

Psalms 63

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[0 : 00] We're doing a series, probably about 10 weeks, on the I wills of the psalm. I've stolen lots of the material from this man, a man called P.B. Power, in this funny book that he wrote.

And he goes through the psalms and he talks about the resolutions, the 10 Christian resolutions. And so we've looked at I will trust, and we've looked at I will call, and then here's the third resolution.

Look at verse 1. Oh God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you, I will seek you. Just look at the inscription of the psalm.

It's a psalm of David, that's who wrote it, King David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah. And he says this, Oh God, you are my God, earnestly I will seek you. My soul thirsts for you, my flesh faints for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

And in lots of ways, that's the story of the Bible. When God created human beings, they were created and they were placed in a garden, weren't they?

[1 : 03] A lush garden. But man's rebellion meant that they were thrown out of the garden and they were put into a wilderness, into a desert of sin and misery.

And yet, we know that God's grace breaks in and it makes that desert bloom. And at the end of time, God will restore.

And so you have this picture of a city that's like a garden in the book of Revelation. And so as children of God, we know, those who've trusted in the Lord Jesus, we know times of surpassing beauty, of tranquil pleasure, of the joys of the garden.

But there are times when it's not like that, isn't there? There are times when drought steps in and the fruit is withered and hard and we feel like we're in a dry and weary land.

Matthew Henry wrote this, he was a commentator on the Bible, and he said, That reality breaks in to Psalm 169.

[2 : 28] Even in Judah, that word thirsty can be translated as faint and weary and exhausted.

So just notice, here is David's condition. And David's condition spiritually matches his surroundings. Can you see that? He's in the wilderness. He's in the desert.

And spiritually, he feels like he's in the desert. And we are often mirrors of our circumstances. I think at the moment, that's very much what we feel, isn't it? Spiritually, we are mirroring what our circumstances feel in terms of our experiences.

And according to David, his whole being was being affected. His whole body was faint and was longing. His soul was thirsting. He felt trapped.

And human beings are a unity of material and immaterial body. And so there's not different aspects of life. And so what happens to our bodies affects our souls.

[3 : 30] And what happens to our souls affects our bodies. And so it's no wonder so many of us at the moment are feeling great struggle and great pressure. In fact, if it was not the case, I think there would probably be something wrong.

And so here's the man of God. And he feels the effects of his circumstances, which are very difficult. And he knows that there is no help within himself. He is thirsty.

And so within himself, that's the condition. And to this thirst, he doesn't have the answer. He doesn't have the answer within himself. There's no help from his surroundings.

The place where he is, there's no water. And so we can bring that physical circumstance and we can bring it into a spiritual reality. And so the dynamic for the world in which we live and everyone in the world is there is a world of thirsty people.

And they've been told, haven't they, you can find relief in yourself. Or you can find relief in someone or somewhere or something in the world.

[4 : 37] And so people seek all sorts of things. People seek a perfect physique. People are self-seeking. You know what it is, isn't it? You get a group photograph and who's the photo that you look for first.

It's always yourself, isn't it? We live in a culture that is striving, seeking, earnestly searching for something. Jesus says, what does it profit a man if he gains the whole of the world and yet loses his own soul?

And so David's experience is really an accurate portrayal of men and women in our world. There is no water. There's no satisfaction. Nothing that lasts. Nothing that satisfies.

But in that desert experience, David voices, doesn't he, a resolution, a determination. He says, oh God, you are my God and earnestly I will seek you. That's his determination.

I will seek. I will seek God. And this in times of drought or desert circumstances or feeling like we're in the wilderness, well, it must be our determination.

[5 : 46] There's two points. First of all, the relationship that must be established and the fellowship must be cultivated. In other words, the way in is the way on.

That's what we're going to find out in the Christian life. So first of all, a relationship must be established. Look what he says. He says, oh God, you are my God. You are my God.

Now there is a sense in which God is everyone's God. I think we need to say that. There's no escaping him. He is the one true and living God. Human beings make idols, but ultimately everyone is accountable to the God of the Bible.

And so sometimes people say when they're seeking to speak to others about the gospel, would you like a relationship with God? I don't think that's a very good question because you have a relationship with God this morning.

There's no neutrality. God is the creator. He's the lawgiver, the king and the judge of all mankind. So no matter who you are and what your views are this morning, you have a relationship with him.

[6 : 58] The question is what kind of relationship is it? And so any person might be reconciled to God. Brought together with God or they might be unreconciled to God.

That is apart from God. But both are real relationships. One there's been a restored relationship. One there's problems in the relationship. But when David speaks, he speaks of God as my God. He has a reconciled relationship. He's not at war with God, but he is able to call the God of heaven and earth in a personal term, isn't he?

He refers to God as loving and intimate and personal and blessed. He says, In the movie Emma, some of the things you watch for your wife's sake, but the character of Emma in that film, she says of Mr. Knightley in his proposal of marriage, she says to Mr. Knightley on his proposal of marriage, I shall no longer call you Mr. Knightley.

I shall now call you my Mr. Knightley. And so, do you see what's happened there? The covenant bonds of marriage have produced a personal pronoun. She's now able to call him my Mr. Knightley.

[8 : 19] And so, before any other issue should be considered, a person should ask themselves, you should ask yourself this lunchtime, whether you can say of God, You are my God. We need to see what God says about how a person may come into a relationship with him.

In 2 Corinthians 5 verse 18, Paul says, God who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, that is, in Christ, in the Lord Jesus, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespass against them.

It is only through faith and trusting in Jesus that the God of the universe can be called my God. Without being joined to the Lord Jesus by faith, we have no grounds for being able to say that that God is my God.

So Paul, when he speaks of what it means to not know God, he says, At that time you were without Jesus Christ, and you were without hope and without God. Do you see how clear it is?

That if you don't have the Son of God, you don't have life. You can't say my God. Jesus says, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. No one can call God, the Lord God of heaven and earth, my God and my Father, except through Jesus and his work.

[9 : 45] But through Jesus, and in Christ Jesus, you this afternoon may call God, my God. Martin Luther, the German reformer, used to say that the whole Christian faith was bound up in personal pronouns.

So Paul in Galatians chapter 2 said, I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. And here the psalmist is echoing that personal relationship.

Oh Lord, you are my God. The man or woman who knows Jesus Christ never speaks of God in an abstract or an impersonal way.

The almighty that sometimes people say. The man upstairs, that's a sure sign you don't know God. But he cries or she cries out in prayer. Oh God, you are my God. So a relationship must be established.

But the Christian life isn't over and done with when somebody becomes a Christian. So secondly, fellowship must be cultivated. So just look what it says. Oh God, you are my God.

[10:51] Earnestly I will seek you. That's the language of relationship. But the whole of the Christian life is to be a seeking after God. This is the resolution. Earnestly I seek you.

So why does David need to make such a resolution? Is it that God delights to play hide and seek and hide himself away from us? Is that what's going on? Does our heavenly father deliberately distance himself from his children?

No, we know it's the other way around, don't we? And so we know, don't we, that our sin separates us. It still leads us away from God. And so the Christian needs to deliberately orientate their lives towards God.

Deliberately to set themselves to seek him. And the seeking here is intense, isn't it? It's not half-hearted. It's not listless. It's not complacent. There's a real desire for God.

So the verb is in an intensive form. The King James Version, instead of earnestly, it says early I will seek you. And so the picture is there of, you know what it's like when you've got a flight, and I remember when you could get a flight, or you were going somewhere, and you had to get up really early in the morning, and you were excited about getting up early in the morning, and you woke up before the alarm, because you were eager, weren't you?

[12:12] Eagerly I will seek you. You're up before the alarm clock. You're up and at it. And there's that sense of early and earnestly, and passionately motivated seeking.

Let me read you these promises. Proverbs 8, verse 17, God says, I love those who love me, and those who seek me diligently find me. Isaiah 26, 9 says, My soul yearns for you in the night.

My spirit within me earnestly seeks you. A.W. Tozer has got a chapter in a book, and the chapter is called Following Hard After God.

And he says something I think that's maybe missing from contemporary Christianity. He says, He says, He says, I want to deliberately encourage this mighty longing after God.

The lack of it has brought us to our low current estate. The stiff and wooden quality of our religious lives as a result. It is in him, knowing him, and growing in him, that our souls find relief for the thirsting of our hearts.

[13:37] And that's why the Psalms are so helpful. Because they picture the Christian life as a life of longing. And I think we've probably lost that of yearning.

Isaiah 41 says, I will open rivers in desolate heights, God says, and fountains in the midst of the valleys. I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and a dry land springs of water.

And so do you see what God promises you? Is God gives us this promise of being able to quench our thirst. The thirst of a human heart.

And that takes us to the cross, doesn't it? Because do you remember on the cross, the Lord Jesus, he cried out seven sayings. He bears our sin, and he takes our shame, and he cries out.

Do you remember what he cries out? He cries out, I thirst. I thirst. And that wasn't only a physical thirst that he was experiencing.

[14:40] It was that as well. But it was the experience of alienation from the living God. The human soul becomes dry and parched, and thirsty. And so Christ, on the cross, is being made sin for us, and becoming sin for us.

And his soul becomes dry, and parched, and thirsty. And so he cries out, I thirst. The very Christ who is the rock from whom the people in the wilderness received water from.

The Jesus who said in John's Gospel, whoever drinks of this water will never thirst again. Whoever drinks of the water that I give him will never thirst. The same Jesus who stood up on the last day of the great feast, and said with a loud voice, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

He who believes in me, as the scriptures say, out from them will flow rivers of living water. And that same Jesus on the cross says, I thirst. And he says, I thirst so that you might never thirst.

Jesus alienated from the God that he sought all of his days. So that we could be found of God. And find God in seeking him.

[15:57] So how do we seek God? I'll give you a few things. How do we seek God? We seek God in his word, the Bible that you hold on your laps.

Psalms 119, verse 18, My soul faints for your salvation, but I hope in your word. And so every time we open our Bible, we are desiring to seek God in every word, to seek him in his word, to seek the God who wrote this book.

It's Jesus whom the Bible speaks. And we also seek God in public worship. So if you look at verse 2. So I've looked upon you in the sanctuary, in the gathering of God's people, beholding your power and glory.

We seek God in public worship. When we sing, when we pray, when we come to hear God's word, we are seeking to encourage one another, but it is a means of seeking him. We seek God in the sacraments.

We taste thee, O living bread, and long to feast upon thee still. We drink of thee, the fountainhead, and thirst our souls from thee to fill.

[17:13] We seek God in his word, in public worship, in the sacraments, and we seek God in prayer. Look at verse 6. When I remember you upon my bed, and meditate upon you in the watches of the night.

And so we finish off this morning. We take no credit. It's not that we are great seekers.

But we also don't despair. We don't despair of our reluctance, and our non-seeking. We've this great truth from the Bible, don't we, that we pursue God, only because he has pursued us. We seek after God, only because he has put that urge within us, that spurs us on in the pursuit.

Before you ever sought God, he sought you. And if he sets our heart to seeking him, he will uphold us, and he will perfect us in that seeking.

And we will find him. If you seek me with your whole heart, you will find me, he says. O God, you are my God.

[18:25] 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.

Let's pray.