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SERMON TITLE Thirsty for God, part 2

SERIES Thirsty for God

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KEY SCRIPTURE Psalm 63

SYNOPSIS We all have a soul thirst that only God can satisfy. We can choose to go after God with all our heart.

HIGHLIGHTS Closing song live: Better is One Day



☞ **Thirsty for God, part 2**

Psalms 63

1 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.

You've heard of God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; the God of David and Solomon; the God of the prophets and apostles. But do you know him as your God? I want you to have a personal experience with God. I want your faith to be based on your own walk with the Lord, not just what you've heard from someone else. *Dr. Newman wouldn't let you get away with just quoting your parents or your pastor.*

☞ **My soul thirsts:** as I said last week, **soul issues cannot be resolved with worldly solutions.**

Ecclesiastes 3:11 says that God has put eternity in the hearts of humans. Everyone has an innate desire for God. There is an emptiness in the heart of everyone that only God can fill. People try to fill that void with so many things, but never find true satisfaction. Drugs, alcohol, pornography, recreation, work and more, only leave us still feeling empty. Actually, they make you feel even more empty over time. There is a hunger and thirst inside you, in your soul, that can only be satisfied by God. The Donut Man had it right, there's a hole in the middle of your heart.

This world is a dry and weary land, without water when it comes to soul thirst. As Jesus said to the woman at the well, you can drink but you'll be thirsty again. Those other things may temporarily reduce your thirst, but they will not satisfy. You'll be looking for something else before long. But Jesus offers the living water that can truly satisfy.

☞ So, **seek after the Lord.** Don't just lazily hope to encounter him, go after him wholeheartedly. Some believers have lost their zeal for God and wonder what happened. Often, they will blame others for their situation. "Somebody hurt me and soured me to the things of God." "My friends moved away and now I don't have anyone to relate to when it comes to my faith." "Church has become boring, so I've lost interest in God."

Those are all excuses to remove the responsibility from yourself. If your fire for God has dwindled, it's time to seek him wholeheartedly. Don't blame somebody else. Don't make ☞ excuses, just go after God. Like I said last week, **do the things you did at first.** (Revelation 2:5).

Think about those earlier days when you were fired up about your faith. What were you doing back then? Think about your camp, breakaway or retreat experience that really energized you. What did you do during that time?

I know there's a crowd factor that works to inspire you, but what did you personally do? Did you just sit there like a bump on a log or did you participate? Did you go away and just dismiss what happened during the meeting, or did you continue the conversation afterward? Did you just watch the leaders worshiping, or did you enter in, too? Did you stay in your seat, or did you go to the altar to pray and worship? Do the things you did at first!



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

☞ This is what I want for all of you. **I want you to see, hear, feel, and experience the power and glory of God.** A significant part of that kind of experience happens when we sing songs of praise and worship.

☞ Psalm 22:3 says that God inhabits, or sits enthroned on the praises of his people. **When we praise him, he draws near.** James 4:8 actually says “Come near to God and he will come near to you.”

There is nothing else like the power and glory of God. His presence is what can bring satisfaction to that soul thirst we’ve been talking about. Have you had an experience with God where you sensed his presence so strong that you got goosebumps? Have you seen his power through answered prayer? Have you felt the overwhelming sensation of his glory?

Table talk: Share your experience of God’s power and glory with each other. What did it feel like? What was happening that prompted that moment? Have you seen a powerful healing or miracle? Share those stories with each other.

I’ve had many times of experiencing his presence. The most profound was probably at Bible Camp in my teens when I was first filled with the Spirit. I was kneeling and praying at the altar and I felt tingles run up and down my spine and then it literally felt like someone was praying for me with their arm around my shoulder. When I turned to hug who I thought was my sister, there was no one there. I’ve also seen some powerful moves of God where people fell down, because they couldn’t stand up in the presence of God. I’ve been there when people felt such a spiritual release from the Lord that they couldn’t help but shout out. I’ve seen people’s lives completely transformed when they surrendered to the Lord... addictions broken, relationships healed.

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.

Here’s the truth: when you have really experienced God like we’re talking about, then verse 3 will make sense to you. His love is better than life. His power and glory, revealed in his presence is the best experience you can ever have. It’s better than jazz music performed by the Manhattan Transfer or Michael Buble. It’s better than a medium rare steak with green beans at Texas Roadhouse or a cheddar biscuit at Red Lobster. Those are my favorites, but God is better. What about you? Think about your favorite things. God is better!

The psalmist says “my lips will glorify you; I will praise you as long as I live; I will lift up my hands; I will sing and praise you.” Some of this is in response to experiencing the presence of the Lord. But some of it is indicative of the way to experience the presence of God.



You have to make a decision; a personal choice that you will praise and glorify God. You don't have to wait to be inspired by someone else. You don't have to be in the "perfect" situation of ☞ music, lighting and mood. **You can choose to enter in to God's presence.**

Last week we saw how the psalmist remembered taking the lead when it came to worship. He wasn't waiting for someone else to say just the right words; he was determined to meet with God. You can be too.

6 On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.

Here's another part of being on fire for God; another part of satisfying your soul thirst: **Your ☞ walk with God needs to be number one in your life.** Here, the psalmist says that even in the middle of the night, the Lord was on his mind. When you wake up at 2 or 3 am, where are your thoughts?

Naomi says when she wakes up at night she just begins to pray for whoever happens to be on her mind. That's an ongoing connection with God. I've had times when I woke and asked the Lord if there is something he wanted to say to me.

Here's an interesting point. If we can train ourselves to think this way, God can really connect with us. During the day, we are so easily distracted by life happening all around. But at night, our defenses come down, hopefully our minds are more at rest, and God can finally get through. When you wake up during the night, talk to God.

7 Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.

Perhaps you've been going through some difficult times and circumstances. Remember, God is your constant help. Psalms 46:1 says, "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." He is always with you. Remember too, that God has not moved away. He is the same yesterday, today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8).

The "shadow of his wings" could be a reference to the ark of the covenant which was covered by the wings of the cherubim and was the place where the glory of God resided. So, here again we are reminded of the presence of God and how wonderful it is.

Other verses about God's shadowing wings:

Psalms 17:8

Keep me as the apple of your eye; hide me in the shadow of your wings... this speaks of a treasured possession which is kept safe and tucked away for protection. That is what **you are to ☞ God – his treasured possession.**

Psalms 36:7

How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow ☞ of your wings... It's like **a big hug is coming from God** and when you're in that hug, nothing can hurt you.



Psalms 57:1

Have mercy on me, O God, have mercy on me, for in you my soul takes refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed... even if you've brought the ☞ trouble upon yourself, **God is merciful and welcomes you back into his arms.**

That's how wonderful it is to be in the presence of the Lord. There is mercy, refuge, love, protection and comfort in the Lord.

8 My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.

KJV says "my soul follows hard after you." NKJV says "my soul follows close behind you." NCV says "I stay close to you." The Message says "I hold on to you for dear life." All of these give us ☞ a picture here. God is stable and trustworthy, therefore, we should **stay close to him, holding on, and following wherever he leads.** This is an extension of verse 1, which said "earnestly I seek you." The idea is that wherever God is, is where I want to be.

9 They who seek my life will be destroyed; they will go down to the depths of the earth. 10 They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals.

Always remember, you have a real enemy that wants to destroy you. There might be a few people that don't like you, but that's not the enemy I'm talking about. 1 Peter 5:8 says, "Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour." John 10:10... "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy..."

I know it can get wearisome resisting the enemy, but here's the good news: he's going down. Jesus is coming soon and the enemy will be thrown into the lake of fire. Jesus wins! There's ☞ another reason to stay close to him. **With him, we are more than conquerors.** (Romans 8:37).

Pianist & singer get ready

11 But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God's name will praise him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced.

You and I are the king in this context and we will rejoice in God. In other words, we will see his victory and will rejoice when we do. Here's another interpretation of these words: we can choose to rejoice in God. If you really love the Lord and are loyal to him, **Piano start to play... choose to praise him; ☞ choose to press in to his presence; choose to pursue him with all your heart.**

There is a soul thirst within that can only be satisfied by God. You can't find real satisfaction in anything else, so, go after God. Earnestly seek him. And, when you do, you will begin to see the power and glory of God. You will walk with him and sense his presence with you at all times and you will rejoice. It will be the best decision you've ever made. So, go after God!

Song: Better is one day