

Staff Work

11-15-2017

A Satisfied Soul

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Recommended Citation

Lancaster, R. (2017). A Satisfied Soul. Retrieved from https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/staff_work/84

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A Satisfied Soul

Abstract

"Knowing that God will keep his promises, both to destroy and to save, sustains us."

Posting about our faithful God from *In All Things* - an online journal for critical reflection on faith, culture, art, and every ordinary-yet-graced square inch of God's creation.

<https://inallthings.org/a-satisfied-soul/>

Keywords

In All Things, lectionary, David, King of Israel, promises, God

Disciplines

Christianity

Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

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November 15, 2017

in things

Daily Scripture Texts

[Psalm 63](#)

[Joel 3:9-21](#)

[Matthew 24:29-35](#)

“A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.”

Often, it seems that when we read a Psalm, we skip right over the title and move straight into the first verse. However, the titles often provide some context to the Psalms. This is especially true of the Psalm that the lectionary offers us today, Psalm 63.

As we read Psalm 63, we find David in the wilderness. David spent time in the wilderness at various points in his life, and the title does not let us know which particular time this is. It could be when he was fleeing from Saul, or it could be when he was fleeing Absalom. In both instances, he was fleeing for his life.

*“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.”*

David is in a dry place — both physically and spiritually. He is thirsty — both physically and spiritually. He is on the run. And he is weary. This verse reminds me of Psalm 42, of the Sons of Korah, that begins, “As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” Both Psalms show an earnestness to drink deeply. To drink deeply of that water that will satisfy our deepest thirsts, after which we will never be thirsty again (John 4:13-14).

*“So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary,
beholding your power and glory.
Because your steadfast love is better than life,*

*my lips will praise you.
So I will bless you as long as I live;
in your name I will lift up my hands.”*

After confessing his thirst, David moves on to praise God. Does this surprise you at all? Is this a normal response? Would this be your response? If you were worn out, weary, thirsty, running for your life and, seemingly, from your promised calling, would your immediate response be to praise God? If we are honest, probably not. And, it is not always David's response. But it is here. And what is it that causes David to praise God? He has looked on God in his sanctuary. He remembers being in God's presence in prayer and in worship. He remembers the stories of God's steadfast love to the people of Israel. He remembers the promises God made to him. And, all of this is better than life itself. If he remains on the run, and dies a fugitive in the wilderness, it pales in comparison to the steadfast love of his God. This marvelous truth leads him to praise God — despite his weary circumstances.

*“My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food,
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.”*

A satisfied soul... We likely all know what it means to be satisfied with fat and rich food — the way you feel after a big Thanksgiving dinner. It is a feeling of comfort and of satisfaction; it is a lack of want. How much better then to have our soul satisfied. To have our soul filled — to not want (Psalm 23:1). The parallel between the first part of this section and the last is striking. Notice that, as it is translated, the first part is in the future tense and the second in the present. David is in the wilderness, and maybe you are as well — at the very least, we are strangers and aliens in this world — but even as a wanderer, David knows that one day his soul will be satisfied, his lips will be glad, and he will sing praise. Even now, even as he is a kind of exile in the wilderness, his soul clings to God, and God upholds him. It is the same for us.

*“But those who seek to destroy my life
shall go down into the depths of the earth;
they shall be given over to the power of the sword;
they shall be a portion for jackals.
But the king shall rejoice in God;
all who swear by him shall exult,
for the mouths of liars will be stopped.”*

David knows that in the end things will be made right. The wicked will be judged, and they will receive their due, but David will be restored. Because God is a God that keeps his promises. Knowing that God will keep his promises sustained David. And knowing that God will keep his

promises, both to destroy and to save, sustains us.