

I want you this morning to think about longing and satisfaction. Desire and fulfillment. Thirst and contentment. What do you find yourself longing for? Like deep, heartfelt yearning? Aching? Maybe it's a person you want desperately to see and be with. Maybe it's a place you yearn for. Maybe it's a feeling or a sensation you long to experience. Maybe it's a food you really, really want to taste. What are the things you believe will bring you deep, satisfying contentedness? And when and if you were to get that thing, how would you, how do you, respond? For instance, an infant longs for the embrace of its mother, to be held. And when it is satisfied, that baby rests. It's calm. It's happy. It's safe. Or maybe a sports fan longs for a victory for his or her favorite team. We NEED this win. And when that fan is satisfied, he or she celebrates. They express themselves physically, vocally, outwardly. Or

someone who really appreciates food longs for a specific cuisine. A perfect medium-rare steak. A big bowl of Texas chili. A heaping serving of Blue Bell ice cream. A double order of hashbrowns scattered, smothered, covered, and topped with a side order of grits and a waffle. And what do they do when they get that meal? They savor it. They indulge in it. A lonely person longs for companionship. They long for the company and acceptance of another person. And when they get it, they hold fast to it. An engaged couple longs for marriage. And part of the satisfaction is sharing it, declaring it publicly, inviting friends and family to witness it, wearing rings to display it publicly. So we long for any number of things. And when those desires are fulfilled, we respond in any number of ways.

In the book of Psalms, the songbook of God's people in the OT, we find a song about longing and fulfillment:

Psalm 63. It's a Psalm written by David, the shepherd, the giant slayer, the poet, the king, the sinner, the man after God's own heart. And in this Psalm, David finds himself in the wilderness, away from his home, away from his people, away from the pleasures of God's immediate presence. And he's struck with this yearning, this aching, this deep hunger and thirst in his soul. But he's confident this longing can and will be satisfied. And so he pledges himself to a particular response when it finally is.

As you take a Bible this morning and turn with me to Psalm 63 (if you're using a pew Bible it's on page 479), I want you to think about what you long for most deeply.

What you find your find your soul aching for. Do you have

a confident expectation that your desire will be fulfilled?
How do you think that's going to happen? What assurance
do you have? How will you know? And how do you
anticipate you'll respond? So with those questions in mind,
I would ask you to follow along as I read Psalm 63
[READ].

The first thing we see, that jumps off the page, is a
longing expressed. Now to really grasp the full force of
this Psalm, you need to understand that David writes this,
according to the superscription (the introductory
statement) while he is where? In the wilderness. Most
scholars believe this is written when David is fleeing from
his son Absalom in 2 Samuel 15-17. Absalom had been
conspiring against David and was seeking to overthrow
him and kill him. So David is on the run, he's in exile, he's

being pursued by his enemies, he's threatened, he's forsaken, he's destitute, he's frightened, he's needy. He's a fugitive, away from his home, away from his people. And so he describes his situation as one of seeking, thirsting, fainting. Which makes total sense. ANYONE in that situation would be feeling that way. Lost, empty, weak. But look closely at WHAT he seeks FOR, what he thirsts FOR, what he faints FOR. It's not for water. It's not for vengeance. It's not for victory or rescue. It's not for peace and comfort. It's not for a change in his outward circumstances. What does he seek for? What does he thirst for? What does he faint for? For God. The mighty One. The sovereign One. The all-powerful One. The One who made the universe and governs it with the strength of His hand and the word of His command. But it's not just THE God that David longs for. He says, "O God, you are

MY God.” He calls on the One who he knows, the One who knows him, the One who has pledged His steadfast love and covenant faithfulness, the One to whom David belongs. He has a deep, aching desire for the One he knows most intimately. With a lot of things – food, entertainment, possessions – the more you have, the less you need. You get full. Your desires diminish. But it’s not that way with God. With God, the more you have, the more you experience, the more you encounter, the more you want, the more you need. David says that his soul thirsts for God like a dying man in a desert without water. His flesh faints. He feels it in his bones. It’s a craving for God. He NEEDS Him. Think about how an addict needs whatever they’re addicted to. Alcohol, drugs, food, sex, porn, gambling. It’s a compulsion. It’s like David is going

through withdrawals. Every part of his being yearns for God.

But what exactly is it about God that he's looking for?

What he's wanting? That he's needing? He longs to experience, to sense, the presence of God, specifically in public worship with God's people in the sanctuary. His exile has deprived him of regular worship attendance.

David misses encountering God in corporate worship in the holy place, the tabernacle, the tent of meeting where God communes with His people. It's a priority for him. It's where David sees God's power and glory. The whole setup of the tabernacle, if you go back and look in Exodus, is intended to spotlight God's creation of all things and His redemption of His people. The architecture, the materials, the embroidery, the furniture, the priestly duties, the

sacrifices, the prayers, all designed to remind God's people of His majesty and His might and His mercy so they would delight in Him. So they would rejoice. Which is exactly what David craves. He remembers the joy of worship. He remembers what it is like to praise God with his lips, to bless God, to lift his hands in prayer and praise. And he wants to do it again. He NEEDS to do it again. And he's confident that he WILL! He has to! He confesses that God's steadfast love, affirmed and celebrated and experienced in worship, is better than life itself. And he's not exaggerating there. He's not just saying that for effect. For David, the loss of God's love, the loss of God's nearness, would be worse than dying. Existing without God's steadfast love would be worthless and empty. He feels that in a real, tangible way.

Let me ask you this morning, what is God worth to you? I'm not asking what you SAY God is worth to you. If someone were to follow you around for a week, paying attention to how you spend your time, how you spend your money, how you talk, how you treat people, what would THEY say God is worth to you? Would your life be any different, practically speaking, if God were to remove His love and presence from you? Would that change your daily routine? Would it change your spending habits? Would it change the way you talk to people and about people? Would it affect your priorities? Listen to the way David speaks about God, how he aches for God. Do you long for God like that? Do you long to be with God's people in corporate worship? Do you long to praise God with your lips alongside your brothers and sisters in Christ? Do you long to lift up your hands in His name

standing with your church family? Does it grieve you to miss it? I think about people in our congregation who, due to physical struggles or unavoidable obligations, haven't been able to gather with us like they want to. I think about Charlotte Coats and Michele True and Jacci Watson and Barbara Eckert. It hurts them not to be able to be here. I think about how I felt during those first eight or ten weeks of the pandemic, when we were only able to gather virtually. I felt that. I feel it when I miss a Sunday for illness or vacation. Do you? We desire what we love. We desire what we value. Is God exceedingly valuable to you? I feel like we are quick to confess God as the greatest good in all the universe. But if that's the case, why do we struggle to desire Him? Why do we struggle to long for Him? Why do we struggle to miss Him and His people? Why do we struggle to prioritize worship? Why are content to desire

and chase after small things, temporary things, meaningless things? What do we long for? A longing expressed.

But even as he longs, David expresses full confidence that his hunger **WILL be satisfied.** God WILL fill him. Not just partially. And not with some inferior delight. David says he will be satisfied as with fat and rich foods. So the best and the most. He's going to feast on the goodness of God, the savory, abundant, delicious pleasures of God. Every craving that he has for God will be met. To the extent David desires God, he is filled. God's provision matches David's desire. And it's the same for us. To whatever extent you want God, you long for God, He will meet that desire with a fulness more satisfying than food or sex or money or power or popularity and comfort or even life

itself. And when He grants that fulfillment, that satisfaction, it only makes the earnest worshipper want him that much more.

And when that happens – when we experience that satisfaction – the mouth that is filled with the most gratifying provision will burst forth in praise. David longs for God, God satisfies him fully, then David completes that satisfaction by praising him. Remember, that's what David longed for, to worship. So any provision wouldn't be complete without David declaring God's greatness. C.S. Lewis wrote that praise completes enjoyment. He says it is its appointed consummation. When it comes to anything we love – our spouse, a book, a movie, nature, your favorite game, the weather, food, the team you cheer for – delight in a thing is incomplete until it is expressed. We

WILL and we MUST tell about the things that thrill us. And so those who have nothing to say about God – about His goodness, about His grace, about His love, about His forgiveness, about His provision, about His protection, about His comfort and care – have likely never experienced it and have never known God at all. Those who desire God are satisfied by Him, and those who are satisfied will declare His praise.

And when does David say this happens for him? As he lies in bed. Throughout the night. Even in the wilderness. Even before he's able to return to the sanctuary. He longs for worship with God's people in the sanctuary, but until then, he will worship privately, personally, individually. In the interim, THAT will satisfy him. THAT will fill him. Do you respond to trouble like that? Is that how you make it

through sleepless nights in the wilderness? With worship and prayer? By meditating on God? You can. You should. At night, in bed, David remembers and meditates. He sets his mind on God. He thinks, he ponders. He rehearses over and over who God has been to him and what God has done for him. We can do the same. In those moments of sleeplessness where you are tempted to let your mind drift into frivolous, unhelpful, even dangerous thoughts, how much better would it be for you to remember the goodness of God? Instead of repeatedly going over your hurts, your offenses, your injustices, your anger, your grievances, your outrage, how much better would it be to rehearse the faithfulness of God? How much better would it be to go back and think about all the times and all the ways God showed Himself faithful to His people in the Bible? All His people throughout the history of the church?

How God has shown Himself mighty and gracious in your own life? Go back into the playlist of your life and put on the greatest hits. Go back over all the times that God has been good to you. The Scottish Baptist minister Alexander McLaren wrote that past deliverances give present trust and future joy. Let all those moments in your past give your courage now and cause you to rejoice in what's coming. David says that God upholds him, that the Lord sustains and strengthens him by His grace, by His right hand of favor and power. That's a reminder that, for those who trust in Him and depend on Him, He will not let you fall. I remember when I was a child, whenever I was in a situation where I felt unstable or unsafe, my dad would reassure me by saying, "I've got you." Don't be afraid. He's got you. He is your help. He shelters you under His wings.

His right hand upholds you. Remember. Be intentional about setting your mind on those God's faithfulness.

And how does David respond? He sings and he clings.

Those who know the goodness and the faithfulness of God should be the first and the loudest to sing. And I don't mean figuratively, like a tune in your heart. I'm talking about real, actual, loud singing with your voice. People sing for all sorts of things. They sing at concerts and at sporting events and at birthday parties. Church, don't let the world out-sing you! They raise their hands at football games and parties. Don't let them out-joy you! Who has more reason to sing and lift their hands than the one who knows God, who has been helped by Him, who is upheld by Him? Who should sing louder or more constantly than a sinner who has been forgiven, a slave who has been set

free, a blind man who has been given sight, a lame man who has been given the ability to walk? Christians, we should be known as singers! I don't care if you can't carry a tune in a bucket with both hands. I am a thousand times more thrilled with a person who can't sing a lick raising their voice all out of tune and off key with joy and passion than I am the most talented vocalist going through the motions. Sing! And cling! Hold fast to God. Like Adam did to Eve. Like Ruth did to Naomi. The image is like a bur in the grass grabbing hold of your pant leg and getting carried everywhere you go. It's like the static cling on a plastic wrapper that, no matter how hard you try, you can't get it to turn lose of your hand. As you remember the goodness of God, sing to Him and cling to Him. It doesn't happen accidentally or incidentally. David says, "I WILL..." Determine that you WILL do those things. That you WILL

be satisfied with God. That you WILL praise Him with your lips. That you WILL remember and meditate on Him in the night. That you WILL sing to Him for joy. That you WILL hold fast to Him. Let Him satisfy your hunger.

So we've seen a longing expressed and a hunger satisfied. Last, David shows us a **deliverance confirmed**.

As David finds his hope and fulfillment in God, as he remembers and praises God, what will become of his enemies? Those who drive him into the wilderness, away from the sanctuary? Those who seek to destroy him? Those who want his life? Those who have set themselves, not just against David, but against God? David declares that they will go down to the depths of the earth, to their graves. They will be given over to the power of the sword. They will die violent deaths. They will become portions for

jackals. They will be subjected to public exposure and shame and humiliation as their carcasses are devoured by wild animals. Their lies and accusations will be silenced. Those who threaten David will be defeated. God will deliver His own. His enemies will be destroyed, and His people will be vindicated. Not surprisingly, that's exactly what happened to David's pursuers in 2 Samuel 18. And in response, David says God's king and God's people will rejoice in Him. At the beginning, David longed to see the power and the glory of God in the sanctuary, but his enemies had driven him into the wilderness. Now, by the end, every hindrance to his longing has been removed. He can once again draw near to God in worship and fellowship. The Lord has redeemed His own.

Now remember, when we read these OT passages, these historic documents, they often speak of outward, physical realities. David longed for a physical place, a visible, tangible sanctuary. And he was hindered by physical enemies, real people who wanted to end his life. But for us, the reality is broader than that. Our longing for God isn't bound to a place or a building. We don't have to yearn for a physical sanctuary to meet with God. In John 1:14 we are told that Jesus, the eternal Word, became human and tabernacled among us. He came to us as the sanctuary, as the dwelling of God among His people. And then, in 1 Corinthians 6:19 Paul writes that our bodies are the temple of the Holy Spirit; we are the sanctuary individually. And then in Ephesians 2:21 he writes that the church is built into a holy temple for the Lord; we are the sanctuary collectively, corporately. To long for God is to long for

Christ and for His body, the church. Do you yearn for Jesus, to know Him, to believe Him, to trust Him, to love Him, to obey Him, to worship Him? Do you long to experience His presence in the church, to worship with His people? Because just as the longing is for Christ, the satisfaction is found in Him as well. In John 6:35 Jesus says, "I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst." In John 7:37 He says, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink." We find our satisfaction and fulfillment in who He is and what He's done through His life, His death, and His resurrection.

And in response to His provision in the gospel, we remember. We remember in testimony. We remember in song. And we remember by taking the Lord's Supper. And

we don't just remember; we rejoice. We worship. We worship in song. We worship through fellowship. We worship through giving. We worship through service. We worship through offering ourselves as living sacrifices. And please hear me when I say this, because I don't want you to be discouraged: this longing, this contentment, this remembering and rejoicing will not be perfect. It's not for me and it won't be for you. It's not constant. It is not free from inconsistency and distraction and struggles and stumbling. Don't set yourself up for failure by thinking if you don't long for God perfectly or if you don't find your satisfaction in Him adequately or if you don't remember and rejoice fully enough or passionately enough that your faith isn't genuine. As you find yourself falling short (like I do), we simply ask God to grow those things in us, and we press on in faith. And we can do that because we know

that, just as David had confidence that God would defeat his enemies, we know that God has defeated His enemies through the cross of Christ and will fully destroy them at the final judgment. Back in Genesis 3, God promised that the offspring of a woman would crush evil. In Colossians 2:15 we're told God set aside the debt against us, nailing it to the cross, and by doing so, "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Christ." He has conquered His enemies, our enemies, so that we can be assured of full and final satisfaction in Him. Do you find yourself longing for God today? Come to Jesus and have your hunger and your thirst fulfilled.