

A MEDITATION ON PSALM 63

from **“DAVID’S CROWN - Sounding the Psalms!”**
by Malcolm Guite
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For love lifts time into eternity,
kisses each passing moment into life,
gives us glimpses of Your unfading Glory.

We fall away like every falling leaf,
but even as we fall we yearn for You.
Our prayers are passing and our blessings brief,
yet each one reaches deeply into You,
for You yourself are reaching into us
to breathe your life in us and make us new.

The barren wasteland is made glorious
with blossoms, breathing an eternal Spring,
and even as this first world fades from us,

we step into the true world and we sing
a joyful song, for there at last we see
our heart’s desire: our Risen Lord and King.

Caroline Sackley

LENT 2022 PROGRAMME

9th March	Noël Hector on Psalm 42
16th March	Joshua Fowler on Psalm 117
23rd March	Caroline Sackley on Psalm 63
30th March	Nicholas Maddock on Psalm 22
6th April	Tim Daplyn on Psalm 95

*Copies of the notes on all of these Psalms are available
at the back of each church or from the Church Office*

The Benefice of EAST CLEVEDON - LENT COURSE 2022

Diocese of Bath and Wells

LENT COURSE 2022

PSALM 63 (NRSV)

Comfort and Assurance in God’s Presence

A Psalm of David, when he was in the Wilderness of Judah

- 1 O God, you are my God, 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;
I will lift up my hands and call on your name.
- 5 My soul is satisfied as with a rich feast,
and my mouth praises you with joyful lips
- 6 when I think of you on 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 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 prey 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.

PRAYER

To You we come, radiant Lord
the goal of our desiring,
beyond all earthly beauty;
gentle protector,
strong deliverer,
in the night You are our confidence
from first light be our joy;
through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen**

BACKGROUND

This Psalm is attributed to David and possibly written when David was seeking refuge during Absalom's rebellion or from his wilderness years before he came to the throne. With everything threatened and no one he could trust, he called out to the one who could satisfy his deepest longings. It is an implicit prayer and was prescribed by the early church for daily public prayers. An expression of longing ending with the expectation of joy. And in the darkness of the night a remembering of the delights of closeness, the feeling of being safe in the embrace of God. There is both a search for God and the sense of his presence, certainty and doubt that often have a balance in faith.

REFLECTION

In the same way that water is essential to life, the psalmist is acknowledging that God is essential for life as well. There are longings, memories, reliance, praise and confidence here in this psalm, it is passionate as so many psalms are. David was probably lonely in the wilderness, but as we know we don't have to be in a wilderness to be lonely or depressed or to feel that everything is against us. That God is far from us.

And yet here, we have a man expressing his relationship with God, expressing his love, praise and thanksgiving from the beginning of the day to the end. Longing for someone you love, wanting to start the day off with them, is a hint for us and how we discipline our spiritual

lives. I have a friend who set her alarm half an hour before it was needed to spend that time with God, so in the working week that was 5.30am. Self-discipline and longing.

I chose this psalm not only for the beauty of its words and expressions, but because it is something I aim for, long for, but fall far short of. It reminds me of my humanity- I can have, have had, mountain top experiences, and times of feeling sheltered, contained under the wings of God, times of feeling in the wilderness and mostly humdrum existing, juggling all the balls of faith, family, work, friends, study and housework. But sometimes praise and thanksgiving get lost in just keeping going.

But then there is the joy when it does break through, the beauty of nature, a friend's warm hug. I can remember a dog walk after a very hard winter, when I suddenly realised spring had broken through, there was a certain warmth to the sun, the very air felt and smelt different and coming out of hiding in the banks were spring flowers. My out of tune singing of "My God how great thou art" had the dogs looking over their shoulders and getting as far away as possible.

David has his times of anger and despair, but his longing for God and his experience of God's loving kindness, increased his desire to praise him, this was a relationship not a one-way street. Sometimes people yearn for things to fill the hole inside themselves, and yet nothing ever does for the long term, could God fill that hole?

Another thing I try to remember from this psalm is that praise and thanksgiving can be there in bad times as well as good. David was hiding in a wilderness, things were bleak, and yet his love for God shines through in this song of praise and thanksgiving. Remembering our blessings even in the hard times, when it is tough just to put one foot in front of another, remembering God is with us, surrounding us with his arms, sheltering us under his wings and allowing a seepage or a full outpouring of praise and thanksgiving as we acknowledge in this psalm a desire for God's presence, provision and protection.