

O God, My God

A Funeral Sermon

Psalm 63:1-7



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FOCAL Psalms 63:1-7 .. O God, thou [art] my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; (2) To see thy power and thy glory, so [as] I have seen thee in the sanctuary. (3) Because thy lovingkindness [is] better than life, my lips shall praise thee. (4) Thus will I bless thee while I live: I will lift up my hands in thy name. (5) My soul shall be satisfied as [with] marrow and fatness; and my mouth shall praise [thee] with joyful lips: (6) When I remember thee upon my bed, [and] meditate on thee in the [night] watches. (7) Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.^{KJV}

The early Christian Church had no bound hymnbooks as we have today, so when believers gathered together they sang the Psalms. This Psalm in particular was a favorite. Look at it's beautiful words.

FOCAL Psalms 63:1 .. **O God, thou [art] my God; early will I seek thee**

The Christian, just like the unbeliever, often finds himself in a dry place, a thirsty place, a desert. Those who do not know the Lord will seek solace or comfort in a variety of things. They may seek money or riches. The Lord Jesus warned against constant chasing after riches in the **parable of the rich man (Luke 12:16-21)**. In the end the rich man stood before God with nothing but certain judgment. As our Lord said:

Luke 12:31 But rather seek ye the kingdom of God; and all these things shall be added unto you.

It is much better to seek God, for God can be found. If we chase after riches, power, position, these things all flee from us. There is never enough. But if we seek God we will find Him:

Deuteronomy 4:29 But if from thence thou shalt seek the LORD thy God, thou shalt find [him], if thou seek him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.

Life Is Full of Desert Lands and Canaans

FOCAL Psalms 63:1 .. **O God, thou [art] my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;**

Life is so variable, so fragile, so changing for humans. Our lives are filled with desert lands and Canaans, times of want and times where we are filled, times of thirst and times where we thirst no more. Every day brings with it a new challenge. Praise God for His Love and His salvation, for our joy does not depend on whether we are on the mountaintop or in the valley. Our joy depends on knowing that **O God, Thou art MY God**. There is someone greater than you or I who oversees all things, the good and the bad, the plentiful and the scarce. This

God loves us so very much! The Bible says three very important things about God that you need to remember. First it says:

1 John 4:8 ... God is love.

God *is* love – this is central to His nature. God loves, and He loves us. Though we are imperfect and variable, God loves us. The love of God *never* changes, for God:

James 1:17 ... the Father ... does not change like shifting shadows.^{NIV}

God does not change. The seasons change. The trees, so green and beautiful now, will eventually lose their leaves. Fall will come, then winter, and with it cold weather and perhaps snow. We who are created by this Loving God change. In the spring of our lives we are young. As time passes we age in this flesh. We were not designed by our Creator to last forever on this earth. God, however, is changeless, and is always love. The third great truth is this:

Jeremiah 32:27 "I am the LORD, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?"

God is all powerful, over all. Life is filled with desert lands and Canaans, times of plenty and times of lack, but God is love, His love never changes, and He is over all. The Bible says in another place:

Psalms 103:19 The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

(1) God is love, (2) His love never changes, and (3) God is over all. These three great truths ring out through our good times and our bad times. These are truths we *must* cling to. God proved these three things to you when He came to earth, born of a virgin, to live and walk among us. When you walk through life's desert places – as you are doing even now – remember the words of our Savior:

Matthew 11:28-30 Come unto me, all [ye] that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. (30) For my yoke [is] easy, and my burden is light.

The Lord never changes! Life changes, but He does not change, nor does His love for you change. Cling to the Lord Jesus in your sadness. Seek Him **early**, as the Psalmist said:

FOCAL Psalms 63:1 .. O God, thou [art] **my God; early will I seek thee:** my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is;

Seek The One Who Is Our Guide Through The Valley of Shadow

FOCAL Psalms 63:1 .. O God, thou [art] **my God; early will I seek thee:**

As you go through this particular wilderness, a place we call *the valley of the shadow of death*, do not despair. The God Who saved you, the Jesus Who died for you, rose from the grave to show you that death is not the victor. God is the victor – your loved one yet lives, for he is with Jesus even now.

You may be asking yourselves, “**Why?**” Why did our brother have to die? Why couldn't the Lord have just healed him, and raised back to his feet? If these three things are true:

(1) God is love, (2) His love never changes, and (3) God is over all.

then we know that God *would have done just that* if it were best for our brother. God knows best – and our brother is now in a much better place.

The Bible teaches that we can only reach Canaan – the Promised Land – once we go through the wilderness and the desert. While **Israel** was in the wilderness God Himself was closer to them than at any time. It was in the desert that God fed His Chosen with manna and meat. When **Hagar** was taken into the desert to die God came to her and reassured her that He loved her still, and was

yet looking over both her and the child **Ishmael**. When **Moses** ran away into the desert it was there that God came to him and spoke through the burning bush. Our dear **brother** has just recently come through his own wilderness, but God *never* left his side.

May I respectfully state that I have heard **good men of God** misinterpret the text of **Luke 16**, that wondrous story of the **Rich Man and Lazarus**. They often quote that section of Scripture where Jesus said:

Luke 16:22 **And it came to pass, that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom: the rich man also died, and was buried;**

While our Lord Jesus Christ was on the earth this was certainly true. When an Old Testament Saint's time came to die the Lord sent an angel to bring that loved one home. Yet, dear Ones, this was *prior to the Cross of Christ*, and *prior to the Savior's promises* – we read:

Hebrews 13:5 ... He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

Matthew 28:20 ... I am with you always, [even] unto the end of the world. Amen.

and then there is the always favorite:

John 14:2-3 **In my Father's house are many**

mansions: if [it were] not [so], I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. (3) And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, [there] ye may be also.

No **angel** came to get our loved one as he went into glory. No hireling went, no, no, dear ones! **Jesus Christ Himself** has promised to be with His Saints **even unto the end of this world**, even as we go beyond the veil into the next life. Jesus Christ Himself has promised to be with those who love Him, for He has promised “**I will never leave thee nor forsake thee**”. He did not leave Glen as our Brother entered the wilderness, and He kept Glen in His nail scarred hands as our Brother passed into eternity.

The **Great Shepherd of the Sheep** came to get His beloved this past Tuesday, June 13th, and then He took him to heaven. Our brother has not ceased to be, but has gone to receive the reward of all who have believed in Jesus. **Please do not talk of our brother in the past tense – he has not ceased to be.** He has passed through the valley of the shadow of death, but only the shadow has touched him. Our Lord has *promised*:

John 10:27-30 **My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: (28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any [man] pluck them out of my hand. (29) My**

Father, which gave [them] me, is greater than all; and no [man] is able to pluck [them] out of my Father's hand. (30) I and [my] Father are one.

What Jesus has promised is certain. Our brother is in His hands.

Rejoicing In The Midst of Sadness

FOCAL Psalms 63:3, 6-7 .. Because thy lovingkindness [is] better than life, my lips shall praise thee. ... (6) **When I remember thee upon my bed, [and] meditate on thee in the [night] watches. (7) Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice.**

It is appropriate that every believer here grieve, for our brother is no longer with us. But do not grieve as an unbeliever would grieve. Those who do not have a *personal relationship with Jesus Christ* approach death as if it were the end of life. The Psalmist says, **I will meditate on Thee, O Lord, in the night time. When the hour looks dark, I will remember Your promises and focus on them.** What promises has God given you concerning *physical death*?

1. God has promised **that our loved one, saved by faith in Christ, is even now with Jesus.** The Scripture says:

2 Corinthians 5:8 We are confident, [I say], and willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord.

Philippians 1:21, 23 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. ... I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far;^{NIV}

Psalms 49:15 But God will redeem my soul from the power of the grave: for he shall receive me. Selah.

2. The Bible promises that **our loved one suffers no more, but has been given a glorious new state of being:**

Revelation 21:4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

Because our loved one *experienced Christ as Savior, calling upon the name of Jesus* he now experiences the *reward of the righteous*. God was our brother's help in life – and God is certainly with him now. **C.H.**

Spurgeon stated:

“Beloved, there has hitherto been no pause in the goodness of God to us. ... The Lord has never failed us. Did He not say, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee?' and has it not been so? Up hill and down dale, in the dark and in the light, in summer and in winter, the constancy of God's help has been proved. His faithfulness is a fountain of delight to us. The Lord has always been our help.”

If you have experienced salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, if you, having confessed your sins, have called upon the Name of the Lord, then you know yourself to be in His charge. He has not left our brother, but is with him yet. He has not left you. He is with you yet. Cling to Jesus, glorify God, and trust in His precious promises. May God bless the reading and preaching of this Word.

Graveside Service

There are familiar, beautiful words that we turn to in times of sorrow. The best of these words are found in **Psalm 23**:

Psalm 23:1-6 The LORD [is] my shepherd; I shall not want. (2) He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. (3) He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. (4) Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou [art] with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. (5) Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou

anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. (6) Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.

Lord, You are truly our Shepherd. We have no Shepherd but You. You laid down Your life for us then rose again on the third day, forever proving to us that death has lost its sting, and is not the victor. We thirst now for Your presence, dearest Jesus. We pray that You come to every heart and satisfy the longing of our souls. If we have been struck low by the passing of our loved one, please take our hearts in hand and lead us. Lead us, O Lord, into the calm assurance that You are in control. Lead us, and **make us lie down**. Come, dear Lord Jesus, and be our rest. Drive away all fear from our hearts. We know that:

1 John 4:18-19 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love. (19) We love him, because he first loved us.

You love us, dear Lord, and are with us even now. Put peace, we pray, in our hearts. Guide us as we go through this experience of loss, and let the experience of Your love overwhelm all else. In Your Precious Name, the Name of Jesus, we do pray. Amen.