

March 20 Su Reading 79 — Psalm 63:1-11 — Desiring God

A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.

- 1 O God, you are my God; earnestly I seek you;
my soul thirsts for you;
my flesh faints for you,
as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
- 2 So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
- 3 Because your steadfast love is better than life,
my lips will praise you.
- 4 So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.

- 5 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,
- 6 when I remember you upon my bed,
and meditate on you in the watches of the night;
- 7 for you have been my help,
and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy.
- 8 My soul clings to you;
your right hand upholds me.

- 9 But those who seek to destroy my life
shall go down into the depths of the earth;
- 10 they shall be given over to the power of the sword;
they shall be a portion for jackals.
- 11 But the king shall rejoice in God;
all who swear by him shall exult,
for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

Better Than Life — David said that God’s superb “*steadfast love is better than life*” (v. 3). This anointed, but uncrowned king, was running from King Saul, so he was pulled away from the corporate worship of God at the tabernacle. He missed it deeply. Three times, he said “*my soul*” longs for intimate, public worship of Yahweh. Each time, it tells us something different about God. First, David said, “...*earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you*” (v. 1). God is desirable. He is worth seeking. There is nothing more valuable than God’s love. Money, fame, and power are sought for by the world, but the one who knows God, knows to seek for Him. Next, David said, “*My soul will be satisfied...*” (v. 5). God is not only desirable, He is also satisfying. Money may promise satisfaction, but it cannot deliver it; it is false advertising. On the other hand, God never disappoints us when we come to Him. He always satisfies those who worship Him. Finally, David said, “*My soul clings to you*” (v. 8), saying that when you have a good thing, you want to keep it. When I cling to God in faith, His “*right hand upholds me.*” He loves us much more than we love Him, so we cling to each other. Be satisfied today with One who is “*better than life*”!

To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David, the servant of the LORD, who addressed the words of this song to the LORD on the day when the LORD rescued him from the hand of all his enemies, and from the hand of Saul. He said:

- 1 I love you, O LORD, my strength.*
- 2 The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer,
my God, my rock, in whom I take refuge,
my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.*
- 3 I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised,
and I am saved from my enemies.*

- 16 He sent from on high, he took me;
he drew me out of many waters.*
- 17 He rescued me from my strong enemy
and from those who hated me,
for they were too mighty for me.*
- 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity,
but the LORD was my support.*
- 19 He brought me out into a broad place;
he rescued me, because he delighted in me.*

- 20 The LORD dealt with me according to my righteousness;
according to the cleanness of my hands he rewarded me.*
- 21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD,
and have not wickedly departed from my God.*
- 22 For all his rules^[fn] were before me,
and his statutes I did not put away from me.*
- 23 I was blameless before him,
and I kept myself from my guilt.*
- 24 So the LORD has rewarded me according to my righteousness,
according to the cleanness of my hands in his sight.*

- 25 With the merciful you show yourself merciful;
with the blameless man you show yourself blameless;*
- 26 with the purified you show yourself pure;
and with the crooked you make yourself seem tortuous.*
- 27 For you save a humble people,
but the haughty eyes you bring down.*
- 28 For it is you who light my lamp;
the LORD my God lightens my darkness.*
- 29 For by you I can run against a troop,
and by my God I can leap over a wall.*
- 30 This God—his way is perfect;^[fn]
the word of the LORD proves true;
he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him.*

- 31 For who is God, but the LORD?
And who is a rock, except our God?—*
- 32 the God who equipped me with strength
and made my way blameless.*

33 *He made my feet like the feet of a deer
and set me secure on the heights.*

34 *He trains my hands for war,
so that my arms can bend a bow of bronze.*

35 *You have given me the shield of your salvation,
and your right hand supported me,
and your gentleness made me great.*

36 *You gave a wide place for my steps under me,
and my feet did not slip.*

37 *I pursued my enemies and overtook them,
and did not turn back till they were consumed.*

38 *I thrust them through, so that they were not able to rise;
they fell under my feet.*

39 *For you equipped me with strength for the battle;
you made those who rise against me sink under me.*

40 *You made my enemies turn their backs to me,^[fn]
and those who hated me I destroyed.*

41 *They cried for help, but there was none to save;
they cried to the LORD, but he did not answer them.*

42 *I beat them fine as dust before the wind;
I cast them out like the mire of the streets.*

43 *You delivered me from strife with the people;
you made me the head of the nations;
people whom I had not known served me.*

44 *As soon as they heard of me they obeyed me;
foreigners came cringing to me.*

45 *Foreigners lost heart
and came trembling out of their fortresses.*

46 *The LORD lives, and blessed be my rock,
and exalted be the God of my salvation—*

47 *the God who gave me vengeance
and subdued peoples under me,
48 who rescued me from my enemies;
yes, you exalted me above those who rose against me;
you delivered me from the man of violence.*

49 *For this I will praise you, O LORD, among the nations,
and sing to your name.*

50 *Great salvation he brings to his king,
and shows steadfast love to his anointed,
to David and his offspring forever.*

ESV Footnotes

(18:22) Or *just decrees*

(18:30) Or *blameless*

(18:40) Or *You gave me my enemies' necks*

Who and What — This psalm of David is filled with statements of who God is and what He does. I counted 22 different attributes and 16 actions of God. Many of them refer to Him as a rescuer or deliverer. It would be worth reading again, just to marvel at the descriptions of God's greatness.

David admired what he had seen in the character of God and His activity on the king's behalf. We should marvel as well. One statement that stuck out to me was in verse 35: "...*your gentleness made me great.*" There is a large, ironic contrast between the two ideas of gentleness and greatness. We normally think of greatness as being achieved through power, but God does it through gentleness. This statement also shows God's desire to provide good for us. He wants to make us truly great.

[Lead Me Gently Home Father - YouTube](#)

Lead me gently home, Father,
Lead me gently home;
When life's toils are ended,
And parting days have come,
Sin no more shall tempt me,
Ne'er from Thee I'll roam,
If Thou'll only lead me, Father,
Lead me gently home.

Lead me gently home, Father,
Lead me gently home, Father,
Lest I fall upon the wayside,
Lead me gently home.

— Will L. Thompson (1879)

March 22 Tu Reading 81 — Psalm 121:1-8 — Help from Yahweh

A Song of Ascents.

- ¹ *I lift up my eyes to the hills.
From where does my help come?*
- ² *My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.*
- ³ *He will not let your foot be moved;
he who keeps you will not slumber.*
- ⁴ *Behold, he who keeps Israel
will neither slumber nor sleep.*
- ⁵ *The LORD is your keeper;
the LORD is your shade on your right hand.*
- ⁶ *The sun shall not strike you by day,
nor the moon by night.*
- ⁷ *The LORD will keep you from all evil;
he will keep your life.*
- ⁸ *The LORD will keep
your going out and your coming in
from this time forth and forevermore.*

God Who Keeps — Five times in five verses (vv. 4-8), the Hebrew word *shamár* is used, which means to keep, guard, or watch over. In verse 4, it emphasizes God's constant attentiveness to us:

“he who keeps ... will neither slumber nor sleep.” In the subsequent verses, it focuses on God’s protection for His people: *“your keeper ... your shade”* (v. 5) from harm *“will keep you from all evil”* (v. 7). He also protects us in our activities: He *“... will keep your going out and your coming in”* (v. 8). It concludes with an eternal timeframe: *“...from this time forth and forevermore.”* There is nothing God misses, always being attentive to our needs, and there is nothing God can’t do. *“The LORD is your keeper”* (v. 5) because He loves you.

Meditation: The title of this psalm is *“A Song of Ascents,”* which is intended to be used by people ascending the hill of Zion for worship in Jerusalem: *“I lift up my eyes to the hills...”* (v. 1). That means that this psalm was written after King David conquered Jerusalem and established the tabernacle there. The author of this psalm is not known, but tomorrow we will read another *“Song of Ascents”* from David.

March 23 W Reading 82 — Psalm 124:1-8 — God Our Helper

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

- 1 *If it had not been the LORD who was on our side—
let Israel now say—*
- 2 *if it had not been the LORD who was on our side
when people rose up against us,*
- 3 *then they would have swallowed us up alive,
when their anger was kindled against us;*
- 4 *then the flood would have swept us away,
the torrent would have gone over us;*
- 5 *then over us would have gone
the raging waters.*
- 6 *Blessed be the LORD,
who has not given us
as prey to their teeth!*
- 7 *We have escaped like a bird
from the snare of the fowlers;
the snare is broken,
and we have escaped!*
- 8 *Our help is in the name of the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.*

Giving Credit — This psalm begins and ends with important insights about Yahweh (*“the LORD”*). First, we learn that He is *“on our side”* (v. 1). That says so much about God’s relationship with us. Because of His great love, He is *for* us. The Apostle Paul emphasized the same point. After his relationship statements that *“for those who love God all things work together for good,”* and that we are chosen by Him to be His own, Paul asked, *“If God is for us, who can be against us?”* (Rom. 8:31). God is *“on our side.”* David’s ending statement in this psalm points out that Yahweh is our helper: *“Our help is in the name of the LORD”* (Ps. 124:8). The middle of the psalm describes generally how He helped Israel, allowing them to escape from the threat of an enemy. God did it; it was by the help of Yahweh. Yes, Israel probably went to battle, but the victory was because of God. Do we recognize the hand of the Lord in the struggles we survive? Look for it! It was *“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts”* (Zech. 4:6). David recognized that God was the

reason for Israel's victory and he acknowledged it in the middle of this psalm, "*Blessed be the LORD...*" (Ps. 124:6). Give credit where credit is due!

[O God, Our Help in Ages Past - YouTube](#)

O God, our help in ages past,
our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal home;

—Isaac Watts (1719)

March 24 Th Reading 83 — Psalm 128:1-6 — God Who Blesses

A Song of Ascents.

- 1 *Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,
who walks in his ways!*
- 2 *You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands;
you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.*
- 3 *Your wife will be like a fruitful vine
within your house;
your children will be like olive shoots
around your table.*
- 4 *Behold, thus shall the man be blessed
who fears the LORD.*
- 5 *The LORD bless you from Zion!
May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life!*
- 6 *May you see your children's children!
Peace be upon Israel!*

God Blesses Fear — It might sound strange that God blesses fear, but it is true if the meaning of the word "fear" is understood in this context. It is used twice in this passage about one "*who fears the LORD*" (vv. 1, 4). As we have seen before, this word can be used in both a negative sense (being afraid) and a positive sense (having awe and respect). For example, in the middle of a terrible storm, when the sailors heard that Jonah served "*the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land*" (Jonah 1:9), they "*were exceedingly afraid...*" (v. 10). That was negative fear. However, when the sea immediately became calm after they threw Jonah overboard, "*the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD*" (v. 16). Their positive fear-response was to worship Yahweh. In our psalm, everyone who fears God "*walks in his ways*" (Ps. 128:1), which is obedience. Other Scripture references show observable evidence of how people fear God: "*Job ... feared God and turned away from evil*" (Job. 1:1); another who fears Yahweh, "*greatly delights in his commandments*" (Ps. 112:1) or "*swears [in a vow] to his own hurt*" (Ps. 15:4) or "*walks in righteousness*" (Prov. 14:2); they also "*hope in his steadfast love*" (Ps. 33:18). Fearing God should result in action. When God sees it, He blesses that fear. In Psalm 128, God blesses those who fear Him by providing food (v. 1), family (v. 2), prosperity (v. 5), and long life (v. 6).

A Song of Ascents.

1 *Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD!*

2 *O Lord, hear my voice!*

*Let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleas for mercy!*

3 *If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities,
O Lord, who could stand?*

4 *But with you there is forgiveness,
that you may be feared.*

5 *I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,
and in his word I hope;*

6 *my soul waits for the Lord
more than watchmen for the morning,
more than watchmen for the morning.*

7 *O Israel, hope in the LORD!
For with the LORD there is steadfast love,
and with him is plentiful redemption.*

8 *And he will redeem Israel
from all his iniquities.*

From Forgiveness to Fear — Here is that positive “*fear*” again, fear that respects and worships God. And here, fear follows forgiveness: “*But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared*” (v. 4). It suggests that we cannot really worship God until we are forgiven. That is why the psalmist said, “*my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning*” (v. 6). There is both lack and longing there. We don’t deserve God’s forgiveness, but when one “*pleas for mercy*” (v. 2), “*there is forgiveness*” (v. 4). What awaits us is God’s “*steadfast love, and ... plentiful redemption*” (v. 7). It is worth waiting for, even though the longing wait is a struggle. How can we avoid it? Obedience. The less we sin, the less we must wait for restoration to an intimate, loving relationship with God.

To the choirmaster: according to The Gittith.^[fn] A Psalm of David.

1 *O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!
You have set your glory above the heavens.*

2 *Out of the mouth of babies and infants,
you have established strength because of your foes,
to still the enemy and the avenger.*

3 *When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers,
the moon and the stars, which you have set in place,*

4 *what is man that you are mindful of him,
and the son of man that you care for him?*

- 5 Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings^[fn]
and crowned him with glory and honor.
- 6 You have given him dominion over the works of your hands;
you have put all things under his feet,
- 7 all sheep and oxen,
and also the beasts of the field,
- 8 the birds of the heavens, and the fish of the sea,
whatever passes along the paths of the seas.
- 9 O LORD, our Lord,
how majestic is your name in all the earth!

ESV Footnotes

(8:1) Probably a musical or liturgical term

(8:5) Or *than God*; Septuagint *than the angels*

Creation and Dominion — This psalm opens and closes with identical statements about the majesty of Yahweh. It also twice speaks of glory in this psalm. First is the glory of God in His creation: “*You have set your glory above the heavens*” (v. 1), which are “*the work of your fingers*” (v. 3). We are struck with the wonder of the stars in the universe; the more we learn about its vastness, the more awesome it seems. One of those stars is our sun, our source of light and heat. What a difference it makes for us between night and day! The moon gives us some light at night, displays great variety in its appearance throughout the month, and its gravity provides our changing sea levels with the tides. On the other side of God’s greatness is man’s relative insignificance. How could such a great God care about us? He not only cares about man but has “*crowned him with glory*” (v. 5). There is the second “*glory*”: the glory of man’s dominion. God put mankind in charge of His created earth. The plants and animals were given for man to manage and enjoy. That is having dominion. How does a dog look at its master? The master is like the dog’s god. That is only a glimpse of how we should look at the majesty of God and treat Him with our respect and obedience.

[Majesty - YouTube](#)

Majesty, worship his majesty.
Unto Jesus be all glory, honor, and praise.
Majesty, kingdom authority.
Flow from his throne, unto his own, his anthem raise.

So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus.
Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus, the King.
Majesty, worship his majesty.
Jesus who died, now glorified, King of all kings.

— Jack Hayford (1981)