

DSC Community Group
Sermon Summary, 04/01/2012

Title: "Better than Life"
Series: "Pour Out Your Heart to Him: A Study Through the Psalms"

Text: Psalm 63
Preacher: Ryan Kelly

It doesn't quite make sense to say that anything can be better than life, since life is the means by which we enjoy anything in life. But, says David, God is better than life. In fact, it is God's "hesed" or "steadfast love" that is better than life. This is his loving covenant loyalty. It includes his mercy toward us and our communion with him. When all is shaken does your foundation actually feel more sure because your foundation is an unshakable God? David testified to God's better-than-life love when everything was almost gone for him. The background for Psalm 63 is 2 Samuel 15-17, when David's son has amassed an army of 12,000 to take him out and secure the throne for Absalom. David's story puts ours in perspective.

1. Seek Him Desperately (1-2)

- The psalm begins on a personal, intimate note: "O God, you are my God." "Earnestly I seek you," can also mean "early I seek you." And, of course, seeing earnestly would often mean seeking Him early. David's reference to "thirst" reminds us of how Psalm 42 began.
- David's longing is to be where God is, which, in the Old Covenant, was at the temple. This is his singular focus, as expressed also in Psalm 27.

2. Praise Him Joyfully (3-5)

- Exodus 34:6-7 shows us that God's "hesed" ("steadfast") love is an extension of who He is: "The LORD, the LORD, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."
- Because God's "hesed" love is better than life, we can: 1) Praise him (3b), bless him (4a), lift up our hands to him (4b), and be satisfied with him (5a). David is far from the king's palace buffet, but he says that God's love is better than the best of the food he has known.
- Notice the resolve: "I will. . . I will. . . my soul will. . . my mouth will. . ." (3, 4, 5)

3. Meditate on Him Thoroughly (6-8)

- Meditation, to be clear, isn't thoughtlessness, but just the opposite - it is filling the mind with the Word of God, chewing on the Word, digesting, the Word. David's meditation looks back (2, 7), looks to the present (3, 6, 8), and looks to the future (4,5, 7b). He meditates all the time ("upon my bed," "in the watches of the night"). He's restless and sleepless, but his mind moves to God.
- Notice the different components of the Christian life here: Longing -> Pursuing -> Beholding -> Cherishing. There's a kind of progression, where one generally leads to the other, and the more we invest in this cycle the greater becomes our longing, our pursuing, our beholding, and our cherishing.
- "My soul clings to you": This draws up the image of a toddler latching onto the leg of her parent, committed to being with them. So should it be with the Christian toward God.

4. Trust Him Completely (9-11)

- David trusted in God's final justice (9-10), in his work in him (11a) and in his work in others (11b).
- But who really trusts like this? David did, to a point. Jesus did truly. Jesus is proof that God's love is better than life. He gave his life for it! There God's covenant love was on display for us and toward us.

Sample Questions

- What's your favorite thing in life? What is that thing which if taken away would destroy you? David uses a particular word to describe God's love, "hesed." This, he says, is better than life.
- A number of the psalms call to mind different kinds of difficult circumstances. When have you known trouble something like David's as recorded in 2 Samuel 15-17 (abandoned, falsely accused, etc.)?
- David begins his psalm with an expression of great longing for God in a great trial of life. We shouldn't suppose that David's longing for God just began at the point of trial, even if it was strengthened there. No, David was on the longing/pursuing/beholding/cherishing cycle already.
- How does the cross relate to this psalm? How can the cross help us in great trouble, like David's?