

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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**SERMON TITLE** Soul Thirst

**SERIES**

**DATE** 10/29/2023

**KEY SCRIPTURE** Psalm 63:1-5

**SYNOPSIS** We each have spiritual senses which can only be satisfied by God.

**HIGHLIGHTS**



## ☞ Soul Thirst

We've been talking about putting God first in everything and always giving him the place of priority. We want to really know God, not just intellectually, but relationally, in a way that transforms us.

### ☞ Psalms 63:1-5

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. 2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory. 3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. 4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. 5 My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.

David was in the wilderness. We all go through wilderness experiences when life is hard and trouble is around every corner. There are times when our walk with God feels barren and dry, like a desert. Though he was hungry and thirsty during this time, David recognized a greater desire within. He needed the Lord.

### O God, you are my God,

Elohim you are my El = Elohim is sort of a generic word for god, while El focuses on the strength and power of God. It is also more personal. God is not just some far-off deity, judging humanity. He is personal and knowable. He's not just a god; he's The God, and he can be Your God.

☞ **You can personally know God.** David's wilderness experience became a worship experience. He didn't focus on his troubles, but rather focused on his Lord.

### earnestly I seek you;

☞ Since there is an inner desire which can only be satisfied by God, David chose to **go after God wholeheartedly**. Have you ever had an itch that just wouldn't go away? You just have to scratch it. If it's hard to reach, you may have to get creative, but you will find a way to scratch that itch. Likewise, there's an itch in our souls which only God can relieve.

David was earnest about seeking the Lord. He wasn't just half-hearted or lackadaisical about it. He was determined to go after God. Have you ever been famished? I mean really, really hungry? In that moment, you're focused on satisfying that hunger. You can't really focus very well on anything else because that hunger is pervasive and you can't ignore it. So, it becomes **a priority**.

*Some translations say, "early I seek you," because the word is closely related to the Hebrew for "dawn." Whether it's translated "earnestly" or "early," it speaks of priority. Jesus practiced seeking the Lord in the morning. When you seek God this way, you center your mind, heart and soul around him. Your inward man is renewed and grace is given for the day ahead.*



## my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you,

Here's the truth – this is a matter of the soul. As we discussed last week, it's more than an intellectual pursuit. It's more than just learning factual information about God. It's actually a need and a craving within your soul. (*The Donut Man was right*)

☞ Wiersbe... **Just as we have physical senses that are satisfied by God's creation, so we have spiritual senses that can be satisfied only by Christ.** When you're genuinely hungry, only eating some food will satisfy. When you're thirsty, you've got to get a drink. When you're exhausted from work, you've got to get some rest. When your soul is weary and run down, you need more than rest and relaxation. You need to connect with God.

## in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

This is how it feels sometimes when life throws a bunch of curveballs. It's also how it feels when you haven't connected with God in a while. Things begin to feel dry and weary. If church feels like that, it may be because you're not really connecting with God. You're just going through the motions of a group experience, when **what you really need is a God experience.**

That's why I frequently encourage you to pour your heart into worship and prayer. Don't just say the words on the screen. Fully give your all in expressing your desire and your love for God. It's not that he needs to hear it, but that you need to express it. And, in doing so, you experience his presence in much more depth. You don't have to stay stuck in the desert. You can draw near to God, who is the living the water.

## 2 I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

How many have witnessed God at work in your life? Have you seen or heard about a healing in someone you know? Have you felt God's presence in a powerful way that moved your heart and soul possibly to tears? David recalls that kind of experience with the Lord, and clearly, he longs for that again. I want that for us as well. Sometimes we need to intentionally remember what God has already done because that will spur us on to desire more from the Lord.

Revelation 2:5

☞ Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and **do the things you did at first.** Remember, repent, redo!

In David's case, the height of his experience with God was in the sanctuary. For many today, your best experience with God also happened at church or some related event. It was probably when you were really diving in. For me and many others, it was during singing and worship, or an intense time of prayer. That's when I've sensed the presence of the Lord most profoundly. The Lord says, "do those things again."



### 3 Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.

Sometimes we forget just how good the love of God is. And I'm not just talking about the way he treats us. I'm talking about the simple goodness and love of God, himself. His love for us is better than anything else.

Here in America, it's easy to forget this. There are a lot of things in life which are desirable, and we so easily go after those things. We have a ton of options to pursue and most of those are just distractions from what we really need.

We can get caught up in all kinds of substitutes and counterfeits which don't really satisfy. Drugs and alcohol are widely known as things people use to try to relieve their pain or to satisfy some soul craving, but they don't actually work. But even things like recreation and relaxation can become attempted substitutes for the real deal our souls need. As I said earlier, when it's a soul-  
☞ weariness, you need more than rest – **you need to connect with God.**

### 4 I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.

David sees the truth of his soul-thirst and knows that nothing else, but God will satisfy. So, he  
☞ chooses to **pursue the Lord earnestly** and he clarifies here how he will do that. He will **praise** the Lord.

This praising the Lord is “shabach” which means to applaud or express admiration, often loudly. And, here, David follows it with the lifting up of his hands. This was often a posture in Jewish prayers, but in this context, it is a proper posture for praising God.

*Peter Swann... I wonder if there isn't more value to lifting our hands than we generally think. Raising of hands is not required, but it can be a meaningful part of worship. Besides the Scriptural examples, it's also all over our culture. When we celebrate, what do we do? Stand up, yell, and raise our hands. And if anything in life is worth celebrating, Jesus and the gospel are worth celebrating. It's striking to me that we celebrate college football with a biblical example that we might not celebrate our Savior with.*

Nate Beard wrote an article about raising hands and concluded that it's all about connecting with God, which is what we're talking about today. He related it to how we reach for help when we're falling. We raise our hands when we're cheering on our favorite team. We raise our hands when we're trying to get someone's attention. We raise our hands as a sign of surrender, as well as to volunteer for something. And, we raise our hands when we are reaching out to receive something. All of these can apply to raising our hands to God in worship. In David's psalm here, it's part of how he will earnestly pursue and praise the Lord, connecting with God.





**5 My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.**

Finally, David is confident that as he focuses on the Lord instead of the desert, he will be satisfied. **☞ Since God is the one who can meet the deepest needs of the inner soul, when we pursue him, he will bring satisfaction.** He can scratch that itch within your soul that nothing else will reach. He offers living water for your thirsty soul, which can fully quench that thirst. When you're really hungry, almost anything sounds good, but when God meets the needs of your heart, it's like a banquet of the very best foods. He brings true satisfaction to your soul.

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We all have a soul-thirst which can only be satisfied by the Lord. Everything else is a poor substitute which will not really satisfy. You need to connect with God and have your very own, personal God-experience. You can set yourself up for a God-encounter by pursuing the Lord wholeheartedly and giving him your very best praise.

Perhaps you've been feeling like you're in the wilderness or desert. So many things are out of whack and troubles are unrelenting. Life has become mundane. Your walk with the Lord has been dull and dry. It doesn't have to stay that way. You can find relief and satisfaction for your soul-thirst. It's in the Lord. You can know him personally.

**☞ Put him first. Pursue him. Praise him.**

Here for you – closing song