

Spiritual Desire
The Elements of Praise
Lesson 3 Psalm 63.1-11
060125

Introduction

- 1 This morning we are continuing in our study of Psalm 63 which is a psalm about spiritual thirst, hunger and desire for God. But it's not only a psalm about spiritual desire, it is also a psalm that offers a great deal of insight on how to increase or rekindle our desire for God.
- 2 That is also the theme of our **Summer Week of Prayer** beginning tomorrow morning.
 - a We're going to open up the sanctuary every morning from 6-9am because it is sometimes its helpful to have a place to pray away from your normal routine.
 - We will play soft prayer music and provide **prayer stations** to help guide you through the theme of increasing your desire for God.
 - You can come once or every day. Your can drop in for a few minutes before work or stay for the full three hours.
 - b So that's starts tomorrow and runs through Friday. On Wednesday night we are going to gather to pray *together* in what we call "Prayer in the Round." It's a bit different from other prayer services.
 - Instead of using the stage we center the band in the middle of the room (Student Center) and everybody kind of gathers around like were at a singalong or campfire.
 - We rotate between worship and prayer for about an hour and a half and try not to plan to much and focus more on being open to the Holy Spirit's leading and gifts.
 - We plan to offer child care for infants and a special lesson on prayer for Preschool and Lower Elementary children.
- 3 Again this Psalm offers a great deal of insight on how to increase or rekindle our desire for God.
 - a And that insight is a very valuable thing to possess when you consider that our passion for God throughout the course of our lives seems to ebb and flow like the tides. Sometimes we feel very close to God and at other times not so close.

- b There are many reasons for this phenomenon but most of the time it is caused by, as the writer of Hebrews puts it, either weights or sins.
 - Weights are things that weigh us down and distract us from running our race well.
 - Sin refers to unaddressed unrepented sin. It makes us feel dry and distant from God. And it is so deceptive that we often do not even realize that it is the cause of our feeling distant from God.
- 4 That's what David, the human author of this psalm, discovered about himself.
 - a He wrote it after one of his sons, Absalom, conspired to lead a military coup that forced David to flee the palace in Jerusalem and hide out in the desert. In the process David repents and then writes this psalm.
 - b The background to the psalm is found in 2 Samuel 13-19 and along with this Psalm it shows us how David came to rekindle his desire for God.
- 5 That's what we are trying to learn. How do we do that? Thus far we have gained some insight from the first three verses. Let's read them again.

You, God, are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you, in a dry and parched land where there is no water. ² I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. ³ Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you (Ps 63.1-3).

 - a David realizes his dryness and emptiness and it leads to renewed thirst and hunger for the presence of God. He's not asking for protection, deliverance from his enemies or that he would get his kingdom back. He just asking God for God himself.
 - b As his spiritual hunger is reawakened he starts thinking about times in the past when he used to experience the presence, power, glory of God. As he remembers it he realizes in spite of his unfaithfulness to God, God's faithful love remained.
 - c And as the reality of the faithful love of God came over him like a flood and he concludes that regardless of what happens in his present circumstances, he has all that he needs in the Lord.
 - d So he says to the Lord, *Your love is better than life (therefore) my lips will glorify you (and) I will **praise** you as long as I live (v3-4a).* And **praise** is what the next five verses are about. Directly or indirectly David says he is going to praise God no less than nine times.
 - ⁴ I will **praise you** as long as I live,
 - ^{4b} and in your name I will **lift up my hands**.

- ⁵ I will be fully **satisfied** as with the richest of foods;
^{5b} with **singing lips my mouth will praise you**.
⁶ On my bed I **remember** you;
^{6b} **I think of you** through the watches of the night.
⁷ Because you are my help, **I sing** in the shadow of your wings.
¹¹ The king will **rejoice** in God;
- 6 All these verses are about praising God. Basically they expand on three of the core elements of praise revealed in v2-3. They are **remembering, evaluating, expressing**.
- a We are going to look at these core elements of praise this morning because sometimes you can better understand the whole of something by examining its parts.
 - b I was reminded of that a couple of weeks ago when I was watching the last round of the PGA championship rooting for Scottie Scheffler who won the tournament & happens to be a brother in Christ.
 - c At one point in the broadcast they were showing his swing in slow motion and talking about all the elements of the swing ...
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- ... the setup, takeaway, backswing, turn, downswing, impact, release, and follow-through.**
- e Now nobody thinks of all those elements when they are swinging the club, but knowing them will enhance your game. Likewise, no one thinks of the three elements of praise when they are praising God but knowing them will enhance your praise.
 - f Fortunately there are only three: remembering, evaluating and expressing. They are not the steps of praise. They are the elements or essence of praise. They are what makes praise, praise.

The Elements of Praise

[1] Remembering

*I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory
 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you (Ps 63:2-3)*

- 1 David is remembering his past experiences with God in the Tabernacle and therefore he is thinking about God's attributes ... namely His power, glory

and love. And this is where praise begins. It begins with thinking about **who** the Lord is and **what** He has done for us.

2 As we discovered a couple of weeks ago the word love is translated from the Hebrew word “hesed.”

a Hesed is a very important word in Bible.

- It’s also a very difficult word to translate because it’s a very wide-ranging word that includes the qualities of love, faithfulness, loyalty, compassion, mercy, grace, and kindness.
- That is why it is used to describe God’s nature in the OT and as such is the foundation of the gospel in the NT.

b Generally speaking it means loyal love. It is the love that doesn’t move and doesn’t change under any circumstances even at the cost of everything.

c It is covenant love ... the kind of love that God repeatedly showed the children of Israel throughout the Old Testament beginning with the covenant He made with Abraham.

3 This is may have been what came to David’s mind when he was thinking about hesed. God’s promised Abram ... *“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you ... and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.” (Gen 12:2a,,3b).*

a About ten years later Abraham’s old, Sarah’s barren, they have no heir from which a nation would arise and no land for the nation to dwell in. So Abraham says, God ... what’s up?

b God reassures him of the promise of offspring and land and then gives him a sign. He tells him to get an ox, goat and ram, and cut them in half and arrange the halves to be opposite of one another which Abraham did.

c That evening God caused Abraham to fall into a deep sleep and a smoking fire pot and flaming torch moved around and through the animal halves. So what is going on here?

- God was making a covenant with Abram. In the ancient world one way covenants were ratified when both parties walked a figure eight around the animal halves signifying that the covenant was enforceable by death. In essence they were saying “I promise to do what I am saying now, even if it means I have to die in order to do it.” That’s *hesed*. That’s covenant love or loyal love.

- To keep the covenant from being broken God put Abraham asleep and made the covenant with himself. The smoking firepot represented God the Father and the flaming torch Jesus Christ.
- d Ultimately God did have to die to keep his promise to bless all nations through Abraham. And to die he had to become a man, a man born into the kingly line of David who was called Jesus, the Son of David.
 - And just like King David this Greater Son of David was driven out of Jerusalem ... but not because of his own sin, like David ...but rather for our sin.
 - Unlike David, however, the Son of David was not offered hesed by God. Instead, he hung on the cross and endured the opposite, judgment so that we would could receive the fullness God's hesed.
- 4 So as David is thinking about God's hesed and it has a dramatic impact on him.
 - a First it stabilizes him ... so much so that in essence he says not matter what happens, no matter what the outcome, I have everything in your hesed.
 - b Then he begins to praise God and as he does it heals him. This praise (v4-7) is not only a right response to God's hesed, it is also the means of experiencing God's hesed.
 - c As David praises God for his hesed he is healed. And you see a clue about that at the end of the psalm. *But the king will rejoice in God (Psalm 63:11a).*
- 5 Remember David is fleeing and fearing for his life and is about to lose everything. Along with the **fear**, there's was also a good dose of **regret**.
 - a Six years earlier David's son Amnon sexually assaulted his step sister Tamar. Perhaps, because Amnon was the eldest son and in line for the throne, David did not pursue justice for Tamar. This infuriated her brother, Absalom.
 - b Two years later Absalom assassinated Amnon and fled into exile. Four years went by and he was allowed to return to Israel and two years after that he reconciled with his father David and was welcomed back into the palace.
 - c But the reconciliation was not genuine because for the next four years he plotted against his Father. Still angry with David over his sister he worked tirelessly to win the hearts of the people by undermining his father.

- d By the time he executed his plan he had the loyalty of nearly the whole army, many in government and even David's closest counselor. When David found out it devastated him.
- 6 But if you look at story a bit deeper you will discover that the roots of it go back much farther than Amnon and Tamar. They go back twelve years earlier to another tragic event in David's life, his sin regarding Bathsheba and her husband Uriah.
- a After he repented the prophet Nathan told he was forgiven but there would be consequences.
- Galatians 6:7 says a man reaps what he sows. Sometimes God graciously keeps the seed of sin from becoming the fruit of consequences.
 - But other times the seed is allowed to produce consequences that remind us to steer clear of sin and pursue holiness.
- b So as David is fleeing he was thinking why is this happening to me and how could this happen to me? Why didn't I see it. But in all the questions eventually his mind would have landed on his own failures.
- The seeds he had sown produced bitterness, jealousy and distrust in his own family. Amnon's sin, Tamar's assault, Absalom's revenge and rebellion all grew out of David's failure.
 - He was out in the wilderness & being hunted down largely because of his own sins. He's depressed, nearly suicidal and feeling unworthy to be king.
 - And it's only when you understand that will you understand what this psalm teaches us about praising God and the significance of what David says in verse 11.
- c When he gets to verse 11, he doesn't just say, "I will rejoice in God."
- That is what he says in many other psalms. He says, "This is happening, and that's happening. I'm devastated, but I will rejoice."
 - Here, however, he doesn't say, "I will rejoice in God", he says "**the king** will rejoice in God."
- d Why does he do that here? **Because through his praise for the God of hesed, the hesed of God has flooded his soul and healed him.** When he said the king will rejoice he was reaffirming his calling as the king. In other words he realizes he has failed but God's hesed never fails.
- e God calls us to live a life of repentance, pursue righteousness and become more like Jesus. But he does not call us to be paralyzed by our

past sins. He calls us remember and believe he is the God who abounds in hesed.

*And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, “The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in **hesed** and faithfulness (Ex 34:6).*

- If we are faithless he remains faithful (2 Tim 2:13a). *Therefore*
- He will never leave or forsake us (Heb 13:5) *and*
- Nothing will separate us from his love (Rom 8:39).
- He who began a good work will complete it (Phil 1:6) *because*
- He is able to keep us from stumbling and will present us before his glorious presence without fault and great joy (Jude 24).

[2] Evaluating.

- 1 Once we remember who God is, the next step is to evaluate what that means for our lives. It's not enough to simply list God's attributes; we need to personally appraise their value and implications for us I our lives. That's what David does in (v3).

*I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. ³
Because your love is **better** than life, my lips will glorify you (Ps 63.2-3).*

- a When David uses the word *better* he's moving from naming the attributes to appraising and valuing the attributes of God.
 - b He's not just saying, “You're powerful, glorious, faithful, loving and merciful. He evaluating his situation in the light of God's power, glory, faithfulness, love and mercy.
 - Since you're the God of hesed, why am I afraid?
 - Since you're loving, why do I feel so alone?
 - Since you're merciful, I need not feel condemned.
 - Since your loyal, I will not feel abandoned.
 - Since your all-wise then I can trust you with what your doing in my life.
 - c What he's doing is he's moving from just naming the attributes of hesed to valuing them. He is thinking about why God's hesed is valuable to him and it changes his perspective.
- 2 Illustration: Ladies let's say you have a vase your mother gave you. It's not particularly attractive so you set it on a shelf and forget about.

- a One day your daughter sees it and asks if she can use it in her little Susie Homemaker kitchen in her bedroom. You think sure, somebody should get some enjoyment use out of that thing.
 - b A month later a guest in your home, who's a big fan Antique Roadshow, goes into your daughters bedroom and starts screaming. You finally settle them down and they say, "Do you realize this is a thing is a Chinese Ming Dynasty vase worth millions?"
 - c Now what are you going to do with that vase? I'll tell you one thing Susie Home Maker is never going to see it again. That vase is not staying in your daughter's room anymore. You're going to treat it differently. Why? Because somebody appraised it and you realized it's value and it changed your perspective.
- 3 That is what David did when he says your hesed is **better** than life. He's evaluated and he's realized.
- a He's saying Your hesed is more valuable than anything else. I won't take it for granted. I won't treat it like a toy in my daughter's room.
 - b Your hesed, your faithful love, your mercy and grace, your kindness and goodness are worth more than anything else and therefore *my lips will praise you*.
- 4 Praising is an act of ascribing ultimate value to God. It is seeing what he's worth and living in response to that worth in such a way it encompasses your whole life.
- a Praising God is not just a little inspiration thing. It's not just a little sing-song pick-me-up prelude to the main event of the Sermon. It's not the thing that good Christians do, something they should do or something they need to do so God will bless them.
 - b Praising God is seeing and responding to God's hesed in a way that moves a guy who laden with shame to reasserting his call to serve God as the King of Israel. The king will rejoice in God.

[1] Remembering

[2] Evaluating

[3] Expressing

- 1 True praise cannot remain internal ... it must be expressed outwardly. This expression can take many forms from speaking, singing and shouting to clapping, kneeling and dancing. In one way or another praise must be expressed. David says,

Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you ... and in your name I will lift up my hands.

- 2 The Psalms are the hymnbook of the Bible and through out them you see the constant call to remember God's attributes and evaluate them as the stimulus and motivation for expressively praising God.

Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy. For the Lord Most High is awesome, the great King over all the earth (Psalm 47:1–2)

Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care (Psalm 95:6–7a).

Sing to the Lord a new song, for he has done marvelous things; his right hand and his holy arm have worked salvation for him (Psalm 98:1).

Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp. For the Lord takes delight in his people; he crowns the humble with victory (Psalm 149:3–4).

- 3 Now why is expression so important? Let me explain. Last week I mentioned that being a Christian is not just about knowing and believing God's Word but also hungering and thirsting after God which leads to beholding and experiencing God. As the Psalmist said, *Taste and see that the Lord is good (Ps 34:8a).*

- 4 One of the ways in which you know you are not only learning and knowing God but also experiencing the beauty of God is that you will praise him.

Why?

- a When we delight in something, when we find it beautiful, we praise it ... whether that is a piece of art, a sunset, a song, a great movie or fine food, your child's first recital or one hundred other things.

- b And the reason we do is because you really can't fully enjoy something until you *verbally* praise it. Praise is the completion of your joy in whatever you are praising. That's why when you experience something praiseworthy you say something.

- Fine food – mmm that's excellent! I can't believe food tastes that good.
- First time powder skiing – woohoo all the way down the mountain.
- Beautiful sunset – Wow, look at that, that's stunning.

- c The expression is the completion of your joy in whatever you are experiencing. You have to express it, then you have to go tell someone else about it or better yet get someone to experience it with you.
- 5 So if you are actually experiencing Jesus Christ, who's beauty eclipses all else, it would be impossible for you not to express praise.
 - a You say I'm not in to all the praising stuff. Then you've never tasted the goodness of his hesed, the joy of his presence or the honey of his Word. It would be like eating the finest tasting food you've ever had and saying nothing.
 - b You say I grew up in a family that didn't express love or give praise so that's kind of who I am. No, that's not who you are. Romans 8 says you're a child of God who calls out Abba Father in praise.
- 6 Look, if you struggle with expressing worship to God, singing praises, lifting your hands in praise or bowing before him in worship it's not because of who you are. It is because there is something keeping you from being who you are.
 - a It might be tradition, pride, guilt, sin or Satan ... but it's not who you are. You're a worshipper of God.
You are a (part of a)chosen people, a royal priesthood ... God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light (1 Peter 2:9)
 - b It doesn't matter if you're an extrovert or an introvert every one who tastes the hesed of God praises God
- 7 As we engage in these elements of praise - remembering, evaluating, and expressing - something remarkable happens: we find deep satisfaction in God.

[4] Satisfaction

*I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. ⁵ I will be **fully satisfied** as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you (Psalm 63:4–5).*

- 1 Just like a food lover experiences satisfaction as he praises the richest of foods (mmm that's good), a worshipper of God experiences a supernatural satisfaction when he praises the richness of God's hesed.
- 2 Have you every noticed that there is something very satisfying to the soul when you begin to tell another person why you appreciate or love them. Let me illustrate this.

- a Guys, if you say to your fiancé or wife I love you, most often they will answer back, I love you too. But what if they answered why ... why do you love me?
 - b After you wipe that startled expression off your face what do you say? (There are websites that are actually dedicated to providing that answer.)
 - c You say I love you because of your qualities and character. She asks what qualities? She knows them but she wants to hear them. And as you list them what happens? You start experience closeness.
- 3 Just as describing why we love someone draws us closer to them, articulating our love and appreciation for God's hesed draws us closer to him. You don't just say I love you Lord but I love you Lord because of
- Your mercy rescued me from a pit of guilt.
 - Your grace saved me from a life of not knowing your love.
 - Your kindness draws me into your presence.
 - Your faithfulness always is working for my good.
 - Your loyalty that makes me feel safe even if all others forsake me.
- d As you do that what happens. You start to experience the closeness of his presence and as you do you begin to feel as if you needed nothing else. There is a divine satisfaction that settles over you.
- 3 But there is more. This satisfaction is multiplied when we praise God with others. Each person's unique perspective of God's hesed adds to and magnifies the praise, creating an experience of God's presence that we couldn't experience alone.
- 4 Let me close with one more illustration. My dad's 90 birthday is coming up and it reminded me of his 89th.
- a We went around the dinner table each one of us sharing what we appreciated about Dad the most. Now he knows we appreciate him and he was a little reluctant to listen to us share. But graciously, he did.
 - b So each one of us shared the qualities and characteristics we appreciated about him according to our own unique perspective.
 - c As we did each perspective not only added to our praise of Dad, it magnified & multiplied the praise. If each one of us would have done that alone with him it wouldn't have been nearly as powerful.
 - d My dad was blessed with the praise but we were even more blessed with the satisfaction it gave us.
- 5 That's what happens when we gather to praise and worship God. Basically we're all gathering around the table and singing his praises.

- a And as we praise him, each from our unique perspective, we together experience satisfaction in God that we could not experience alone.
- b And unless you're physically unable that's why should never be satisfied with watching worship online. You miss the satisfaction that comes when our worship is multiplied and we experience the presence of God that comes when we worship together.
- c That satisfaction is the end goal of worship.
 - As the theologian John Piper famously said, God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.
 - God is most glorified in us when we sing from our hearts ***your love is better than life.***

Small Group Discussion Questions

- 1 Share a time when you felt particularly close to God. What led to that experience?
- 2 The sermon mentions that our passion for God can ebb and flow. What factors contribute to feeling distant from God in your experience?
- 3 David remembers God's attributes (power, glory, love) as he praises. What attributes of God do you find yourself most drawn to when you worship? impact your view of His faithfulness, especially during difficult times?
- 4 The sermon states, "Praise is the completion of your joy in whatever you are praising." How have you found this to be true in your life, both with God and in other areas?
- 5 Discuss the statement: "God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him." What does this mean to you practically?
- 6 What are some barriers that might prevent people from expressing praise openly? How can we overcome these?