

Psalm 63 • When you find yourself in the Wilderness

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

Psalm 63 is not terribly long. It's only 11 verses. Let's go ahead and read through it and let's see what the Lord has for us. It says,

"1 O God, you are my God; earnestly 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; in your name I will lift up my hands.

5 My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips,

6 when I remember you upon 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 will 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 a portion 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. " (ESV)

All right. In this interesting Psalm, David begins by expressing that he finds himself in a time of wilderness. He speaks to the Lord and he says that, I'm

thirsting for you as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. In other words, the wilderness. And this is one of the many Psalms that frankly speaks of this area, the wilderness.

And the wilderness is both literal and figurative for David. There was probably very literally a place where he was hiding from king Saul or something like that. And where water was perhaps scarce.

But figuratively speaking, this area that we refer to as the wilderness, this dry and weary land where there is no water, is what we refer to as those times when we just find ourselves in a challenging circumstance or circumstances and we're not happy. Things aren't going well.

And like David, we often find ourselves wandering around in the wilderness. Or at least during a time in our lives that we would consider to be a period of wilderness. And those sorts of periods can come for all kinds of different reasons. And I'm sure we've all had them.

You guys know that Israel spent 40 years in the wilderness, wandering around in the wilderness. Of course, their wilderness wanderings were due to the fact that, they responded in unbelief when God brought them right to the doorstep of the promised land. And instead of believing that God was able to bring them into the land and conquer all the enemies that were there. They believed a bad report. And because of their unbelief, they spent the next 38 years wandering in the wilderness.

David spent a good period of his time, both literally and figuratively, wandering around in a wilderness mostly because Saul was trying to kill him and he was on the run. There are times in, later in David's life, when he experienced some wilderness wanderings. In those situations, it was more because of his own bad choices and his own failures that he found himself in those sorts of situations.

To be honest, there's a lot of reasons why wilderness times can pop up in our lives. They can happen as the result of losing someone that we love, either to death or just to a broken relationship. They can come because of an extended time of illness. Those can be incredibly trying times. Or even the loss of a job; the ability to sustain oneself. Or just a change of life that's happening to us. Change of life that is big and overwhelming.

There's a lot of different reasons why we may find our self in that sort of a situation. We might even be in a wilderness for the same reason that Israel found themselves in the wilderness. It could be in, because of unbelief in our

lives. Could be because of something we just didn't believe the Lord. It doesn't mean you're not saved.

You can just, you can be a child of God, walking in your salvation. And then something comes up in your life that just, you stumble over in the sense of believing and walking out that promise or that truth or whatever. And suddenly you find yourself in the wilderness.

Regardless of why we may end up in this place that we call the wilderness, the feelings are usually the same. We usually feel separated. There is a sense of isolation. We feel isolated from other people. We sometimes feel isolated from God during those times. And I've had people say to me, and I bet you have too, I just feel like I'm in the wilderness right now.

It's a hard road. It's not enjoyable. Just all kinds of challenges. In fact, usually joy is hard to come by in the wilderness. And way too often, those times are met with sorrow, even confusion, or both, about why we're going through these particular times.

I liken wilderness wanderings as trying to drive your car on four flat tires. And that's just the way it feels. Like getting anywhere is just a chore. And, there instead of fruitfulness, you go to church and you hear people talking about what it is to walk the fruitful life for Jesus Christ. And you think to yourself, there's no fruitfulness going on in my life right now. It's barrenness. And were we not given some insights into times of wilderness in the Word of God, we may despair a little more than we do.

We know that wilderness times in our lives and the barrenness that can come with them, can often come from a time of pruning. Jesus told us that we are pruned by our Heavenly Father, literally cut back. The branches of our lives can be cut back in order that we might bear more fruitfulness at some particular time down the road.

Boy, I tell you, when you look at a tree that has been cut back and pruned, it looks dead to all visual inspection. We've had some trees here on the property. A number of years ago, we had a guy that pruned some of our trees. And I came one morning and I saw and I was horrified. I thought, who killed these trees? These poor trees! They look like nothing. I mean, they were just barren and sticks, sticking up out of the ground.

What was interesting is that by the middle of the summer, those were, they had... They were in full leaf. And I was blown away by how the leaves looked

so healthy and strong on those very trees that just a few months earlier, looked like they literally were dead! I don't know anything about trees. I can't tell an elm tree, from a maple, from a this or that. But I'll tell you one thing, I think I know when a tree looks dead. And these looked deader than a doornail and yet they just flourished.

Do you know Christians, that sometimes our lives can look that same way? We look at each other. We look at ourselves. But then we look at each other and we think, "I don't know if she's even saved. I don't know if he even knows the Lord." And they're probably going through a time of pruning and cutting back. And it looks, for all intents and purposes, like they're dead. But just give it time.

But, boy, when you're going through that time when you've been pruned, when the Lord has cut you back, that you might have more fruitfulness, Oh, is that a painful time. People, it's a dry and weary land where there seems to be no water. And it's a time of stripping away. The Lord will take us through a season in our lives of stripping away our external comforts so that we might draw near to Him.

But those times in the wilderness are often times of searching. Hopefully we're searching for God. But the wilderness season in our life we begin to search. Because we're lacking comfort, we search for comfort. We search for rest. We search for answers. People want to know, Pastor, why is it that I'm going through a time in my life, I've had such a close relationship with the Lord. And now I feel like I pray and I get nothing. Why is it I don't seem to be getting any answers? Why am I... I feel like the heavens have become brass, as they say. We search for stability and hopefully in all of that, we're searching also for God.

The reason I bring all this up is because I think what David has done for us here in Psalm 63 is, he's given us a roadmap of how to find our way back when you're going through that wilderness period in your life. And again, if you haven't been through it, you will.

And you find yourself in a time where you just suddenly realize this is a barren season in my life. It's a dry, and dusty, and difficult time in my life. We recognize it, what do we do with it? Well, I'll tell you what most Christians do. They don't handle it well. Let's just say that we'll bring that up more as we go.

But we notice here as we begin looking again at this Psalm, that the search... We've defined what the wilderness period is. The search though, that goes on during those times of wilderness is a personal one.

And you see that here in verse one, as David begins, look with me in your Bible. And he says, "*O God, you are my God;...*" And I want you to note it, notice what he says here. "*...earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you; (notice the emphasis there) my flesh faints for you;*" Notice here what David is doing. He's not looking for happiness. He's not looking for religion. He's not even looking for answers at this particular juncture. He's looking for a person. He's looking for God Himself.

And he says, I want You earnestly. I seek You. I'm on the search. Because I am in a time in my life that is dry, and barren, and dusty, and there's no water. And I'm desperate. In fact, I'm so desperate. I'm even fainting. I've never been so thirsty that I felt like fainting. I can hardly imagine. But he's talking here about the fact that my flesh faints for You. I want You and the life giving water that only You can bring. I'm looking for You. I'm looking for a person.

And the reason David is saying that is because, our God is a personal God. A God who can be known in personal intimate fellowship. And when we're going through those times of wilderness wanderings, we're lacking that personal touch to our walk with God. It's been personal in the past, but now it's hard and we don't feel it. And so that's what we need to do. We need to come to Him, exactly what David is doing to that God who can be known. The only one who can really meet our deepest needs. A God who can touch us in the deepest areas of our hurt, the deepest areas of our lives, that need to have healing and life brought to them.

I want to show you a promise that Jesus gives us in the Word from John chapter 10. On the screen. Look at this, Jesus said,

John 10:10 (ESV)

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. (We usually apply that as a MO for the enemy, Satan. But notice what Jesus says here.) I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

We read this verse in light of those wilderness times in our lives, and we begin to wonder. What's going on with me? What's wrong with me? And this is where people begin to doubt their salvation. And it's very possible that they would become angry and disconnected from the Lord. Because you look at verses like this and you think, Jesus came that we might have abundant life and I'm just not feeling it. I just don't feel like I have this abundant life right now.

And yet... Here's the point you guys. When you're going through a wilderness time, this verse stands as a promise regardless of the circumstances you're going through, and regardless of how you feel. And here's what you and I have to decide, is Jesus true or is He a liar? Simple as that.

Is what He said true, or is what He said a bald faced lie? Because if it's true, then even when you're going through a time of wilderness, in that dry and dusty place, you're going to strive to get this, that abundant life. You're going to keep coming back.

That's what David is doing here in this psalm. He explains to you here that he's going through a wilderness time. But he's also explaining to you, the person who he is running after to bring this time to an end. Rather than blaming God, rather than blaming himself, rather than blaming others, he simply comes to God.

And that's the other thing that we see about this. His search is intense. Did you notice that? Look again in verse one with me. Look at these words. Earnestly, he says, I seek you! Guys, this isn't a casual, gee, I'm just wondering where God is in all this. Sometimes people will say that flippantly. I've just, I'm feeling terrible. And I'm just wondering where God is in all of this. Go look for Him! It's not like He's a long way away.

The point is, David said, "...earnestly, I seek you;..." Have you ever? Have you ever looked for something earnestly? I don't know if you're the kind of person that deals well with lost things. I don't. Never have. And it doesn't matter what it is. It doesn't even have to be all that important. I don't like having it lost. And I'll be, I'll look for it and drive my wife absolutely crazy. She's like, who cares! I got to find it because it's lost. I'm a resolver. That's my personality. I have to resolve issues. And so, I go and I'll, and I'll just, I'll tear the house apart looking for something that I've lost.

I don't know if you've ever done that before. But imagine if we put that same energy into seeking and searching out God, especially during those times of difficulty. You can see the intensity here, "*my soul thirsts... my flesh faints...*" You see, it's not just this casual, "take it or leave it" sort of an attitude toward God. Gee, I sure hope God shows up. I'm putting everything I have, my whole life is going into this search for God. And it's no less of a search than it would be for a person who was looking for water who was thirsty. Because the person who's thirsty and doesn't know where there is any water, recognizes, if I don't get water, I'm going to die. I have to have water to live.

Let me ask you a question. Do you believe you have to have the Lord, to live? I really believe that David was convinced of that. I think that David truly believed that without God in his life, without that relationship and the personal and intimate connection, I thought, I think he thought he would perish. No different. He makes reference several times through the Psalms, of water. And like the need for water, is his need for the Lord.

You can see the intensity. And it doesn't, frankly, take David long to tell us where he believes his answer lies in this search. It's in verse 2. And if you look with me in the first few words of verse 2, he says, "*So I have looked upon you...*" And that's it right there. And that's one of the first steps to finding what we're searching for. David says, "*I have looked upon you...*" And there it is. Don't skip over it too quickly. Because we have to stop and we have to pause and think about the implications of this powerful statement.

Because usually these, like, these times in the wilderness are so all consuming. Here's what I mean by that. When we're going through a difficult season and what we would call a wilderness wandering. Do you know what I'm thinking about more than anything else? My wilderness wandering. That's what has my attention. That's what I'm thinking about.

I can see nothing but sand and the wind blowing that sand into my face. And I can feel the beating hot sun on my skin. And I can feel myself becoming faint because it's so hot and the sand is hot even through my shoes. And, you know what I'm saying? That's all I'm feeling and that's all I'm knowing. What do I do? I focus on that. That's what I do. That's what I do. It's not what David does or did, but it's what I tend to do. And I'm willing to bet you're probably similar to me. We do that.

David recognized that because he was in a time of wilderness wandering. He desperately needed to look upon the one who could make a difference. And that was the point of what he wanted to say here. I have looked upon You. I'm coming to You rather than focusing on my problems...

Listen people, rather than sitting and licking my wounds, which by the way, turns into self-pity. And isn't that the devil's snare? Isn't self-pity the devil's snare? When I get so self-focused about my problems, and my hurts, and my challenges, that I refuse to look to God, because now I'm mad. I'm mad at Him. And that's what self-pity will get you. And, by the way, that's about all self-pity will get you. It won't get you any closer to finding any answer.

I've noticed that when people begin to give in to self-pity, they begin to isolate themselves. They isolate themselves from fellowship. They isolate themselves from Bible reading. They isolate themselves from prayer. Because they're feeling so fixated and focused on their hurt: my life, my problems, and my issues. And it just becomes this vicious cycle.

And if we don't, and then while we're isolating our self from fellowship, and the word, and prayer, sometimes we'll try to fix it ourselves. I realize I'm in a wilderness place, but I think all I need is a distraction. I'm going to busy myself with something. I'm going to find a job or find something that I need to do or should do. And what that is, is that's just the old pull myself up by my bootstraps attitude.

It's like, all right, Paul, you've done this long enough. You've been sitting here feeling sorry for yourself long enough. Now that's enough. Get yourself out of this funk that you're in and let's rise up and let's do something positive. I'm going to get involved in the community or do some..., give my time away, or I'm going to go do something that's going to make me feel better. But it really has nothing to do with solving my issue, which is an issue of the heart.

I'm in a wilderness time for some reason or another, and the only one who can satisfy me is the Lord God. My busyness is not going to satisfy me for long. Yes, I might get distracted for a period of time, but ultimately I'm not going to be satisfied. And that's why David comes to the Lord in verse 2 and says, "*I have looked upon you...*," but I want you to notice he doesn't stop there.

Look what the rest of the verse says. "*I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,*" And what did he find in the sanctuary? His power and glory. And that's what he goes on to say, doesn't he? I looked at You. "I looked for you in the sanctuary and I beholding your power and your glory." Do you see how different...?

See again, when I'm going through a time of wilderness, all I'm beholding is my misery. And so David says, I need to shake myself free from that. And I need to come to the only one who can really be the answer for me. And I need to behold His power and His glory. Why His power? Because He's got the power to bring me through this time. I don't have the power. He does. I need to look to Him and I need to see and behold His power.

And by the way, when I say see, and when David says "*behold,*" he's not talking about, and I'm not talking about just with your physical eyes. We're talking about beholding the Lord with your heart, with your spirit.

I'm not talking about seeing God. God, just show me. I want to see You appear before me and I'm going to be better. No, I need to be lifted up out of this situation. And I need to behold the eternal, glorious God.

You'll remember that I said earlier that being in the wilderness tends to strip away all of the comforts that we would normally run to in this world in which we live. And that's what happens when we're in the wilderness. We find that our priorities are being reset. Suddenly the things that were just absolutely incredibly important to us just aren't anymore. Those times of wilderness are like that.

The things that used to demand our time and our attention are no longer really that important. Because now we're finding satisfaction from God, or we're longing for that satisfaction from God. Even if we haven't found it yet, I'm longing for it. Lord, I need to be satisfied by You. And now that has to become a very precious thing.

When I've gone through periods of time in my life, where the future is fearful to think about, those are times when the presence of the Lord and His peace become a very precious thing that I'm searching for. I'm looking for. God, I need Your peace. I haven't experienced it lately and I need it. And that's what happens during those wilderness times. We recognize our need for God, like we've never needed Him before.

I want you to notice what David says here in verse 3. He says, "*your steadfast love is better than life.*" And that's where David's priorities now have been reset. Listen, David was a man who was drawn to a lot of different things in this world, not the least of which were women. He was a very passionate man. He was a lover and that was a very important thing to him.

But when he would go through these wilderness periods, all of that just fell away. And he would say things to the Lord like, I'm just looking for You. And I'm looking for Your steadfast love. And right now God, I got to tell You, it's better than life. I'm looking for You and Your steadfast love more than I'm looking for all the other things that I have run after in the past. That I have made such a focus of my life. I've given so much time and attention to. Now it's You, Lord. It's You that I want more than anything!

And so David begins this experience, this, or this journey rather, to experience God by doing something vitally important. And this is where, what he begins in verse four. And this is important that we see this people. Look what he says in

verse 4 "...I will bless you as long as I live; in your name I will lift up my hands."

People, one of the very first steps after you just make your determination to come to God; one of the very first steps to get out of that time of wilderness is to begin to praise. And I want to remind you of something here, David is offering up this word of praise before he's out of the wilderness. This is not post-wilderness. This is in the wilderness. This is current. He says, "*I will bless you*" because he knows that before I can be delivered from this place of isolation and this place of darkness, I must begin now to walk in obedience. And obedience begins with praise.

How do you do, on a scale of 1 to 10? Don't, obviously, say anything out loud. I'm asking you to think about this. How do you do in, on a scale of 1 to 10 when it comes to praise? How about when you're happy? Well, usually most of us can get the pointer up there a ways. If not a 10, pretty close when we're happy. How about when you're just medium? How about when you're just in full flat out discouragement mode? Depressed? Scared? Maybe even a little bit frustrated that things aren't working out the way they should.

How do you do praising then? Do you come to church and do one of these numbers, (Pastor Paul folds his arms and puts on a disgruntled face) while everybody else is singing and thanking the Lord for His goodness. I'll do it when I have something to thank You for. Or is there a sacrifice of praise?

People I believe, and I really believe this with my heart, that one of the vital and important steps to breaking free from that time of that wilderness wandering, is to begin simply to be obedient and praise the Lord. To praise Him, Lord, I praise You. I worship You. I bless You. I thank You. Doesn't matter whether you feel like it or not, I'm doing this out of obedience.

I think we fail to realize sometimes what just a huge step this is. And yeah, it might be baby steps toward obedience, but we need them just to begin to praise. You can just come to the Lord and say, you know what Lord, I offer this up as just a small token of the praise that I know that I'm probably going to be a whole lot more passionate, once you bring me through this season of my life. But I offer up this sacrifice of praise as just a token of what will come. Because Lord, I choose to praise You. That You hear my prayer. That You know my situation. And that You will deliver me from this time of wilderness wandering in my life.

And you know that's... Jesus teaches us by example that when life is hard, we should pray harder. We should praise and pray harder when life is hard. Let me show you something from Luke chapter 22. This is a great passage. This is given to us when Jesus was in the garden of Gethsemane. And it says,

Luke 22:44 (ESV)

And being in agony he prayed more earnestly.

And being in agony he prayed more earnestly.

Now, if that verse was talking about you, how would it end? If it started by saying, and being in agony, he, she did what? Ran out and got drunk. Yeah. Got angry with God. Swore at God, and said, I'm never coming back to church again. Got depressed and discouraged and just walked off and left it all behind. Fell into a pity party and thought about nothing but them self, and poisoned every relationship that they walked into after that point.

You see, too often, that's what we do. But Jesus gave us an example, a model. When life gets hard, pray harder. When... Praise and pray harder. Our agony should drive us onward.

I was just reading in Acts chapter 16 about when Paul and Silas were in Philippi. And just because they delivered a young girl from a demonic spirit, they were tossed into jail. And the city officials impressed upon the jailer that he didn't want these guys getting out. And so the jailer put him in an inner cell, as far away from the exits as he could possibly get them. And it says, he put their feet in stocks. Meaning they were chained in a sitting down position where they couldn't move. They couldn't get up. They couldn't move.

Let me, let's read this from Acts 16.

Acts 16:22-26 (ESV)

The crowd joined in attacking [Paul and Silas], and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks. About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

The crowd joined in attacking [Paul and Silas], and the magistrates tore the garments off them and gave orders to beat them with rods. (That hurts.) And when they had inflicted many blows upon them, they threw them into prison, ordering the jailer to keep them safely. (Don't let these guys get out.) Having received this order, he put them into the inner prison...fastened their feet in the stocks. (And what did they do? And being in agony, Paul and Barnabas screamed at God and yelled and cursed the day that they were born. Doesn't say that, does it? It says) About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and (It says that all) the prisoners were listening to them, (Because that's not what people usually did at midnight, when they were in the inner cell, fashioned with their feet in stocks. And you guys know the rest of the story.) suddenly there was an earthquake the foundations of the prison were shaken and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

This is one of those beautiful biblical pictures of the determination or the decision that is facing you and I when we feel like we're in some very desperate situation. Where we feel like, I can't get out. *"And being in agony he prayed more earnestly."* And being in the inner cell with their feet in stocks, they prayed and sang hymns to God.

People, it is so important when you're going through a wilderness time, lift your hands and praise the Lord. Lift your hands to heaven and praise God. If you can't thank Him for what's going on in your life, fine, don't. But you can praise Him because He is always worthy of your praise. Always. He is who He is regardless of what you're going through.

And you know what, sometimes the things that held us, like we see in this story that we just had up on the screen from Acts 16; sometimes the very things that used to bind us, we find those things falling away as we begin to lift up our voices and praise the Lord.

Look what David goes on to say. This is interesting in verse 5. He says, *"My soul will be satisfied...with fat and rich food,..."* Okay, now this is interesting. I think we can probably all relate to fat and rich food. Not that we want to eat it all the time because it's not good for us. But I'll tell you one thing about fat and rich food. It tastes good. Right?

David says here, *"My soul will be satisfied..."* Remember the soul is the seat of emotions, the intellect and the will. My soul will be satisfied as with a Twinkie and a whopper hamburger. Huh? You guys are going to go out tonight after this and go get a whopper, aren't you? It's like, man, he was talking about a

whopper. Now I have to have one. And fries with it. And a chocolate shake, with whipped cream.

No! That's what he's talking about, though. He's talking about, when you, not that I can even eat that stuff anymore, But it's when you do, it's like, whoa, this is just this is wonderful. He says, my soul will be satisfied in that same way. I'm just going to enjoy. Oh, enjoy. He's expressing his confidence in God's ability to fill his heart with all that he really truly needs and to satisfy him completely. God, I trust You to satisfy me.

The wilderness is all about a prolonged period of time in your life where there is no satisfaction. You are not satisfied with life. You are not satisfied with your circumstances. You are not satisfied with the way things are going. You're not satisfied with the people around you. You're not satisfied with your job. You're not satisfied with your relationship with God. But David expresses confidence nonetheless. You will, and You can, satisfy me.

He goes on to say, *"and my mouth will praise you with joyful lips, when I remember you upon my bed; and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for you have been my help, and in the shadow of your wings I will sing for joy. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me."*

Have you ever felt like you're clinging to the Lord with everything you have? Just hanging on by your last grip? And that's where David is right now. He says, my soul will cling to You. I'm going to cling to you with all I have. But he says, I'm going to, I remember You upon my bed and meditate on You in the watches of the night.

When I'm going through a wilderness time, the watches of the night is the worst time of the day. I hate when you wake up at like 2:30 in the morning. And you're going through that hard time. And you wake up and your mind just begins to roll with the thoughts of what's happening in your life. And you just can't shut it off and now you can't get back to sleep. What do you do?

Well, I'm going to get up and pick up that novel I started a couple of days ago, and maybe that'll take a little bit of the edge off. Maybe I'll get up and watch a little TV. Isn't that fun at 2:30 in the morning? All you have is this shopping channel and some grade B movies with about the dumbest commercials you've ever seen in your entire life.

David says, no, I'm going to remember You. And I'm going to meditate on You and on Your Word in the watches of the night. Why do we meditate on the

Lord? Why do we do that? Well, because when we do we're focusing on the solution rather than the problem. Again when I'm going through a time of wilderness wandering, I'm all about my problem. I'm all about focusing on my problem. But I have to change that and meditate on the Lord, and on His power, and on His purpose, and on His comfort. And to meditate is to ponder and wonder on the greatness of God. That's what it means to meditate, to think deeply.

One of the chapters that has been used to help get people back on track during a time of difficulty, is a passage in Isaiah. I don't want you to turn there. In fact, I want you to, I want you to close your Bible, please, right now.

I am going to read this chapter to you. And the reason I'm asking you to just listen and not read along with me is, I want you to think about the words. And I want you to let these words roll over you as you listen to what the Lord is saying.

I will tell you that this is Isaiah chapter 40. (Isaiah 40:1-31) And this is one of those chapters that is great to think about. Maybe even memorize portions of it. And ponder it in those difficult watches of the night when meditating on the Lord, is necessary to find some peace again. Listen now. Just listen as I read this.

"1 Comfort, comfort my people, says your God.

2 Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for, that she has received the LORD's hand double for all her sins.

3 A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God.

4 Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain.

5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

6 A voice says, "Cry out!" And I said, "What shall I cry?" All men are like grass, and their glory is like the flowers of the field.

7 The grass withers, and the flowers fall because the breath of the LORD blows on them; surely the people are grass.

9 The grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of our God stands forever. You who bring good tidings to Zion, go up on a high mountain, you who bring good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up your voice with a shout, lift it up, do not be afraid. Say to the towns of Judah, "Here is your God!"

10 See, the sovereign LORD comes with power, and his arm rules for him; see, his reward is with him, and his recompense accompanies him.

11 He tends his flock like a shepherd; he gathers the lambs in his arms; and carries them close to his heart, he gently leads those that have young.

12 Who has measured the waters? In the hollow of his hand, or with the breadth of his hand, marked off the heavens, who has held the dust of the earth in a basket or weighed the mountains on the scales, and the hills in a balance?

13 Who has understood the Mind of the LORD, or instructed him as his counselor?

14 Whom did the LORD consult to enlighten him? And who taught him the right way? Who was it that taught him knowledge, or showed him the path of understanding?

15 Surely, the nations are like a drop in the bucket, they are regarded as dust on the scales; he weighs the islands as though they were fine dust.

16 Lebanon is not sufficient for altar fires, nor its animals enough for burnt offerings.

17 Before him all the nations are as nothing, they are regarded by him as worthless and less than nothing.

18 To whom then will you compare God, what image will you compare him to

19 As for an idol! A craftsman casts it, a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashioned silver chains for it.

20 A man too poor to present such an offering selects wood that will not rot; he looks for a skilled craftsman to set up an idol that will not topple.

21 Do you not know? Have you not heard? Has it not been told you from the beginning? Have you not understood since the earth was founded?

22 He sits enthroned above the circle of the earth, and its people are like grasshoppers; he stretches out the heavens like a canopy, and spreads them out like a tent to live in;

23 he brings princes to naught, and reduces the rulers of this world to nothing.

24 No sooner are they planted, no sooner are they sown, no sooner do they take root in the ground, than he blows on them, and they wither, and a whirlwind sweeps them away like chaff.

25 To whom will you compare me, or who is my equal? says the Holy One.

26 Lift your eyes and look to the heavens: who created all these? He, who brings out the starry host one by one, and calls them each by name; because of his great power and mighty strength, not one of them is missing.

27 So, why do you say, O Jacob, and complain, O Israel, "My way is hidden from the LORD, my cause is disregarded by my God"?

28 Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary; and his understanding no one can fathom.

29 He gives strength to the weary, and increases the power of the weak.

30 Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall;

31 but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength; they will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not be faint."

I'm going to pray. Ken, come up and lead us in a couple songs to conclude our time tonight.

I share that last chapter of Isaiah there for you, as a great chapter to read and meditate on in those watches of the night, when the difficulty of your circumstances can weigh so heavily on you. Where the weight of it and the pressure of it can just become overwhelming.

And it's at those times that we need to remember the glory and the power of the Lord. And that's what David said in this Psalm, I look to You and to Your glory and Your power. Because if I'm going to look to myself, I'm going to be crushed into nothing.