
God is the Fulfillment

Psalm 63

Introduction

Text: Psalm 63

Title: God is the fulfillment

Topic: What to do in seasons of loss

Big Idea: In seasons of loss there is but one thing to do; worship God.

Functional Question: What does that look like?

Appearances of Worship: 1) Fainting for God (Vv.1-4) 2) Feasting upon God (Vv.5-7) 3) Fastening to God (Vv.8-11)

Purpose: equipping our souls to worship in the course of seasons of heartache

“A great wind came across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house and it fell upon the young people and they are dead...Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head and fell on the ground and worshiped.” (Job 1:19-20)

When everything else seems trivial due to pain what are we to do? The clear answer seen in Job and worked out in the Psalms is this:

In seasons of loss there is but one thing to do; worship God.

This is it for tonight. In a single sentence you have before you the entire message. We are to worship God in all circumstances; even amid heart-tearing, life-threatening times.

But for this to help us, don't we need more than merely stated truth? Do we not need help in seeing what this truth looks like under pressure? This is what we are going to do tonight. We will look at “What to do in seasons of loss” by noticing what authentic worship looks like. We are going to ease drop on someone's prayer to glean for our lives what genuine worship looks like under great stress. We will observe 3 forms of worship in Psalm 63 for the purpose of equipping our souls to worship in the course of seasons of loss and failure and disappointment and heartache and confusion and unbelievable pain.

Open your Bibles and let's observe 3 appearances of authentic worship in the middle of incredible pain.

The Place

“when he was in the wilderness of Judah”.

The Psalm begins by setting the stage. It starts with the words *A Psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah*. It is significant in our Bible listening (either when we are silently reading or when we listen to sermons) that we observe internal hints as to the situation in which Scripture was written. The people of the Bible lived life. They were happy and sad and frightened. They were pained and perplexed in pursuit of answers. When cut they bled. When betrayed they cried. And so it was with King David.

When he was in the wilderness of Judah he wrote this Psalm. According to v.9 David was a fugitive of some sort. He was running for his life. For some, they link this episode to the time when King Saul was after David. This is not so, however. V.11 tells us that David was king. In the time of Saul he was not king.

Distressing division

The situation in which David writes this Psalm can be read about in 2Samuel 15. David's son, Absalom, cultivated a conspiracy against his father. He won the hearts of many in Jerusalem. As a result, he was able to run David out of the throne and into the desert.

2Samuel 15:23 says, "...the king crossed the brook Kidron and all the people passed on toward the wilderness". Later in this account we see David's heart. "David went up the ascent of the Mount of Olives weeping as he went".

Dodging danger

David's son wandered away from the Lord. David's son was so far from the Lord that he desired power and prestige more than propriety. His heart was so in love with himself that he was ready to demoralize, dethrone and eventually kill his own dad. My imagination stops working as I try to feel David's situation. It is hard for me to imagine but a few things more dreadful and painful than my own child running away from the Lord. And then returning to humiliate and harm me. In this heart-tearing, life-threatening moment what did David do? When all else seems insignificant due to pain what are we to do?

David demonstrates something worth remembering. What David is about to exhibit must be understood by us; lest in the moment of dismay we turn away. The Lord through David depicts:

In seasons of loss there is but one thing to do; worship God.

Worship God

Clearly defined and described in the Bible is what we are to do when facing hardship. We are to worship God. The beneficial thing for me in Ps. 63 was not merely being told this truth. It was seeing this truth. Here in Ps.63 we have modeled for us three forms of worship; worship given to God in the course of great hardship. Let's take these forms of worship to heart one at a time.

Fainting for God (Vv.1-4)

In vv.1-4 we see David's desire. It is strong. It is focused. And it is strongly focused on God. He has a thirst for those pleasures the world cannot give. To his knees he goes in search of the Fountain of living waters (cf. Isa.55:1-2; Jer.2:13; John 6:35). To prayer he resorts to find the quench for his raging thirst.

But these vv. tell us that this desire was "fainting for God". Like banished to the wilderness without water, his soul was shaky. His mind was lightheaded. These times were not times of sweet satisfaction. He was out in the wilderness and the sanctuary was in Jerusalem in which God's power and glory were on display. He longed to see and savor his covenant-making, covenant-keeping God. He knew God would uphold the covenant He made to Abram in Genesis 17:7, "I will establish my covenant between me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you. . . and ***I will be their God.***" He is utterly confident that God is his God because of the covenant. But God was not made out noticeably in vv.1-4. God was not clear and conspicuous in the eye of David's mind. Rather God was distant and dim. The glory; the matchless and breathtaking essence of God, was not apparent to David. David's heart was dizzy. Ready to faint he thirsted for God.

Here we see a form of worship. This is a stage of worship which is experienced by God's people who have a heart for God. It is unpleasant. It is not satisfying. It is a desire not fulfilled. The condition of this type of worship seen in these vv. is horrendous hardship. David knows that God will not forsake him. He says in v.1 that God is his God. And yet, David sees Him from afar. Dim and distant God's power and glory are not notice well. David cannot make out the shape of His infinite holiness. This type of worship is done out of emptiness with desire for fullness. This form of worship occurs when worldly danger and dryness are near and divine power and glory are afar.

This worship is genuine if God is the center of the desire. We need not think that we are second-class Christians due to this experience of worship. We need not think that genuine worship is not happening when thirst is present. This passage rejects the notion that real worship happens only when satisfaction and peace and ever-flowing affections are moving toward God due to joy in God. On the contrary, we “see in a mirror dimly”. We live in a fallen world. We have indwelling sin. Life is hard. We yearn for God; yea we faint for God precisely because we do not see Him and have Him like we desire. Our soul thirsts. We desire more. We long for God! This is the first appearance of worship sketched out for us in Ps.63

What is played out before our eyes in this Psalm is: even amid heart-tearing, life-threatening times we worship God. And what this worship of God looks like might start out as fainting, thirsting, yearning, hungering, aching for God.

But our Psalm does not stop there. And we mustn't either. Notice with me vv.5-7. (Read)

Feasting on God (Vv.5-7)

If vv.1-4 describe worship as hunger desiring fullness, vv.5-7 describe it as fullness displayed in praise. This is remarkable. David's circumstances have not changed. He is still stalked. His life might be snuffed in the night. Yet something has changed. He now is talking about feasting; not fainting. “My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food”. This phrase was the way the Hebrews talked about delight. Full and satisfying was described in these terms. What is happening to David? How did he get from fainting to feasting? The answer is found in v.2 and v.6.

“I have looked upon you...”

In v.2 he talks about the time when he enjoyed sweet corporate worship back in the sanctuary. Before he was thrust out of corporate worship and into the desert, he delighted in God as God manifested His power and glory in the sanctuary. As David sits on sandy ground shivering in the night air he ponders these times; times of engaging community worship.

“when I remember you...”

This interpretation is confirmed as we observe v.6. He recalls in the night out in the desert who God is. He thinks right thoughts about the character of God (i.e. His power and glory (v.2) and loving-kindness (v.3) and renown (v.4) and mercy (v.7) and justice (v.9-11). This was a means of grace for David. It moved him from fainting for to feast-

ing upon God. This grace empowered David to see and savor the supremacy of God. Oh, how instructive this Psalm can be for us!

Even in affliction we can praise. When this is the frame of our mind, we value the loving-kindness of God more than life. God's loving-kindness is our spiritual life, and that is better than temporal life. We will praise God with joyful lips when we remember God upon our beds; beds of suffering. David was in continual danger; care and fear held his eyes open. His nights were wearisome nights. But he comforted himself with thoughts of God. The mercies of God, when called to mind in seasons of loss, support the soul, making darkness cheerful.

Oh beloved, strengthen your sight to see God by remembering God! How happy we will be when God is seen as our happiness. How satisfied we will be when He is savored as our choicest. How full and free we will be even amid pain when we reflect upon and believe in God. In the end, we shall be satisfied with all the fullness of God, and praise him with joyful lips, where there is no night, and where sorrow and sighing flee away (Psalm 17; Isaiah 35:10)!

Forms of worship as seen in Ps.63 are

- 1) fainting for God = when hardship is close and the spiritual sight of God is faint but desire for him is strong
- 2) feasting upon God = when hardship is close and spiritual sight of God is focused and desire for him is satisfied

And now we come to the last appearance of genuine worship. This is observed in vv.8-11.

Fastening to God (Vv.8-11)

We are calling this form of worship “fastening to God” taken from v.8. “My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me”.

Here we have hands and feet to worship. We recognize that worship is about what we live for and rely upon and trust in. David was a fugitive. He was forced to escape from danger and run for his life. He is not out of peril. He still must live in a world of uncertainty. Genuine worship will fasten to God for life and breath and all things. It will cling to God when pressure is up. It will hold on to Him when the circumstances are unpromising. This is dependence. This is obedience. This is worship.

Lest the emphasis lands on the wrong person, notice how David worshipped God by fastening himself to Him. V8b says “your right hand upholds me”. This little phrase is pregnant with grace and hope and power! God clings to us and therefore we must cling to Him. Wor-

ship is not reliance upon self to give God our obedience. Worship is being gripped by God irresistibly that we grip on to God. He upholds us. We stand. He guides us. We walk. He strengthens. We stride. Those who fasten to God would soon fail if God's right hand did not uphold them. It is he that strengthens us and comforts us. It is all about Him.

This form of worship is dependence upon God amid hardship. It is a sad day that when we encounter danger we cleave to dust. This is not worship when we make God our last resort. Worship fastens upon God because God upholds the worshiper.

In the last 35 minutes we've heard a charge. *In seasons of loss there is but one thing to do; worship God.*

. We noticed what worship looks like. Three forms:

- 1) fainting for God = Desiring God
- 2) feasting upon God = Delighting in God
- 3) fastening on God = Depending upon God

Conclusion

In bringing the message to a close let me ask us a few questions.

- How does our understanding of this text affect our worship as we experience difficulty?
 - That worship is not merely about Sunday
 - That worship can and ought to occur amid pain
 - That worship comes in different shapes and is expressed in different ways
- Amid pain, what does my response to God demonstrate? What is the object of my worship?
 - That responses amid hardship is telling
 - That worshipful responses to God in seasons of loss demonstrate the value of God
- What are ways I can “remember” His power and glory so to see Him more clearly?
 - Journal on sweet community worship
 - Memorize & Meditate on Scripture