



## **PSALM 63: THE WILDERNESS**

The very title of Psalm 63—*A Psalm of David, When He Was In The Wilderness of Judah*—beckons us to take a look into David’s heart when he was in the wilderness. Our details differ from David’s, but all of God’s children experience wilderness. David was fleeing from his son Absalom. For you, the wilderness might be:

- financial difficulty
- betrayal by a friend
- desertion by a spouse
- chronic pain
- a terminal illness

### **1. SEEK GOD EARNESTLY**

David says: “O God, you are my God; I shall seek you earnestly; my soul thirsts for you, my flesh yearns for you...” David expressed his dependence on God in the midst of the wilderness by hunting for God. David, the man after God’s own heart, teaches us to seek God in the wilderness.

What do you seek after, long for, and thirst for in the wilderness of life? To what do you bind yourself? Two questions can help you consider your desires during the tough times of life. (1) Are the objects of your desires sinful? Another way of asking that question is this: “What do you seek after instead of thirsting after your God?” (2) If my desires in the wilderness are not sinful in and of themselves, do I crave these things so much that they diminish or replace hunger for God Himself? Our anxiety, fear, anger, and bitterness in the wilderness reveal the hunger of our hearts that compete against our desire for God alone. What happened the last time your son or daughter disobeyed you? How did you respond when your husband failed to listen to the events of your day? What did you do when your wife met you at the door when you got home from work and wanted to share her heart with you?

### **2. REFLECT ON GOD CONTINUALLY**

David sought God in the wilderness by fixing his thoughts on God’s character and works. Instead of succumbing to the temptation to believe lies about His God, himself, and his situation, David erected an altar to God in his mind. Instead of allowing his thoughts to wander

with him in the wilderness, David set his thoughts on God. "O GOD< YOU ARE MY GOD" he cried. David declared YOUR LOVINGKINDNESS IS BETTER THAN LIFE. Even in a harsh wilderness, David's mind was on God's loving-kindness, not his own plight. Listen to him. MY SOUL IS SATISFIED AS WITH MARROW AND FATNESS. David reminded himself that God satisfied more than the finest foods in the most lavish feast back in the palace.

FOR YOU HAVE BEEN MY HELP, AND IN THE SHADOW OF YOUR WINGS I WILL SING FOR JOY. David connected the dots on how a mother bird took care of her young in the desert. Finally, David meditated on the ultimate deliverance when God will right all wrongs.

*But those who seek my life to destroy it will go into the depths of the earth. They will be delivered over to the power of the sword; they will be a prey for foxes. But the king will rejoice in God; everyone who swears by Him will glory, for the mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped.*

Can you see this picture? God's justice will prevail. As with David, so with Christ, and so with you. Respond with the same purposefulness of thought. Walk with Him through the wilderness. In Jesus' wilderness experience, He fixed His attention on His Father. What does the alter in your mind look like? Is it broken down and in need of rebuilding?

### **3. PRAISE GOD SUBMISSIVELY**

Words of praise permeate this text.

- My lips shall praise you!
- I will bless you as long as I live
- My mouth offers praises with joyful lips

It was said of Christ, "for the joy set before Him, He endured the cross." Christ's praise expressed itself in doing the Father's work. What do you and I speak of when we find ourselves in the wilderness? What are the topics of conversation inside your head or with others? What can you do to praise God in concrete and specific ways? Make a list of those responsibilities that you tend to neglect while in the wilderness – make your list personal and concrete. Begin today to fulfill those responsibilities as a sacrifice of submissive praise to God.

### **4. APPLICATION**

- (1) Describe the wilderness troubles you face today.
- (2) Seek God in the words of Psalm 63:1
- (3) Search for truth about God's character and work

(4) Plan to praise God in word and deed