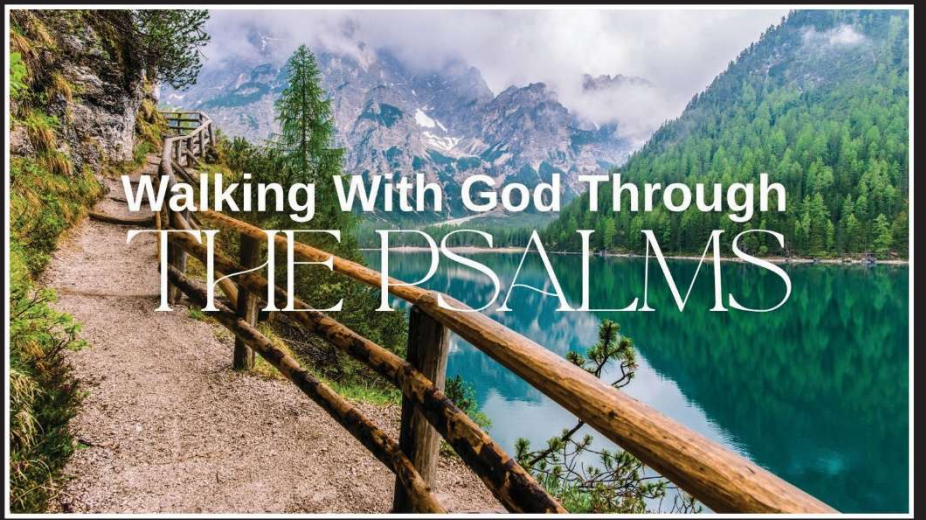




Midweek Study

Dr. Josh Franklin • Senior Pastor



The Soul's Pursuit

Psalm 63:1-11

Psalm 63 is written by King David during one of the most painful seasons of his life. The superscription tells us it was composed "when he was in the wilderness of Judah." Because verse 11 refers to David as "the king," most scholars believe this psalm was written not during his earlier flight from Saul, but during the rebellion of his own son Absalom, recorded in 2 Samuel 15-19. Absalom had spent four years sitting at the city gate, flattering every Israelite who came with a complaint, slowly stealing the hearts of the nation. As Absalom was ready to dethrone his father, David was told, **"The hearts of the men of Israel are with Absalom"** (2 Sam. 15:13). Rather than fight (and probably lose), David chose to flee. David left behind his throne, his city, and the tabernacle where he had worshiped God his entire life. In Psalm 63,

David gives us **three glimpses** into a soul that is passionately pursuing God.

I. The Soul's **Thirst** (63:1-5) – What I long for in the present

"O God, You are my God; Early will I seek You; My soul thirsts for You; My flesh longs for You In a dry and thirsty land Where there is no water. So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, To see Your power and Your glory. Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness, And my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips." (63:1-5, NKJV)

*James Montgomery Boice: "There are three types of people in any Christian gathering. There are those who are Christians in name only. They seem to be following after God and Jesus Christ and say they are, but theirs is a false following, like that of the five foolish virgins who did not truly know the Lord and were rejected by him. The second class are those who are following Jesus but are following 'at a distance,' like Peter at the time of Jesus' arrest. The third type are those who, as Murdoch Campbell suggests, 'in storm and sunshine, cleave to him and enjoy daily communion with him.' These people want God, and they want him intensely, because they know that he and he alone will satisfy the deep longing of their souls. David was a person who desired God above everything else, and Psalm 63 is a classic expression of this longing."*¹

¹ James Montgomery Boice, *Psalms 42-106: An Expositional Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 2005), 516.

John Phillips writes, "What David missed most of all was God's house. It was not his own palace he mourned, nor his own throne, nor family and friends left behind, but God's house. He missed the place of prayer, the sanctuary of God, the place where the people of God came together in public worship. That is what he missed—and it tells us much about the makeup of the man. If we were driven into exile, what would we miss most? Our home and furniture, our car, our comforts? Or would we miss most the house of God"?²

II. The Soul's **Thanksgiving** (63:6–8) – What I reflect on about the past

"When I remember You on my bed, I meditate on You in the night watches. Because You have been my help, Therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows close behind You; Your right hand upholds me." (63:6-8, NKJV)

III. The Soul's **Trust** (63:9–11) – What I anticipate about the future

"But those who seek my life, to destroy it, Shall go into the lower parts of the earth. They shall fall by the sword; They shall be a portion for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; Everyone who swears by Him shall glory; But the mouth of those who speak lies shall be stopped." (63:9-11, NKJV)

APPLICATIONS FOR TODAY

- 1) **Seek God First, Not Last.** God should not be our last resort. He should be our first response. "Early will I seek You." David's word "early" is not just about the time of day. It is about priority.
- 2) **Let the Desert Deepen Your Desire for God.** "Absence makes the heart grow fonder" can also apply to our spiritual hunger for God while we are in a dry season. Do you feel far from God? Use it as motivation to grow closer to God. Don't stay content.
- 3) **Retrace The Faithfulness of God.** Allow your worship to include moments of remembering God's acts of faithfulness. Has God opened doors for you? Answered prayers for you? Carried you through certain crises or struggles? Remember and worship.
- 4) **Entrust Other People to God.** If people have lied about you, misrepresented you, gossiped about you, or sought to harm you in some way, do what David did. He did not take vengeance into his own hands. He entrusted them to the Lord. Trust Him to take care of things outside of your control and stay close to Him.

² John Phillips, *Exploring Psalms 1–88: An Expository Commentary*, (Kregel Publications; WORDsearch Corp., 2009), Ps 63:1–3.