

Psalm 63.9-11
The Glory of Thirsting No More
Sermon #4 in a Series on Psalm 63

Preached by Pastor Glenn Durham at Dominion Covenant Church, Omaha, Nebraska, on September 3, 2006.
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Main Idea: *The glory of a fully satisfied thirst comes to those who stand with Christ in the battle.*

Introduction

The famous Greek mathematician, Archimedes, was solving a geometry problem when his home city was attacked by the Roman army in 212 BC. As General Marcellus claimed Syracuse for Rome, Archimedes was engrossed in his work. The historian, **Plutarch** (AD 45-120) describes the event: “Archimedes, who was then, as fate would have it, intent upon working out some problem by a diagram, and having fixed his mind alike and his eyes upon the subject of his speculation, he never noticed the incursion of the Romans, nor that the city was taken. In this transport of study and contemplation, a soldier, unexpectedly coming up to him, commanded him to follow to Marcellus, which he declined to do before he had worked out his problem. The soldier, enraged, drew his sword and ran him through.”

It is unlikely that any of us will be so captivated by *geometry* as to miss a war! Yet in a spiritually dry and weary land some of us are totally unaware and unprepared for the spiritual battles in which we are embroiled by virtue of our allegiance to Christ. We know we thirst; the land is dry; but we are oblivious to the enemies stealing water!

Psalm 63 grabs our attention, graphically depicting a raging battle and revealing that a fully satisfied thirst comes only to those who stand with Christ in the fray.

This is our final week in Psalm 63, using the theme of “thirsting” to teach our souls the *glorious* desirability of God. David presses this upon us from the first verse: “...my soul thirsts for you; my flesh longs for you, as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.”

The first sermon, an overview, challenged us with the *glory* of thirsting deeply. Though difficult in a land of wealth and consumption, we considered intentionally deepening our thirst by eliminating distractions which prevent our sensing how great is the soul’s longing for God.

Helen and I were once taken out to dinner by a couple. As we drove, the wife said, “We are going to a great restaurant; I did not eat lunch so that I would be hungry for a wonderful meal.” *That’s it!* Psalm 63 calls us to that *spiritual* discipline.

In the second sermon we noted the *glory* of slaking a deep thirst with a great God. Our duty during spiritual droughts is: 1) Recognize *God’s* claim on our souls, 2) Remember *God’s* covenant redemption, and 3) Respond to *God’s* lovingkindness. We do so believing *God’s* word, not because we always feel the worth of duty.

Last week we noticed how *God’s* glory and our happiness are united when *God* is revealed and proven to be the only one “who satisfies sinful, guilty, aching hearts. This conviction breeds a people who go hard after *God* on Sunday morning” (John Piper).

Today is the last in our series: the glory of thirsting no more. While we rejoice at the promise of *God* to fill us with spiritual food as we meditate and remember and praise and place our faith in *Jesus*, we recognize that having our thirst satisfied is NOT our universal and

continuous experience. *Fallen people living in a fallen world sometimes have very dry souls!* The world, the flesh and the devil conspire by inundating us with distractions, temptations, and all-out warfare to keep us far from God, parched and weary. How wonderful that the Bible promises a day when we will thirst no more!

When Jesus was here, he spoke of it with a woman: “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.... Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty forever” (John 4.10, 13-14).

That is a glorious promise!

So how do we get there? One part is described at the end of our text. It is not the ending we might expect. What could “imprecatory prayers,” praying against another person have to do with finding our soul’s satisfaction in God? To find out, first notice....

1. In Order to Glory in the Promise of Thirsting No More, We Must Have Our Vision of God Enlarged (Psalm 63.9-11)

The Bible often surprises; it is not the sweet, sanitized book expected. Jesus is *not* all meek and mild. He rebukes sharply, calls his enemies “snakes” and “sons of Satan,” and assures us that he will one day separate the godly from the evil, and cast those whom he calls, “goats,” into eternal torment.

Likewise, the Father is not an old dotard overlooking some sins and forgetting who committed others. He is a mighty King, a warrior, a persistent foe of sin and evil.

Our family has been reading through Samuel of late. Wild events are recorded there! In one place God condemns the sons of Eli for mocking worship. So Eli tries to correct his two boys: “Now Eli was very old, and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing to all Israel, and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And he said to them, ‘Why do you do such things?... If someone sins against a man, God will mediate for him, but if someone sins against the LORD, who can intercede for him?’ But they would not listen to the voice of their father, for it was the will of the LORD to put them to death” (1Samuel 2.22-25).

Does your vision of God allow it to be *his will* to put people to death?

Nor is it only the “Old Testament God” who does so! Just yesterday I read in 1Corinthians that God sometimes kills us to prevent our worse apostasy: “For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined so that we may not be condemned along with the world.”

It is easy and enjoyable to see God exalted in the salvation of sinners; we are less likely to imagine his glory in the damnation of the unrepentant. God does not save everyone in order to reveal the righteousness of his judgment. Romans 9 explains this clearly:

When Rebecca had conceived children...though they were not yet born and had done nothing either good or bad—in order that God’s purpose of election might continue, not because of works but because of his call—she was told, “The older will serve the younger.” As it is written, “Jacob I loved, but Esau I hated.” What shall we say then? Is there injustice on God’s part? By no means! For he says to Moses, “I will have mercy on

whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.” So then it depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy. For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, “For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth.” So then he has mercy on whomever he wills, and he hardens whomever he wills....

The promise of thirsting no more depends on the destruction of God’s enemies because God’s enemies delight in bringing God’s people to despair. In order to believe in the God of the Bible, we must realize that he will not rest until he has made his enemies a footstool for his feet. Our vision of God must be enlarged.

2. In Order to Glory in the Promise of Thirsting No More, We Must Have Our Vision of Evil Enlarged (Psalm 63.9)

Joe Fisher, a “New Age Guru” contacts spirits through channeling. In his book, he explains how he believed that these spirits were benign, but when he investigated the things they told him, he found they lied! He was shocked, but forced to admit that there might be evil spirits.

Whether Fisher truly contacted spirits or not, I have no idea. But I know this: there is a Devil, a malevolent enemy of all who love God and his son, Jesus Christ.

Charles Spurgeon says of these enemies: “They would not merely injure but utterly ruin.” One gospel tract says, “God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life.” This passage reminds us that Satan hates us and has a terrible plan for our lives. The enemies of God will destroy us in any way possible.

You know that from **1Peter 5.8**: “Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.” Unlike our silly caricatures, he does not wear a red suit and wield a pitchfork. Instead, he “disguises himself as an angel of light,” to more easily deceive and damage (2Corinthians 11.14).

David tells us two things about our enemies.

First, they seek to destroy (9a).

Matthew Henry notes: “They envied and hated him for his wisdom, piety and usefulness and they sought to destroy his soul by banishing him from God’s ordinances, which are its nourishment and support.”

^{NKJ} **1Samuel 26.19**: “Now therefore, please, let my lord the king hear the words of his servant: If the LORD has stirred you up against me, let Him accept an offering. But if *it is* the children of men, *may* they *be* cursed before the LORD, for they have driven me out this day from sharing in the inheritance of the LORD, saying, ‘Go, serve other gods.’”

These enemies desire not only to take David’s life, but to turn him from God! They press him toward idolatry, seeking to entrap him in sin and enslave his soul.

We may feel safe in the midst of our wealth and comfort, but be assured of this: should God convince us of the surpassing desirability of knowing him, such that we make or renew a commitment to going hard after God, then we will find Satan’s devices to be dangerous and destructive. He will use any weapon to drive us from the joy of God’s presence into the desert of barrenness.

Now David tells us something else about our enemies: they are themselves destined to destruction.

Spurgeon: “Destroyers shall be destroyed. Those who hunt souls shall be themselves the victims. Into the pits which they dug for others they shall fall themselves. The slayers shall be slain, and the grave shall cover them. The hell which they in their curse invoked for others shall shut its mouth upon them. Every blow aimed against the godly will recoil on the persecutor; he who smites a believer drives a nail in his own coffin.”

Some of our dryness comes from our sin: we have not sought the Lord. We also thirst because we live in a dry and weary land, a fallen world. But we will not have the full picture, nor come to a biblical solution until we also recognize that our enemies are putting salt in our water and sand in our bread. “Thirsting no more” requires that we see how terrible are the enemies. Only such a vision of evil will move us to pray and labor and make a bold stand with Jesus!

3. In Order to Glory in the Promise of Thirsting No More, We Must Have Our Vision of the Battle Enlarged (Psalm 63.10)

David plans to see his enemies run through with a very real and deadly sword of steel. Such is not our privilege on this side of the cross. The battle we wage is spiritual, not physical. But there is real armor and there are real combatants, real casualties, real victories and defeats. And those who will no longer thirst must not studiously avoid war, but follow Captain Jesus into the heart of the fray!

Dr. William Thomson describes the jackals which David calls to eat the bodies of his slain enemies: “These sinister, guilty, woebegone brutes, when pressed with hunger, gather in gangs among the graves, and yell in rage, and fight like fiends over their midnight orgies; but on the battle field is their great carnival. Oh! let me never even dream that any one dear to me has fallen by the sword, and lies there to be torn, and gnawed at, and dragged about by these hideous howlers.” (*The Land and the Book*, 1861).

Such images make us recoil, but they realistically portray the nature of the fight.

My family enjoys watching old Star Trek TV shows. There every enemy is made into a friend by the compassionate ministry of psychologist Diana Troy and the wise words of Captain Jean Luc-Pickard. Until they met the Borg. The Borg are unlike any other enemy because they cannot be reasoned with; they cannot be domesticated; they cannot be controlled. The battle with the Borg is a battle to the death. There is no peace and no negotiating.

David has enemies like that; you do also.

William Gurnall wrote *Christian in Complete Armour* in 1662. For 1200 pages, this faithful pastor presses upon his beloved congregation the awesome fight in which they find themselves. From the introduction: “The subject of the treatise is solemn: *A War between the Saint and Satan*, and that so bloody a one, that the cruelest which was ever fought by men will be found but sport and child’s play to this. It is a spiritual war that you shall read of; and that not a history of what was fought many ages past and is now over, but of what is now doing—the tragedy is a present acting—and that not at the farthest end of the world, but what concerns thee and every one that reads it. The stage whereon this war is fought is every man’s own soul. There is no neuter [neutral ground] in this war. The whole world is engaged in the quarrel, either for God against Satan, or for Satan against God.”

Will we fight the battle? This is no place for cowards or pretenders toward religion. It will be neither cozy nor comfortable. But if we are to see our thirst fully satisfied, we must “engage the Borg.”

4. In Order to Glory in the Promise of Thirsting No More, We Must Have Our Vision of Ourselves in Christ Enlarged (Psalm 63.11)

When we are on the run; when we are spiritual dry; when we doubt our adoption and are fearful of our Father, these are hard words to pray. We feel neither confident of glory nor of asking God to silence our enemies. On top of all that, how do we look forward to the day when we will thirst no more, when it depends upon the damnation of others?

Such is possible only when we consider ourselves alive in Christ. Otherwise prayer against our enemies becomes arrogant and vindictive—the opposite of the intention of the one who said, “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust.”

What are we to do?

- 1) We pray Christ’s words against Christ’s enemies: “Lord, may all who oppose you be brought down. Convert or confuse them, so that they either are with you or do no harm against your elect.”
- 2) We put on the armor of Ephesians 6 and stand with Christ in the battle.
- 3) We labor for the advancement of God’s kingdom, struggling mightily against our three greatest enemies: the world, the flesh and the devil.
- 4) We commit ourselves to study, both his Word and the Work of the Spirit throughout the history of the church—a history which has much to teach us about the battle we face.

5. Conclusion

Two 6 year old boys were arguing after church. One boy said, “Oh, there isn’t any devil.” The other, rather upset, answered: “What do you mean, there isn’t any devil? It talks about him all the way through the Bible!” The first said, “Oh that’s not true, you know. It’s just like Santa Claus; the devil turns out to be your daddy.”

Martin Luther: “Each Christian should be so armed that he himself is sure of his belief and of the doctrine and is so equipped with the sayings from the Word of God that he can stand up against the devil and defend himself, when men seek to lead him astray.”

When you feel barren and dry, the answer always begins with seeking God. But do not neglect to take up the battle against the enemy, for he seeks to drive us to a dry and weary land.