

## Psalm 63

## Seeking God: Living Life As Worship

(t/h - m:4 Mar 18)

How's life? This is an expression that really means how are you? But how's life is an interesting question. Are we working hard trying to balance our work with our social life, our families and our church lives? In the midst of life's pressures there's something that determines the course of our lives and that's our priorities. If we fail to prioritise all the activities in our lives, we won't achieve our goals, and our pressures will swamp us and we'll become ineffective. If we set clear priorities for our lives and then live by them, we have a better change of living peaceful, balanced lives.

I want to talk about an important priority: Seeking after God! If we make God's will for our lives our priority, then God promises that our lives will be ordered and fulfilling. Jesus taught us to *Seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness and all these things will be added to you (Matt 6:33)*. How do we seek God? Reading the Bible and praying for guidance in all situations is a good way to start, and if you want a place to start reading, then I suggest you seek God through reading the Psalms.

We've been looking at the psalms since the new-year and this morning our focus is on how we worship God through the psalms. Psalm's is a hymn book and God loves to hear His people singing praises to Him. The psalms address praise and thanksgiving as well as cries for help to God. When the psalmist is in an overwhelming situation, pressured beyond his ability to cope, he cries out to God and comes to know God more intimately as he learns to trust Him in a crisis. The psalms reveal much to us about the nature of God, especially His love and mercy. And the psalms reveal much about our own nature; fallen in sin, always needing God when we're unable to cope with pressures of our own.

King David wrote psalm 63 when we was under tremendous pressure. His own son Absalom, had led a rebellion against David and the king and his followers we forced to flee for their lives.

During this time, David spent time in the wilderness of Judah and he wrote psalm 63 while he was there. But interestingly, psalm 63 doesn't contain a petition, but an affirmation of David's priority under pressure. Psalm 63 teaches us that seeking God should be our priority and I want to deal with two questions that this psalm raises. *What does it mean to seek after God?* And, *How do I seek after God?*

*What does it mean to seek after God?* To seek after God means to have an intimate personal relationship with God. *O God, you are my God.* David knew God in an intimate and personal way. Years before, he had entered into this intimate relationship with God when he slayed Goliath. David's relationship with God deepened over the years and in times of crisis, David knew that God wouldn't leave him.

Many people know about God and have been taught about God, but knowing about God and knowing Him personally are two very different things. Jesus said *I am the way, the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me.* (John 14:6). To really know God, we must trust in Jesus as the one who died for us and gave us the free gift of eternal life. That's our introduction to knowing God and then like all relationships, we must develop our relationship by spending time with Him through prayer and reading His word. Honesty and openness is the way to deepen friendships and so it is with God. We should honestly confess our failures and try to grow in obedience to His word, and as we seek God through Christ, God will reveal more of Himself to us as we begin to open ourselves and offer our lives to Him.

*Secondly: To seek after God means always to desire more of Him.* David said; *You, God are my God, earnestly I seek you; I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you.* David knew his God, but he wanted to know Him more, he wanted to go deeper. We can always go deeper with God because God is an infinite being.

We talk of God as being apophatic, which means unknowing and our knowledge of God can never be complete because we are mere mortals. David has walked with God for years and still he thirsted to know Him more,

*To seek after God mean to pursue God because He alone satisfies our souls.* When we are in a jam as David was when his son was trying to kill him, we've a tendency to use God like an Alladins Lamp to get us through a crisis. When we are facing a crisis we reach for the lamp, but once the crisis has passed we put the lamp back on the shelf. Despite the severity of David's situation, he wasn't trying to use God to restore his throne and save him from his enemies, although he knew God would protect him. David was seeking God alone: *I thirst for you, I long for you. I will praise you as long as I live.* David expressed worship of God without asking for anything in return, which is a lesson for us all. We have a tendency to use God when we're stuck. We attend church regularly and we're Christians but we're often living for something other than God. To seek God means to pursue Him along to meet our needs, and to worship Him for who He is, and not for what we can get from Him.

We have looked at what it means to seek after God. *Now let's consider how We can seek after God.* Again, we'll look at this under three headings.

*We seek God by putting love for God at the centre of our relationship with Him.* Psalm 63:8, David says *My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.* What a beautiful balance! David clings to God but underneath it all, God's powerful right hand is holding David. Our relationship with God is much like a successful marriage, which is never built on feelings alone, there has to be commitment and hard work because feelings aren't consistent, they come and go. Sometimes we have to work at the romance, but if there aren't any feelings of love, our marriages will be in trouble. Seeking after God means keeping our passion for God alive.

Christianity is not just a matter for the head but for the heart. As we think what God has done for us in Christ, it should move us emotionally. As we reflect on His great love and the grace He demonstrates despite our failures, we ought to sense our love for Him. Which leads us to our second point:

*We seek God by spending consistent time alone with Him.* David was under intense pressure as he fled from Absalom. He had to think about how all his loyal followers who had fled with him were going to get food and water in the wilderness. He had to be constantly thinking about their safety and well-being. And yet, David made it a priority to spend time along with God, regardless of the other pressures he was under. We all make time to do what we want to do, we juggle commitments so we can manage to do what interests us. If we love God, we will make the time to spend with Him in prayer and reading His Word, renewing our minds so we can understand what He teaches us, and expressing our love and worship of Him.

And third and last: *We seek God by integrating Him into every area of our lives.* God isn't just a spoke on a wheel, He's the hub and he permeates every area of our lives. He's the Lord of everything we are and have and there's no areas of our lives, work, family, money or whatever; where is not an integral part. If every aspect of our lives is truly integrated with God, there will be no division between the sacred and secular, for everything in our lives will be related to God.

Here's David: His kingdom is in disarray and he's running for his life and seeking to protect his people. It would be understandable if God was temporarily squeezed out of the picture. But David is seeking God who is still at the centre of David's life. So in conclusion: How's life? How are things with us and God? Perhaps we are actively involved in serving Him and if so, that's good. But that's not what this message is about!

We can spend every spare moment of our lives involved in church and still lose sight of seeking God. I heard a minister I know tell me how he faced a time in his life when the opportunities for ministry were as good as he had ever seen. God seemed to be blessing his preaching and his church was growing, it was the kind of time that every minister prays and longs for. And then suddenly, the minister became seriously ill. As he lay in his bed, he asked *Lord why now, as opportunities to serve you are so great?* I'll never forget what he said next: He said that the Lord quietly gave him this realisation: *You've gotten your work ahead of your worship.* I am constantly trying to learn how to prioritise my worship over my work and it's not easy to change what has become a habit!

But let's do a little exercise: Let's each review our past week and ask ourselves; ***Did my schedule reflect that seeking God was my number one priority?*** Perhaps we've been busy or had family issues or commitments. And we may say that we've been under a lot of pressure recently. Which brings us back to where we started; that pressure reveals our true priorities. When the pressure is on, everything but the essential gets put on hold. The Scriptures teaches us that through David and Psalm 63, that seeking God is essential! If seeking God is essential for us, then we have to follow David's example and make seeking God's will for our lives essential. And may we be open to God guiding us and revealing His presence to us. **Amen.**

(1766 words)