praise God in the midst of harsh circumstances because God’s
covenant love is better than life.

iv. V 4. Therefore David will bless God as long as he lives by lifting up with
hands to worship in God’s name. Cf. Ps 28:2.

b. Protection and Rest in the Suffering of Exile (vv. 5-8)
   i. Vv 5-6. Imagery: When David thinks about God through the night his soul
will be satisfied as a bountiful meal satiates. Thus he will praise God with
   ii. Vv 7-8. Imagery: David clings to and rests in the help of God as a young bird
finds shelter under its protective mother’s wings. Cf. Ps 17:8
41:12.

c. Hope in God’s Glorious Judgment and Salvation (vv. 9-11)
   i. Vv 9-10. David is confident his enemies will perish by the sword and their
      1. Enemies are those who are hostile to God’s choice of David as king.
      2. Application: Today, this kind of hostility is directed toward Jesus and
his Church. You may not be outwardly hostile, but do you harbor
rebellion in your heart against the Lord and his people? You may not
consider yourself hostile toward God, but are you indifferent to his call
to worship him? Do you miss worshiping God with his people
whenever you miss Sunday worship? Do you turn down opportunities
to socialize or attend special events that will cause you to miss
corporate worship, and then find yourself not missing the opportunity
to worship God, to be in his presence with his people? I know many
of you probably think a vacation from church would be a blessing!
Many of you have entertained thoughts of doing something more fun,
or more needful, or just something different for a change than
worshiping God on your weekend. Recognize your actions and
attitudes for what they are—hostility toward God and his Church.
Repent and turn to the Lord, asking him to give you a supernatural
spiritual thirst for worshiping God and loving his ways. For the
Christian who thirsts for God does not have to muster up the willpower
to quit what he’s doing, to forsake the tyranny of the present, and
make a laborious effort to worship God. No, he delights in God, and
yearns to worship like it’s a cool glass of water in the desert.
ii. V 11. David is confident he will be king, and he and his loyal followers will rejoice in God, when lying mouths are stopped. Cf. 1 Sam 23:17; Ps 21:1; 38:12.

IV. How did Jesus satisfy his thirst? (Ask: What gospel light is shed on the psalm when placed on the lips of Jesus)
   d. Jesus was upheld by the right hand of God in his resurrection. Cf. Mt 22:44; 26:64; Acts 2:25; 5:31; Rom 8:34; Eph 1:20; Heb 10:12-13.
   e. Jesus’ enemies will be judged and given over to death on the last day. Cf. Rom 2:5-11; 1 Thess 5:2-3; Rev 19:11-16.
   f. Jesus, the King of Kings, and all his people shall rejoice and exult in God when he comes in his glory. Cf. Rev 14:7; 17:14; 1 Pet 1:3-9; 4:13; Rev 19:6-9.

V. Conclusion: What are some useless ways we attempt to satisfy our thirst? What is the only true way to satisfy your thirst?
   a. Useless: Pursuit of wealth, power, labor, influence, knowledge, youth, fame, getting high, love, sex
   b. Useless: Abstention from “vices” (do not handle, do not taste, do not touch, do not associate with, do not do)
   c. True: Repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as the Lord and Savior of sinners (even of your sins!), and the diligent use of the means of grace in worship (attention to the read and preached Word, the sacraments, and humble confident prayer)
   d. Only through the power of the Holy Spirit (the living water) which Jesus freely gives to those who come to him, will your thirst for worldly pleasures subside. Only by drinking this living water will you see God’s covenant love as “better than life.” Are you thirsty for God? Cf. Jn 7:37-39.
Verse References

Psalm 42:1-2 As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God. 
2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?

Psalm 27:4 One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the 
house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to 
seek him in his temple.

Psalm 28:2 Hear my cry for mercy as I call to you for help, as I lift up my hands toward 
your Most Holy Place.

Psalm 36:7-8 How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find 
refuge in the shadow of your wings. 8 They feast on the abundance of your house; you 
give them drink from your river of delights.

Psalm 17:8 Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings

Psalm 55:15 Let death take my enemies by surprise; let them go down alive to the 
grave, for evil finds lodging among them.

Romans 2:5-11 But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are 
storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous 
judgment will be revealed. 6 God "will give to each person according to what he has 
done." 7 To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality, 
he will give eternal life. 8 But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and 
follow evil, there will be wrath and anger. 9 There will be trouble and distress for every 
human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile; 10 but glory, honor and 
peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. 11 For God 
does not show favoritism.

Psalm 21:1 O LORD, the king rejoices in your strength. How great is his joy in the 
victories you give!

Psalm 38:12 Those who seek my life lay their snares; those who seek my hurt speak of 
uin and meditate treachery all day long.

John 7:37-39 On the last and greatest day of the Feast [of Tabernacles, which 
celebrated the Lord delivering Israel through the desert and providing water from the 
rock], Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, "If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and 
drink. 38 Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will 
flow from within him." 39 By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him 
were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not 
yet been glorified.
Children’s Sermon

1. **Different drinks.** We all desire different things to drink. Some taste better to us than others. Some satisfy our thirst better than others. But do you ever get thirsty again after drinking your favorite drink?
   a. Bring as props: glass of milk, a soda can, vitamin drink (pond scum)

2. **Birthday parties.** We all look forward to our birthday party for different reasons. Some of you like eating the cake best. Some of you like blowing out the candles and making a wish the best. Some of you like getting gifts the best. Some of you like being a year older the best. But are you ever completely satisfied after your birthday party? Or do you begin looking forward to your next one because it didn’t meet your expectations?
   a. Bring as props: picture of cake with candles, picture of wrapped gift, picture of growing boy.

3. **Worshiping God in Church.** Not everyone looks forward to coming to church. Some people love to worship God and look forward to singing songs with other Christians and learning from the Bible. But some people think church is boring. Some people think God is not wonderful because they can’t see him and so they think God doesn’t love them. Sometimes even those who call themselves Christians can lose sight of how wonderful it is to worship God and be near him. Sometimes we can lose our thirst for God!

4. **Jesus is the remedy for our thirst problem.** Jesus had the Holy Spirit living in him. The Spirit was the “living water” in Jesus that made him thirsty only for worshiping and being with his heavenly Father. The living water that is the Spirit satisfied Jesus’ thirst for God. Jesus promised that to everyone who believes and comes to him, he will give the Holy Spirit to live inside him. And the Spirit in you will be like living water that makes you thirsty only for God, and the Spirit will satisfy that thirst too.
Younger

Older