

Psalm 63

David is reflecting on how God is the most-satisfying and essential thing in his life. Everything else fails in comparison. David is comparing his time hiding in the hot and dry desert as a physical comparison to missing God's sweet fellowship.

Our need for water is our greatest need and drive. Being in a place alone, where there is no water is very unpleasant. We miss not having it more and more. Absence makes the heart grow fonder. We may not be in a desert; but we could be in a godless landscape.

Similarly, life seems to be unsustainable without God's presence and fellowship. It seems to be full of pointless pursuits. Once we are truly saved; we are somewhat *ruined for this world*. All of the cheap substitutes no longer satisfy. We can see through them; and they do not offer the same thrill anymore. We are over this world's pursuits; because we know where they lead. We have tasted something sweeter, through the Holy Spirit.

God's word is compared to water. It is essential to life. It is satisfying.

“For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven, And do not return there, But water the earth, And make it bring forth and bud, That it may give seed to the sower And bread to the eater, 11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me [c]void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it. (Isaiah 55:10-11)

And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely. (Revelation 22:17)

Therefore with joy you will draw water From the wells of salvation. (Isaiah 12:3)

Read Psalm 63:1

I have a habit of taking my blessings for granted. A week away from my wife reminds me how fortunate I am. God wants us to long for his fellowship. I normally do not reflect on all of the healthy and functioning things in my life. Sometimes that appreciation has to be cultivated.

David is hiding in the Judean wilderness, called *The Negev*. This is the area east and south of Jerusalem, and west of the Dead Sea. It is a large and empty and uninhabited desert. The word wilderness (*midbar*) refers to an open land. Sometimes the quality of life and our hopes fall lower and lower, and we feel isolated. The desert is a word picture of feeling alone, and feeling run down. The desert is an unwelcoming and wearing place.

David was a man who lived among his people; and his most-cherished pastime was to commune with God. He is now far away from the comforts of home. It can be hard to focus and connect with God and other men when we are out of sorts. It is hard to be yourself, when you are disturbed. How thankful can we be when life is not the way we want it to be? How long can my quiet time linger when I have pressing issues in front of me? Can I find joy and fellowship with God when I am uprooted and in a strange place?

A journey into the desert could bring back fond memories of cold water, the comforts of home and being surrounded by good food, family and friends. David mentions his thirst for God like being completely dehydrated. It is beginning to dominate his thoughts. His drive to restore what he craves is overtaking his thought life. It is weighing heavily on his heart.

What is the purpose in our times of isolation, rejection, and experiencing a lack of joy? We tend to think that life is the best, as we have it all together. We can still feel empty and alone amidst having it all. We may have some compensating activities to ease our mind, covering areas of spiritual deficiencies. Busy schedules and activity can push off having time for personal reflection and intellectual honesty about our condition.

Faith development requires change. It always stagnates; and requires further processing. It is like a wine being poured from vessel to vessel to mature and develop it. The dregs have to settle; and be carefully removed. We should not long for having no more changes in our lives. That road leads to spoilage. We are not on earth to just go to sleep and entertain ourselves.

There are notable men of God who required desert experience to get to the next level of faith. **Abraham** was the first man of God who found his true identity as he traveled across 800 miles of desert. He left his family, industry connections, and comforts of home. He would improve his chances of meeting God more intimately as he removed

himself from the idolatry and family complications that held him back. He knew that the status quo at home was definitely not God's plan for his life. There is no faith involved in keeping life the same. We all tend to gravitate towards *autopilot daily routines*. **John the Baptist** was from a priestly line. He had a career of serving God handed to him on a platter. Unfortunately the priesthood had become corrupt. John also had to break ties with the expectations of man in order to serve God. John went out into the Judean wilderness to commune with God. Like Elijah, John could not find good counsel in the gathering of the public house of worship.

We need to break our expectations and patterns of thought. Both Abraham and John the Baptist were able to reboot their mind, according to God's view of life. Likewise the **Apostle Paul** had to go out into the Arabian desert for three years to get his mind right. Paul had been programmed by his teachers and religion. He had it all wrong. He needed to start all over, from a completely different perspective. Everything that he thought would boost his status with God was only confusing the truth. Paul achieved the maximum status of obedience in the religious world; and that left him as an angry man.

though I also might have confidence in the flesh. If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: 5 circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; 6 concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. 7 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. 8 Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness which is from God by faith; (Philippians 3:4-9)

It is really God who normally orchestrates our seasons of fulfilled plans; and times of chaos.

To everything there is a season, A time for every purpose under heaven: 2 A time [a]to be born, And a time to die; A time to plant, And a time to pluck what is planted; 3 A time to kill, And a time to heal; A time to break down, And a time to build up; 4 A time to weep, And a time to laugh; A time to mourn, And a time to dance; 5 A time to cast away stones, And a time to gather stones; A time to embrace, And a time to refrain from embracing; 6 A

time to gain, And a time to lose; A time to keep, And a time to throw away; 7 A time to tear, And a time to sew; A time to keep silence, And a time to speak; (Ecclesiastes 3:1-7)

Parents who have children that get caught up into cults need to re-program their thinking. We all latch onto this world's images and expectations. That misinformation short-circuits our joy. We find ways to compensate for a wounded or weak spirit. We can find ourselves as prisoners in our own mind. That is a bigger problem than we realize. We do not see our weaknesses for what they are. We get in a rut and stay there. We occasionally need to be derailed. God cuts our chains of bondage; and pushes us out of our unhealthy nests.

In those days *there was* no king in Israel; everyone did *what was* right in his own eyes. (Judges 21:25)

Every way of a man *is* right in his own eyes, But the Lord weighs the hearts. (Proverbs 21:25)

There is a way *that seems* right to a man, But its end *is* the way of death. (Proverbs 14:12)

Most revivals began with one or more believers, with a burden. We should have a burden for our fallen country. The church-goers who will not be raptured are those who have found a way to get comfortable with the state of the world. Those of us who are communing with God, share his heart. Things down here on earth are not ok. Like the times of Noah; our society has untied its moorings to the LORD. They are drifting according to what seems right at the moment. The devil sells the concept of situational ethics. The whole *Woke Movement* is an example of confusion. God has clearly said that the children shall not be punished for their father's sins. We have a broken society. It is not because of a history of salvery. It is that we have left God's unchanging word.

Are we fearfully watching the news? God is in control. Our lives become complicated; and full of intrepidity. That is all the world has to offer. God's kingdom is not like that at all. We should have an eagerness for what God will do next. The more messed up our markets and public health and international relations become; the more we look for God to make things right. The Jews had an annual feast and celebration to break this cycle of materialism and manmade messes.

The Feast of Tabernacles is to be celebrated by going out into the wilderness, and living in a hand-made temporary shack. It is associated with our restoration of hope and joy. It is counter-intuitive to be happy with less. It is a celebration of how God provided daily manna and water and clothing for 2.6 million people in the desert for 40 years. In other words; the more we are set in this life; the more we can lose the concept of simple reliance on God's daily provision. Spiritual life gets smothered by the patterns of our daily natural life.

*“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the Lord. 9
“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways,
And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Isaiah 55:8-9)*

God here is 'El', or the mighty god. The more we have things squared away; the less we are looking to God for provision and entertainment. Is success bad? Is it accurate to say that *living large* is unhealthy and unsustainable? Not really; God can build us up to handle it.

The blessing of the Lord makes one rich, And He adds no sorrow with it. (Proverbs 10:22)

Read Psalm 63:2-5:

We have a stark contrast here between life's lowest points and highest points. Hiding in the desert in complete doubt and uncertainty is now compared to sweet communion with God. We are told that practicing the presence of God is healthy for your soul. David is telling us that the best part of his lie is his connection with God.

For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather [g]be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness. (Psalm 84:10)

How lovely [b]is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts! 2 My soul longs, yes, even faints For the courts of the Lord; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. 3 Even the sparrow has found a home, And the swallow a nest for herself, Where she may lay her young— Even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, My King and my God. 4 Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They will still be praising You. Selah (Psalm 84:1-4)

The closer we get to God, without distraction, the more clearly we see ourselves. Our quest for personal happiness is not the most noble goal we can pursue. God requires

something else for our restoration. Perhaps our repeating anxiety is a sign that we are knocking on the wrong door.

David is looking for water to replenish his weakened soul. David feels the same way about his spiritual life. He feels weak physically and spiritually. Sometimes endless bible study and prayer are not the only medicine. Sometimes God calls us to do something out of character to restore our health. All of our energy is typically spent on survival, and feeling good again. And yet it is a fleeting thing. That is partially because happiness is not obtainable merely by satisfying our desires. Other people are suffering in their own little worlds all around us. God tells us that if we pull them up out of their bed of languishing, it will be a powerful revitalization to us. Helping someone else is better than any medication.

If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your [f]darkness shall be as the noonday. 11 The Lord will guide you continually, And satisfy your soul in drought, And strengthen your bones; You shall be like a watered garden, And like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail. 12 Those from among you Shall build the old waste places; You shall raise up the foundations of many generations; And you shall be called the Repairer of the Breach, The Restorer of [g]Streets to Dwell In. (Isaiah 55:8-12)

Read Psalm 63:6-11: It is humbling to follow God around, looking for protection like a child. That is exactly what is required to have a healthy life in Christ. On one hand, David was a fearless warrior who led from the front. People could study his military record; and focus on his strategies; but they would miss his secret. Deep down he knows where his help comes from. You really cannot know that until you are at risk. David was living in dangerous situations. He actually saw God deliver him over and over. That gets to be pretty humbling. A young man will want greatness; but an older man realizes he is better off with mercy. It is better to be blessed than good...it just takes a long time to accept that.