

God's Lovingkindness Is Better Than Life

by Sandeep Poonen

This sermon focuses on redirecting our hunger and longing for God, especially in times of wilderness and lack. Drawing from David's example in Psalms 63, it emphasizes the need to prioritize seeking God's presence and recognizing His loving kindness as better than all aspects of our lives. The message encourages a deep, personal connection with God's loving kindness, contrasting David's experience with his son Solomon's lack of understanding and application of God's kindness in his life.

Scripture: Psalms 63:1, Psalms 63:3, Psalms 63:6, Psalms 73:25, 1 Samuel 23:14, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 2 Chronicles 6:14, 2 Chronicles 6:42, Proverbs 3:3

Topics: "Longing for God's Presence", "Understanding God's Loving Kindness"

Description

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Transcript

Psalms 63 verse 3, because your loving kindness is better than life, my lips will praise you. This verse is in Psalm 63 and that verse begins by telling David talking about how he longs for God and his soul thirsts for him, his flesh yearns for God in a dry and weary land. This was David in the wilderness, it's a picture of dryness, it's a picture of having want or not having a lot.

We have less than what we normally have and so there's a real hunger. The question is not whether we act as if we're not hungry or not, whether we're in the wilderness or not. No, we can admit, Lord, these are the hunger pangs, I'm in the wilderness.

But David is an example where he redirected his hunger in verse 1 to the Lord. He said, Lord, I'm in the wilderness, I am tempted to be hungry and thirsty, but my soul thirsts for you, my flesh yearns for you. Where there is no water, I shall seek you earnestly.

Similar to what Jesus also faced in the wilderness when he was tempted, the devil came and told him to turn stone into bread after 40 days of fasting, Jesus was extremely hungry. So the devil knew that Jesus felt the pain of hunger for food, but Jesus again redirected his feelings of hunger and said, yep, I'm hungry,

but I'm going to focus my hunger on God's word. I'm going to focus my hunger on the words that are proceeding out of God's mouth.

So God doesn't promise us a life free of wildernesses or hunger, or things where we have want, he'll give us what we need, he'll give us less than what we used to have. People will hurt us, people will let us down. But in those times of hunger for comfort, hunger for even some of our physical needs, I say, Lord, I'm going to go to you, I'm going to long for you, you'll provide all my needs, you've promised to take care of all of my needs, but I want to use that hunger to redirect it to long for you.

Then he says these verses, I've seen you in the sanctuary, I've seen your power and your glory there, and there I've realized that your loving kindness is better than life. And as that picture we saw in that picture, we have to put everything that is in our life on one side. My health goes on one side, my children go on one side, my wife goes on that side, my job and my career and my home and my future goes on that side.

And then on the other side, all on that one side, and on the other side I put God's loving kindness. And I wait, and I must ask God to open my eyes to see that his loving kindness is better than everything that I have in my life. And David tells me that he sees that in God's presence, in God's sanctuary.

That's when, when I go in God's presence, quite like Asaph in Psalm 73, he had so many things that were troubling him, but then he goes to God's sanctuary and he goes to God's presence and he realizes, wait, whom have I in heaven but thee, on earth I desire nothing. And so it's when we face the hunger pains and the challenges in life because of earthly circumstances, whatever it may be, the challenge is to redirect ourselves, to seek for God and to go into his presence. And as we go to God in his sanctuary, where it's just him and us, we can see, ask God to open our eyes to his glory and his power.

Then it's there that I can grow in my conviction that his loving kindness is better than life. And then I see in the rest of that Psalm that, you know, it starts off with that part that we memorized, my lips shall praise you, but it's not just my lips. I respond with everything in me.

My lips shall praise you. I lift up my hands in your name, verse four. My soul, my feelings is satisfied with marrow and fatness, like having a great meal.

My mouth offers praises, verse five. I remember you, it's my mind now on my bed. If I'm on my bed of sickness, I'll think about you.

I meditate on you. If I wake up in the middle of the night, I'll sing for joy, verse seven. My soul clings to you when my feelings are telling me to go in one direction.

No, I'm going to cling to you and your right hand upholds me. And this is not a temporary response as in the old Testament, this was a temporary response. David was singing this in the wilderness at one point, but another time he should have sung it when he was on the rooftop and his eyes were tempted to lust.

That was when he should have also, it should have been a sustained response. Lord, I want to go back into your presence with my words and my lips and my actions and my hands lifted up, reaching out to you for help, my feelings, my soul. I don't want to be seeking the fatness of this earth.

I want to be satisfied with you, even though my circumstances, it's sickness or whatever it is, I'm going to remember you and meditate on you. You know, and one of the things I want to point out in this reference, I was looking at this up, when did David write the psalm? We're not exactly sure, but there was one time

that he was in the wilderness in Judah and there's a verse I quickly want to point you to is 1 Samuel chapter 23, verse 14. I'll read it to you.

You can turn to it later if you want. So it says in 1 Samuel 23, verse 14, David stayed in the wilderness and the strongholds and remained in the Hinn country in the wilderness of Ziph, which is in Judah. And Saul sought him every day, but God did not deliver him into his hand.

I like that expression, Saul sought him every single day, but God did not deliver him into Saul's hand. God saved him and protected him. And that's the message for us today.

God can help us every day. Even if we're in the wilderness, even if we're feeling a lot of pains on this earth, God can help me in every single situation. God can help me in every single trial and temptation.

As it says in 1 Corinthians 10, 13, it is meaningful to say, Lord, every day, lead us not into temptation and deliver us from evil. God can deliver me from the hands of the enemy and out of every plan of the enemy, God can deliver us out of evil. And the last thing I want to say is this loving kindness of God.

I've been struck by how the loving kindness of God was so real to David and so huge and massive for David that he could say it, I put it in the way in balance and it is better than everything in my life. But there's a warning that I have to make it personal because Solomon, his son, never experienced the same loving kindness of God and never did that weighing the same way David did. I want to point out a verse in 2 Chronicles 6, 2 Chronicles 6, this is when Solomon had built the temple and he had built his own house and he completed both those and he's built all the instruments inside the temple and he's dedicated the temple to the Lord and then he prays in that dedication prayer in 2 Chronicles 6, verse 14 and 15, he says, O Lord, the God of Israel, there is no God like you in heaven and on earth, keeping covenant and showing loving kindness to your servants who walk before you as you did to your servant David, my father, that you promised him.

Indeed, you have spoken with your mouth and have fulfilled it with your own hand as it is to this day. He's bringing his father to mind, but he couldn't quite talk about how God has loving kindness towards him, himself, to Solomon himself. And then at the end of 2 Chronicles, at the end of the prayer in 2 Chronicles 6, verse 42, he says this, O Lord God, do not turn away the face of your anointed.

Remember your loving kindness to your servant David. This is 14 years after you've been king, at least. He still has not discovered the loving kindness of God, but he's always appealing to the loving kindness of his father, David, and saying, God, please bless me because of how you were so kind and loving to his father.

He knew that much about his father, his father must have impressed it into him. God's loving kindness has been so much towards me, it's better than all of my life, but it never became part of Solomon's life. Corruption had already set in.

That's why God had to warn him at the end of that prayer, too, we find out later on. God warned him saying, look, keep my commandments. And so that's a warning for us that God's loving kindness is something that is better than life, but it has to be personal.

It has to be something that we constantly have over our lives in a very real way. So I'll just share this as a way for us to remember, redirect the focus of my hunger away from the wilderness. Yes, the hunger is real, the pain is real, let us focus on the Lord and seek to grow in our hunger and longing for God.

Next properly weigh God's loving kindness, put everything on my life, all the things that we think we want, everything, count our blessings, put that on one side and then think about how God's been so merciful and kind towards us. And we respond not just with our lips, as it says in verse three, but with our hands, with our feelings, with our thoughts and our meditations. And we seek to hide in the shelter of his wings.

God can help me every single day that the enemy seeks to trip me up. Every day is a brand new day and no temptation has to trip me up. I can seek to reach out for his hand.

I can seek to remember God's loving kindness, knowing that he has already paid everything that he could pay for me. And finally, let me remember Solomon and how he never got a hold of what David had grabbed a hold of. David had told it to him, that Solomon remembered it, but Solomon never made it personal.

Let us seek to make God's loving kindness personal. We can't transfer it to our spouses, can't transfer it to our children. Let us, each of us, seek to have that loving kindness over us ourselves.

May God help us.

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