

Sunday 7th March: TIMC Online

WELCOME

Good morning and welcome to our online service for Sunday 7th March. Thank you for joining us. I pray that you are doing well and I pray that during our time together today, you would have a real sense of His presence. That as we sing praise to our God, as we come before Him in prayer and as we look into His word, you would be blessed, encouraged and refreshed and that the Holy Spirit would speak to you personally.

Let's just pray.

Lord, this is the day that You have made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. Lord, be glorified as we meet together and may Your name be exalted above all else we pray. To You be all the praise, all the glory and all the honour for ever and ever. Amen.

We're going to begin today by singing the song 'We have come into this place and gathered in His name to worship Him'. May we come today with expectant hearts ready to praise and glorify our living God. As the song says, let's forget about ourselves and concentrate on Him and worship Him, Christ the Lord. Let's praise Him who is all our righteousness. Give Him glory that we can stand complete in Him and worship Him. Just feel free as we sing this song to raise up your hands in worship and magnify His holy name. Let's sing together 'We have come into this place'.

Song: We have come into this place

Lord, we gather in Your name to worship You and to magnify Your name. Be glorified, we pray. Amen.

Let's continue to praise and lift Him high as we sing our next song: 'Who is there like You and who else would give their life for me, even suffering in my place?'. Feel free to stand or sit as we sing this song. Lift up your hands in praise of Him. Lift up your voice in thanksgiving. Lift up His name – the name that is above all other names. For who is there like Him? Let's sing, 'Who is there like You?'

Song: Who is there like You?

PRAYER

We're just going to take a few moments now to come before the Lord in prayer. Lift up your voice in praise and thanksgiving to Him, for who He is and all that He has done. Give Him glory in that God demonstrated His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Thank Him for the

amazing sacrifice He made on that cross for you and for me. Praise Him for His provision in both the big and the small in your life. Thank Him for His faithfulness to you and His mercies, which are new every morning. Or if there is something else that the Holy Spirit prompts you to pray about, just take this time now and then I'll close with a prayer of my own.

PRAYER

Lord, there is none like You. We glorify You and lift You on high. Thank You, Lord, for Your amazing love for each one of us, in that You were willing to die on that cross so that we may be forgiven and restored to right relationship with You. Lord, we praise You for Your faithfulness to each one of us. Lord, be glorified in us we pray. Amen.

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INTRODUCTION:

Last week, Andrew shared with us some thoughts on Psalm 71 and today we are going to be looking at another Psalm that has particularly blessed and challenged me over the last few weeks. David was a man who was far from perfect, who made mistakes like the rest of us, but he is described within scripture as a man after God's own heart. A number of times, David went on the run, in fear of his life, and it was during one of these times on the run, in the wilderness of Judah, that David penned the amazing words that we are going to look at today. It's not abundantly clear within the text who David was running from – whether it was King Saul or whether it was David's rebellious son, Absalom. Most commentators that I've read, favour the thought that it was Absalom. But the key point that I want to share with you and encourage you with today is David's longing and heart for God. In the midst of that dry and barren landscape, whilst he was a fugitive, a song was birthed in David that revealed his heart and longing for God's presence. That declared the reality of God's love for him. That lifted up His God in praise and spoke of the faithfulness of his God.

I'm aware there may be some listening today who are in their own "desert". I just pray that as the passage is being read and as we explore it a little later, you would be blessed, encouraged and challenged by it and be able to testify to the truths within this wonderful Psalm, and that a new song might be birthed in your heart. Our Bible reading today is Psalm 63 v 1-11.

BIBLE READING: Psalm 63 v 1-11

MESSAGE

“O God, You are my God”. What a glorious statement of faith David pens in the opening of this wonderful Psalm. In the midst of such a hard and troubled time, when he may have been tempted to give up and feel sorry for himself, David takes heart from the truth of his relationship with the living God. At a time when pagans thought there were many gods and each nation had their own gods, David pledges his allegiance to Elohim. He spends time with his God and declares, “You are my God”. Words that ultimately speak of relationship, and it is from this declaration of faith that everything else within the Psalm flows. Everything within the Psalm revolves around his relationship with his God. David didn’t just know about God, but he actually knew Him personally and was in a personal relationship with Him. The glorious truth is that because of what Jesus has done for us on the cross, by dying in our place, we too can have a right relationship with God, because the price has been paid and we can call him “my God”. Praise Him!

David goes on to say, “Earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”

Taking as his inspiration the scenery that he was witnessing first hand as he went on the run, David expresses his desire and longing for God. David was a man who had walked with God many years and yet there was still that hunger and thirst for more. “Earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you.” He had this deep, intense thirst and longing for more of God! He longed to know God more. How much do we earnestly seek Him? How much do we thirst for Him? How much do we long for Him? A. W. Tozer, writing in his devotional book, *The Pursuit of God*, wrote these words:

‘Come near to the holy men and women of the past and you will soon feel the heat of their desire after God. They mourned for Him, they prayed and wrestled and sought for Him day and night, in season and out, and when they had found Him, the finding was all the sweeter for the long seeking ... Complacency is a deadly foe of all spiritual growth.’

May we be a people who earnestly seek our God. May we thirst for Him and long for Him. May we take time meditating on His Word. May we take time in prayer listening to His voice and talking to Him and may we praise and worship Him and express our love for Him, that we may grow in our relationship with Him.

David goes on to say, “I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory”. Whilst out in the wilderness, David reflects on his experiences with God in the sanctuary – the place of corporate worship – and he recalls times when he witnessed God’s power and glory. Matthew Henry writes:

'When we are deprived of the benefit of public ordinances, we should desire and endeavour to keep up the same communion with God in our retirements that we have had in the great congregation. When we are alone we may have the Father with us, and that is enough.'

David missed his experiences of God in public worship and once again longed to behold God's power and glory, but he knew that God's sanctuary was not only a place, but also a spiritual concept that could be entered by faith no matter where a person was. Charles Spurgeon writes:

'It is a precious thought that the divine power and glory are not confined in their manifestation to any places or localities; they are to be heard above the roaring of the sea, seen amid the glare of the tempest, felt in the forest and the prairie, and enjoyed wherever there is a heart that longs and thirsts to behold them.'

Oh, that we would long and thirst to behold His power and glory!
David goes on in the next verse to declare: "Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you." I love this verse! The literal translation of that word 'love' is the word 'loving-kindness', and so David states that the loving-kindness of God is better than life. God's love was better than life. Spurgeon writes: 'To dwell with God is better than life at its best; life at ease, in a palace, in health, in honour, in wealth, in pleasure, a thousand lives are not equal to the eternal life which abides in Jehovah's smile.'

Above all the joys in this life, God's love exceeded it all! Such was the reality and revelation of God's love to David that it was better than life. Oh, that we would have that revelation of the depth of His love for us. That we would echo the words of Paul: "that we, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all of the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge - that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God." May we declare with the Psalmist, "Your love is better than life." David knew and experienced the loving-kindness of His God in such an incredible way that he declares, "my lips will glorify you". In light of David's experience of God's amazing love, he resolves and declares that his lips will glorify God. He is determined to thank God and praise Him with his lips. May we not hold back in our worship. May our lips glorify and praise Him for His amazing love for each one of us.

David goes on to say: "I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands." David declares that he will praise God as long as he lives for God's great love for him and all that He has done. He goes on to say that he will lift up his hands in praise of his God. An expression of praise, which expresses our dependence on Him and acknowledges God's power, wonder and majesty.

“My soul will be satisfied as with the riches of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.” The Amplified version says: ‘My soul [my life, my very self] will be satisfied as with marrow and fatness.’ The Hebrews were more fond of fat than we are, and their highest idea of festive provision was in the marrow and fatness, which they saw as the best of the best. David was fully satisfied in his God, who he saw as the best of the best and who provided the best of the best. Despite the situation that he faced, David’s soul was satisfied. His soul was at rest, for he knew his God was with him. Even in the midst of these troubles, he could truly echo the words of the hymn writer, ‘It is well with my soul’. This declaration of his deep satisfaction in God leads him to reveal that he was resolved to praise his God with singing. Because of all that God was to him and all that he had done, he proclaims that he is going to sing God’s praises! May we be fully satisfied in our God and in light of all that God has done for us, sing His praises and give Him the glory that is due to His name. Verse 6 -8 goes on to say: “On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of night. Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.”

Even during the night, with everything that was happening, God was in his thoughts. Verse 6 in the Amplified Bible says: ‘When I remember You on my bed, I meditate and thoughtfully focus on You in the night watches.’ Though unable to go to the sanctuary to seek God, David resolved to meet with his God during the night. Such was his longing for relationship and companionship with Him. Ever been there? Not able to get to sleep; spending time meditating and focussing on Him at night time? David resolves to meditate and thoughtfully focus on his God. He goes on to thank Him for His faithfulness. “Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.” David recalled the many times when the Lord had been his help and sang for joy at the protection under the shadow of His wings. I am reminded of a song which says: ‘Living under the shadow of His wing we find security. Standing in His presence we will bring our worship to the King.’ Praise Him! May we give Him thanks for the times that He has been our help and deliverer. May we sing for joy at those times in our lives when we have witnessed His goodness and His protection.

My soul clings to you, David continues; “Your right hand upholds me.” The Hebrew word used for ‘cling’ here literally means to hold fast or glue together and such was the closeness of their relationship that David declares that his soul was close to God. It speaks of the intimate relationship, partnership and connection that they both shared. David followed God closely, as though he was afraid of losing sight of Him, and resolved to follow Him swiftly as he longed to be with Him, Matthew Henry writes in his commentary. “David praises his God that His mighty right hand upholds him. Only the power of God and God’s right hand could truly uphold him, as if he went in his own strength he would fall. But underneath him, were the gracious, everlasting arms of His God; David could never do it in his own strength. David witnessed to the truth as revealed in Paul’s 2nd letter to the church at Corinth, that ‘My

grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Praise Him! May we cling to Him and follow Him closely and go in His strength, being upheld by His mighty right hand.

Finally, we come to the last 3 verses of this amazing Psalm: "They who seek my life will be destroyed, they will go down to the depths of the earth. They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals. But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God's name will praise him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced."

You know, David's deep relationship with God did not take away his problems. He had numerous ones in his lifetime, as we all have! The Christian walk is never easy. It involves cost and sacrifice. God never promised an easy ride, but what he did promise was to be with us and to never leave us nor forsake us. Just as David earnestly sought for God, so there were some who wanted to kill David. In the midst of this new song that was being birthed, David turns his eyes on those who wanted to kill him. David cries out to God and trusts Him to deal with his enemies. He knows that His God is a God of justice, who judges fairly, and that the wicked would not prevail in the long run. So he resolves to rejoice in God. To praise Him and to let God deal with his enemies. "But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God's name will praise him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced." He knows that ultimately His God and ours is a God of love and a God of justice. Such an amazing Psalm! It has blessed, challenged and strengthened me over the last couple of weeks. I pray that it has blessed and strengthened you and I encourage you to read it through a few times this week. Can I just ask, how is your relationship with God? If you would like to have that personal relationship with God, so that you can declare with the Psalmist, "O God, you are my God", can I just invite you to share in this prayer and make that commitment to follow Him?

Dear Heavenly Father, I know that I am a sinner and I ask for Your forgiveness. I believe that Your Son Jesus died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins. I repent of my sins. I invite You to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow You as my Lord and Saviour. In Jesus' Name. Amen. If you have prayed that prayer for the first time today, can I encourage you to share it with someone? Please click on the 'Get in touch' button at the bottom of this page, and we would love to help you on that journey. For those who have already made that commitment, can I ask you how earnestly do you seek Him? How much do you thirst and long for God? Alan Redpath once shared of a time in his life when the opportunities for ministry were the greatest he had ever seen. God seemed to be blessing his preaching. And then, right in the middle of it, Redpath was laid up with a stroke. As he lay in his hospital bed, he asked, "Lord, why? Why now, when the opportunities to serve You are so great?" In that time the still small voice of the Lord spoke and quietly impressed upon him, "Alan, you have put your work ahead of your worship."

May we seek Him above all else! May we long for a deeper relationship with God. May we earnestly seek Him, thirst for Him and long for Him, just as David did in this glorious Psalm. A man after God's own heart. May we be men and women after God's own heart.

We're going to sing a song called, 'Is anyone thirsty' now. We read in John 7 that "On the last and greatest day of the Feast, Jesus stood and said in a loud voice, 'If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said streams of living water will flow from within him.' By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive.

Just feel free after the song to spend a few moments before the One who truly satisfies. Come to Him and drink. Believe in Him and let the streams of living water flow through you. Let's sing, 'Is anyone thirsty'.

SONG: Is anyone thirsty?

Let's pray. Lord, we come to You and acknowledge our need of You. May Your streams of living water flow through us. God, You are our God and we pray that we would seek You with all our hearts. Fill us anew, we pray, for Your glory. Amen.

We're going to share together in the Lord's Supper in a few moments and as we lead into that time, we're going to sing the song 'You chose the cross'.

SONG: You chose the cross

Communion

Because of Jesus unfailing love, I am forgiven, I am restored. Praise Him for His unfailing love. For God so loved the world that He gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life. It was out of His unfailing love that God gave His only Son and whoever believes in Him shall have eternal life. Praise Him. It was out of His unfailing love that Jesus chose the cross and was willing to die on that cross for you and for me. Out of His unfailing love, He took all our sin and shame on himself! And though, as He prayed in the garden, His soul was overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death, and He prayed to the Father, "If it is possible, may this cup be taken from me", yet He declared: "not as I will, but as you will." Complete submission to the Father's will. Obedient to death, even death on a cross. And yet death was not the end. Death could not hold Him! As we just sang, 'Up from the grave victorious, You rose again so glorious.' He is risen! Praise Him! I'm lost in wonder, I'm lost in love, I'm lost in praise forevermore. Because of Jesus' unfailing love, I am forgiven, I am restored. May we never lose the wonder of the amazing sacrifice that the Lord Jesus has made for us at Calvary. May we love Him more deeply. May we praise Him forevermore

because of His unfailing love and who He is and all that He has done. As Chloe shared on Wednesday, He never gets tired of it!

The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks. He broke it and said, 'This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.'

Let's give thanks for the bread.

Lord, as we take this bread, we remember Your body and the pain that You endured on our behalf. Thank you, Lord, that You chose the cross, paid the price and made that amazing sacrifice for our sin. Amen.

Let's eat with thanks.

In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying "This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me." For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Let's give thanks for the cup, as we proclaim His death until He comes again. Father, we thank You that because of Jesus' unfailing love, we are forgiven and restored. As we take this cup, by which we remember the shed blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, we praise You that You were obedient unto death, even death on a cross and that Your blood has brought our redemption. May we never lose the wonder of Your amazing sacrifice for each one of us. Amen.

Let's drink with thanks.

We're going to close by singing the song 'There must be more than this'. As we sing this song together, may these words be our prayer: 'Consuming fire, fan into flame a passion for your name. Spirit of God fall in this place.'

Wherever we are, may the Spirit of God fall and may the Lord have His way with us. May He have His way among His people. Let's sing together, 'There must be more than this.'

SONG: There must be more than this

Blessing

Thank you for joining us. I pray that you have been blessed, encouraged and strengthened and that the Holy Spirit has spoken personally to you through it. Please join us again next week and continue to stay connected with God and with each other. Let's close today by sharing the 'Grace' together. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all, evermore. Amen!