

Study 2 Psalm 63

Intro Question:

Either: If you were to ask different people what they thought the point of life was, what kinds of answers would you get? What different answers might you have given at different times in your life?

Or: Share a time when you used something for the wrong purpose.

Context

Psalm 63 is entitled 'A Psalm of David. When he was in the desert of Judah.' This probably refers to the time when David, as king, is forced to flee from Jerusalem because his son, Absalom is leading a coup (2 Samuel 15).

Read through the whole Psalm. What is your first impression of the situation that David finds himself in? What words would you use to describe it?

And how would you briefly describe his response to this difficult situation? (Don't go into too many details yet – we'll work through the Psalm more slowly in a moment)

Read again v1-4. This has been called 'God my Desire' by Derek Kidner.

David finds himself in a 'dry and weary land without water.' He presumably is far away from his home in the capital. What kinds of things would it be natural for him to long for in this situation?

Water. Home. Bed. Peace.

What in fact does he long for? God

Why do you think he talks about 'thirsting' for God? What effect will using that particular word have on him, remembering that he is in a dry place? It means that when he feels thirsty, or when he sees thirst around him he connects that to God. He takes his natural desires and focuses them instead on God.

Is David denying that he is also thirsty for water? Assuming that he isn't, how do you think that he is able to focus his thirst onto God? He knows that all his desires and needs are ultimately met by God and so what he needs is God. Matt 6v33.

What does David mean by the phrase 'you are my God'? Can you unpack this in your own words? He has a personal, intimate relationship with God. He belongs to him. He knows that his purpose is to be for God. In how many different ways is Yahweh David's God?

- What effect would it have on someone if they never said to God 'You are my God?' The relationship would have little emotional weight to it, like a marriage where the couple never affirm their relationship to each other.
- What effect if this truth was right at the front of your consciousness? A growing love for God and desire for him, security etc.

What experience does he look back to which deepens his sense that God is his God? **He has had some experience in the sanctuary of God's power and glory – this may be the normal experience of the worshipper who enters the tabernacle or it may be a specific event.**

Why is a knowledge of God's power and glory so important if we are to understand ourselves as people made to seek satisfaction in God? **If we aren't overwhelmed by God's power and glory then we won't ever see him as sufficient to focus our whole lives on.**

What in your life or spiritual journey has helped you grasp something of God's power and glory?

How is God's love better than life? **For a number of reasons, not least we are made for God's love so life without it will never be true life. There is a peace and security and joy that comes from God's love for us without which life is not true life.**

What kinds of things do you long for when you find yourself in a tough situation (e.g. hard day at work, problems with your family, concerns about your health).

"How I respond when life is tough tells me a lot about who or what I think I am, and especially what I think my purpose is." Do you agree? **E.g. if I love to browse the internet looking at new cars then I think of myself as a person whose purpose is to acquire cool stuff. If I think of myself as a victim then perhaps I tend to grumble, or even long for the person getting at me to be caught, etc.**

What would it look like for us to imitate David in these verses?

How might these verses add to our big question of 'who am I?' **I am created for God, I am someone who will only find true satisfaction with God.**

Read v5-8 Kidner calls these verses 'God my Delight'

David is lying in his bed, presumably having fled from his son who is seizing his throne. What kinds of things could he be thinking about as he lies there? **Guilt or regret about the past. Fear of the future. These are the typical things that we can spin on when life is hard for any reason.**

What are some of the thoughts that you might dwell on as you lie in bed when you find yourself in a typically demanding situation?

What truth about God does David take hold of? (cf. Ps 121v2) What mental image does he paint in v7-8 and what effect does that have on him? **He sees God as his help, like a great eagle who wraps her wings around her helpless fledglings. It gives him a sense of peace and security.**

V5 probably introduces this stanza (v5-8). If so, what contrast is it drawing with v1? How does this encourage David? **It speaks of lavish satisfaction – not just thirst but hunger being sated. It reassures him that he has been made for God and that ultimately he will experience the richest satisfaction it is possible to imagine.**

Read v9-11 Kidner calls these verses 'God my defence'

We've already talked about the tough situation that David finds himself in. What is his confidence in this situation? **His enemies will lose.**

Why do you think that the King can respond to this situation with such assurance and hope? **He knows that he will ultimately be vindicated because he is God's king, trusting in the LORD. It is inconceivable that God would be defeated but that is what a final victory for David's enemies would imply.**

What comfort is there here for people who follow a rejected king?

Like in the Psalm we follow a king who is hated and rejected by those who would take his throne, but ultimately Jesus will rejoice (Heb 12v2) and we will share in that joy.

Summarise

This is our second study in 'identity'. The first was called 'Created by God.' The second is exploring the theme of 'Created for God.'

How has this Psalm given you a taste of what it means to be 'Created for God'?

So how would you answer the question 'Who am I?'

How might this Psalm affect the kinds of things you ask others to pray for you?

Which verse will you aim to memorise this week?

You might like to listen to <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ojybwVrHTgc> as a chance to respond personally to the Psalm and to lead you into open prayer.