

How many of you know or like the movie Sound of Music? This was one of my favourite movies when I was growing up. I think I damaged the video because of overuse. It's about a woman named Maria who lives in a convent, and she gets sent to be a nanny to a family with 7 seven children, they don't want her there and make life difficult for her, until a thunderstorm comes. Then one by one all the kids come running into the room when thunder sounds, and she sings them a song to calm their fears. Do you remember the song? Here are the words...

Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens,
bright copper kettles and warm woolen mittens,
brown paper packages tied up with strings,
these are a few of my favorite things.

Cream colored ponies and crisp apple strudels,
door bells and sleigh bells and schnitzel with noodles.
Wild geese that fly with the moon on their wings.
these are a few of my favorite things.

Girls in white dresses with blue satin sashes,
snowflakes that stay on my nose and eyelashes,
silver white winters that melt into springs,
these are a few of my favorite things.

When the dog bites, when the bee stings,
when I'm feeling sad,
I simply remember my favorite things,
and then I don't feel so bad.

Cute song isn't it, She's basically saying, when times are hard, you can make them better by thinking of your favourite things. Though it's interesting to note that she doesn't sing "These are a few of my favourite things" when she's being chased by the Nazis.

Well here in our psalm today, David is being chased, but not by the Nazis,

Psalm 63 shows us how David relates to God when he's in trouble. How can we see that he's in trouble?

Beginning with the heading we see that David is in the Wilderness of Judah. verse 9 shows David speaking of "those who seek to destroy my life." Someone is chasing him in the wilderness to destroy him. It sounds a little bit like the time when King Saul chased David in the wilderness and tried to kill him, doesn't it. But in verse 11, with the mention of 'king' it possibly points to a later time when David is king. In 2 Samuel 15:23 we see a time when David was king,

where his own son Absalom rebelled and tried to overthrow his father's throne. So this is not only a time when David is in the wilderness, but his own son is tracking him down to kill him.

So with this in mind let's go through the psalm and see how David expresses himself?

In verse 1 we see David seeking and thirsting for God.

In verses 2-5 David's soul is satisfied and he Praises God.

David Praises God because of what he knows of God. He's been to the sanctuary of God and has heard God's word.

Verse 2, David has seen God's power and glory.

Verse 3, he knows the God's steadfast love is better than life and praises him not only with his lips, but with his body. He lifts his hands up to God.

In verses 6-8, David remembers God's mighty acts, which again turns into praise and song.

Verse 7 David has experienced God's help in the past. The image of the shadow of your wings shows God's protection on David. David remembers God's mighty acts, and it causes him to sing for Joy.

Verse 8 is a lovely image of how God is continuing to sustain David. David's soul clings to God, Just as a child clings to their parent, so David's soul clings to God. What is of most comfort is God's right hand sustaining, his strong everlasting arms holding him.

Verse 9-11 – God's just judgement causes David and all who swear by God to rejoice.

Here David is remembering God's just judgement. As we saw last week in psalm 58, God will ultimately judge those who are against him and his people. And so David is confident here, that God will destroy all people who are trying to hurt him.

When the dog bites, when the bee stings, when you're feeling sad what do you remember, when things have fallen apart, what is your response?? (Pause) Do you long for your husband or wife, partner? Do you remember the fun times with your family? Do you put your time and effort into your work?

Well here in this psalm, when David is being chased in the wilderness, we see clearly what David's favorite thing is. His favourite thing is God. He is longing for God. His desire is for God. Is this our experience? Is this your experience? Are you able to say with David the words of these psalms? I think we find it hard to know God intimately, we find it hard to have this same desire and longing that David shows in this psalm don't we? We sometimes find it hard to express ourselves to God with the right words, especially when we feel distant from God.

Well I think Psalm 63 provides us with the words that we need in our relationship with God. These words help us to long and desire for God. Let's have look again at how this psalm of David can be our words too.

How does this psalm relate to us?

1. Relationship with God

Did you notice the very first line of the psalm? O God, you are my God! Very strong relational language is used. How many people can you call mine? My husband, my child, my mum. If you speak with this kind of language there generally is a pretty close relationship isn't there? Well that David calls God, my God shows a close relationship. In fact, this language is covenant language. It shows an intimate relationship between David and God. David knows God, and is known by God. This relationship with God, allows David to cry out – O God, you are my God. This is the same voice that we can use to. So the question is, are you in a relationship with God? If you have been baptized or confirmed, then you would have declared your allegiance to Christ and your rejection of all that is evil: the devil and all his works, the empty display and false values of the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh. That's great if you have done this. If you haven't or unsure but wanting to commit yourself to God and be in a relationship with him, I encourage you to speak to Bruce or myself, or any Christian here at church and talk about how you can be in a relationship with God. If you are someone who does know God, this psalm can be your words too.

2. Thirsting for God

David compares his thirst for God with the most basic and strongest instincts of our body = thirst for water. Our body can't go without water for very long. If we go without water for a while, we feel a thirst. I'm sure you have felt thirsty before? The mouth is dry, the body is longing for water. David here is giving us a picture of extreme thirst. Imagine being in a hot, dry, and sunburnt land, and there is absolutely no water to be found, imagine the thirst – just getting thirsty thinking about it! Imagine the thirst, David says, that's how much my soul thirsts for you.

(P) I love this meal. It's called curry mee, and you can only get this particular meal in Penang, Malaysia. I have yet to be able to find one that compares with it. I've tasted this meal and enjoyed it and been satisfied after eating it. Since I've tasted it and know that it satisfies my particular craving for curry mee, I desire it! In a way this is similar to our relationship with God.

David longs and seeks for God, because he knows that God will satisfy him. We see that in our next section, in verses 2-5.

We see in verse 5 that David says that he is fully satisfied as with the richest of foods. Have you ever had a meal in which you started out hungry and you receive all the food that you need, and more than that, all the food that you could want and it's very tasty and you sit back at the end of it, and say 'ah'.

Why does David know he can be satisfied by God? David has seen God's power and glory and he knows of God's steadfast love.

He's seen God's power and glory from the times that he was able to go to the sanctuary, which was where God was present in the ark. So how do we see God's power and Glory?

We can see God's power and glory in the person of Jesus Christ, through his life, death and resurrection. Philippians 2 and 1 Corinthians 1:18 give us a glimpse God's power and glory through Jesus—

1 Corinthians 1:18.

¹⁸ For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

And Philippians 2:6

“Who, being in very nature^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father

Doesn't this show us God's power and glory?

The second way David knows he can be satisfied is because he knows of God's steadfast love, and he even equates it to being better than life. This is very strong language isn't it? Think about what has happened in David's life, we see him remembering in verses 6-8 about the time that God has helped him and upheld him, where David was in the shadow of God's wing. He was fighting bears and lions as a shepherd, when as a boy he was fighting Goliath, God was protecting him when Saul was trying to kill him, and as he remembers his past, he also knows that God will be with him now as Absalom chases him. He has experienced God's love over and over again, and for him it's better than life. How can we see God's steadfast love is better than life?

We can see God's steadfast love in John 3:16 For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. The reason we can say that his love is better than life, is because we know that our life here on earth is temporary. We know life is full of pain and it's full of suffering, because of sin, but we know that God's love is perfect, it's never bad, and it can last for eternity.

As we said at the beginning verse 9-11 shows that David is confident that God will destroy his enemies. This reminds us of last weeks psalm. So how does it affect us? In the book of Revelation, we read that God will come and judge everybody, and that justice will be ultimately done.

The other key idea that David finishes with in the psalm is Praise of God. which coincidentally is also a main theme in Revelation. When David saw God's glory and power, remembered his steadfast love, and looked forward to God's judgement, his response was to Praise God. When we see God's power and glory, and his steadfast love through Jesus resurrection and death on the cross. Our natural response is to praise God.

So having seen all this, can we say with the psalmist that we earnestly seek God? That God fully satisfies us? And that God's steadfast love is better than life? Would we sing that our favourite thing is God. More importantly would we sing that when being chased by Nazis? or When we're in our own time of difficulty. That's the whole point of this Psalm really isn't it? David is desiring God and wants God even in his troubled times, or perhaps it's because of his troubled times. It sounds good doesn't it, I'm sure most of us read this psalm and would agree. We think it's a good thing to desire God. But sometimes it's so hard to do isn't it? I know that in troubled times, although I eventually get to the point of desiring God, I know that I've gone through so many other options first. sometimes my desire shows that I love other things rather than God. In troubled times we can turn to food, or turn to friends or other things. For example, when I was in high school I was sharing with a friend of mine, how whenever I was sad or troubled, I would sit at the piano and sing to feel better. That's good right? I was singing Christian songs and using the gifts that God had given me? My friend asked me the question – Em, what would happen if you no longer had hands that worked, or a voice to sing with, what would happen then? I realized, then that my desire, although it was a good thing, given to me by God, my problem was that I was longing for something created, not the Creator of the universe himself.

I want to finish on this point for two reasons. One is to acknowledge that although we can understand that something the bible tells us is good and true, it can be hard to follow it. We are sinful people and we aren't always obedient and know what is best for us. I want to acknowledge that this is hard, that if you struggle with this, that I also struggle with it, and I'm sure many other Christians also struggle.

But secondly, having said that this is hard, I want to encourage us as to why David could say O God You are my God I earnestly seek you,. David could say he desires God because he has seen God's glory, he remembered God's love for him, and he remembered God's justice would come. It's the same for us, when we find it hard to desire God, we should read God's word,

allow God's Holy Spirit to work in us and look to Jesus, to see God's power and his love there for us, and know ultimately that God will bring Justice to this world.

The greatest longing of a heart that belongs wholly to Jesus is to live in such a way that your favorite thing in all of life is getting to spend time with and getting to know your God. When God is your favorite, He will fill every other pleasure so that the rest of your favorite things come alive with a wholesome freshness and vitality that cannot be apart from Him.

Nothing is better...nothing is greater...nothing can compare. Therefore,

Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise You...O God, you are my God; I shall seek You earnestly!

Amen.