

My Soul clings to you - **Psalm 63** – 7<sup>th</sup> March 2010

HG notes

NB: 11<sup>th</sup> March Chris Lear is leading the One Lent Evening 7 for 7.30 in the Conker Room on *Christian Heroes*. Newick & Chailey will be there too.

Worship: Psalm 63 seems a bit obvious. Sing something praisey!

Welcome & Word

1. What romantic film / song do you remember from your courting days?
2. Read Psalm 63
3. What spiritual highs do you bring to mind when you remember moments of being close with God?
4. What help does this Psalm give to the Christian who doesn't feel like praying?
5. Your love is better than life – sounds a bit extreme or is it?
6. What advice is there for someone who feels far away from God?
7. How can I learn to pray intense passionate prayers like this? Eg *My soul clings to you*
8. Why is it a set Psalm for Lent?
9. How does it fit with Luke 13.1-9?
10. What advice is there here on Prayer?
11. What bits of bible would you recommend to someone who can't sleep?!

Works:

Pray, it might be easier to pray in smaller groups of three, share then pray.

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Take out the word 'God' in this Psalm and put in the word Gal and that's what you've got. A love song. A really good and powerful love song. The singer is away from his love and he sings of how very badly he is missing his love.

He remembers the good times, he says Your love is better than life. I think about you all the time, through the watches of the night. I sing to myself about how lovely you are, my soul clings to you.

It's a fabulous love song. You might feel a bit embarrassed at the idea of associating such a love song with God. We don't talk like this to God. We're English. (We don't talk like this to our wives either!)

Some of our worship choruses are a bit slushy – 'I love you Lord and I lift my voice', 'My Jesus my saviour', 'This is the air I breathe', - its all a bit lovey dovey and many of us like our songs to be clear and doctrinal and just say Jesus Christ is your high priest and your redemption - now get on with it.

This Psalm is a fabulous love Psalm. So the advice here (if you substitute the word God and put in the word Gal / Guy, that you get a sermon about Remembering the good times,

Think about her a lot, and tell her about it (Billy Joel). This will give you strength to get through the tough times till you see her again. 'We'll meet again ...'

You can do this with so many songs, take out the word Guy and put in the word God. In *Sister Act*, Whoopie Goldberg dresses up as a Nun and gets the choir to sing 'Nothing you can do can take me away from my ... God.'

There's a passion for a deeper worship and thirst for a closer walk with God. It is intense and intimate and full. And we should have a go at learning how to pray like this.

David is in the desert. He is King but there's been a sudden coup at the palace so that his son Absalom has pushed him out of the palace and out of his kingdom and David is running for his life again. He feels far away from God. In his mind he associates being close to God with the magnificent spiritual experiences he has had in the Sanctuary in Jerusalem. (Bear in mind that this is pre Solomon's temple so the Ark of the Covenant would have been hidden inside a tent and the worshippers would have been outside the tent.)

And as he prays, his prayer is to re-establish that deep connection. His prayer is not about all his woes and troubles, it's not a plea for justice or deliverance. There's nothing wrong with those prayers but here's a prayer that's just about you and God.

He doesn't fill his prayer time asking God for things. Last week the advice was Spend time talking to God about what's going on in your life. This week the Prayer is more about just enjoying God and His love and His presence.

"Your love is better than life!" That's how passionate he feels about God. Now we're a little uncomfortable about someone saying that about God. We're okay if this line shows up in a love song – I love you more than life itself! It sounds romantic when you sing it to your wife. But when you sing it to God, suddenly it sounds dangerously fanatical and slightly weird.

But think about it a little bit more. My God, "Your love is better than life". What is my life made up of? My wife, my children, my job, my house, my car, my friends, my church. My health, my time, my money. All these things are gifts from God.

What do I love more: the gift or the giver? The right answer it seems is that I am to love the Giver, to love God more than all the gifts that God has given me.

It should turn out to be quite healthy because if I can love God for who God is rather than as a provider of things and answered prayers, then my faith, my love, my God is going to hold me together more in the rough times.

If I only love my wife because of This that and the other, then there's something lacking in my love.

David loves God more than anything in the world. More than his crown and his kingdom, more than his many wives and children, more than his army and his money. And that is

going to prove to be very healthy for David as he comes now to fight and retake Jerusalem. In the long run it will prove to be good for his kingdom.

So How do I get to pray passionate prayers like this?

Listen to your favourite songs and turn them into prayers. It will sound silly and make you laugh but that's no bad thing. Worship like no ones watching, pray your heart out.

Get some experience of God that's just wonderful and overwhelming.

You might have to proactively seek that, for us all we have at one point or other made the choice to follow Christ, chosen to say God you are my God. So if you haven't done that, do it!

Wesley was a great minister and preacher for many years but something clicked inside when he experienced God's love for himself and he wrote afterwards – I exchanged the faith of a servant for the faith of a son.

Lots of people have a faith of sorts. I don't want to knock the faith of a servant – but how much more wonderful is the faith of a son.

Take yourself off to *Bible by the Beach* or something like that. Sing in your car and come to our 8pm services and lose yourself a little in songs of praise.

May the Lord give to us a passion for worship. Stay a little longer in prayer, sing a little louder. Lift up your hands, lift up your head. Soak in the worship.

There's a Go getting-ness about this Psalm that doesn't wait for God to make the first move, it doesn't wait until the singer feels spiritual or good about himself or about God.

In fact its quite the opposite, David is having a difficult time but one way of coping with it is to whine at God's absence and how everything is unfair and another way is to choose to sing, to praise God, to lift your hands. To make your lungs and body do things that you might not quite *feel* like doing. And it will be good for you.

To choose to remember the good times with God, to choose to think about God and the good things that God has done. When you're having trouble sleeping its not that easy, our worries keep us awake at night, but if we can think about God instead well then that's good for us and its good for God.

If you're struggling to sleep then pick up your bible and read it! If its exciting then it will be time well spent and if its not then you should be nodding off in no time!

Your love is better than life, My soul clings to you.

May the Lord give us a passion for worship, May we learn to lose ourselves in Songs and Praise, May we choose to remember God and to think about God when we're struggling with worries or temptation.

May we come to love the Giver more than all the gifts God has given us. Amen.