

Better Relationship with Jesus – Praise

Psalm 63:1-8

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I've noticed that whatever capacity I had for multi-tasking is gone. I was never very good at doing more than one thing at a time. Lately, I've recognized that I am easily distracted. I can chase rabbits, squirrels, whatever.

I get especially frustrated when I'm distracted during prayer. When that happens I will start praying for whatever distracted me. What pulls me back in is giving glory to God. As I start to praise God my mind and my spirit are focused again the Lord.

Let me read to you Psalm 63:1-2.

O God, you are my God,

This psalm is personal. This is not a God who is far away, distant or remote. This is not a God of wood, or stone, or crystal. This is the God who is near. This is the God who is present.

O God, you are my God,

This psalm is personal. This God wants to be known. This is the God that wants a relationship. This God is present. This God is available.

O God, you are my God,

This psalm is personal. The writer knows this God. The writer has a relationship with this God. The writer knows that life without God is empty. The writer knows that there is no life without this God.

O God, you are my God, earnestly I seek you; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land where there is no water. I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.

Ours is a God of power and glory who is revealed to those who praise Him. An attitude of gratitude proclaims God's power and authority in every situation. A pessimist or optimist can proclaim that their God is bigger and greater than any situation. It's too easy to say the glass is half empty or half full. An fool can do that, right? But when we have an attitude of gratitude we know God is able.

Our God is a personal God. We know our the Lord. The Lord knows us. Jesus has come to us. His Holy Spirit is living in us. You can have spiders, wasps, mice living among you. A bat can be in your house. You may not know it. When you know it you react to it.

Just the opposite is true with our God. We know the Lord. We do react to the Lord. I'll put this in the form of a couple of questions. Do you react to the Lord being with you and in you as if He were absent? Do you react to the Lord being with you and in you by interacting with the Lord? Does your interaction with Jesus and His Holy Spirit dwelling in you impact your attitude?

Christians often react as if the Lord was out of town. We fall back into old sins. We ask where our God has gone. We have the attitude that the Lord might not care, be too busy, or rejecting us. All

three of those are false. The Lord God, Savior of the world, who dwells within us does care, is never too busy, and won't reject us.

One of my disappointments as a Christian and I think as a pastor is how believers react to God. I hear it frequently from young and old Christians that they talk with Jesus when there is a crisis, but not too much any other time.

I talk this personally. I've spent my life talking to Jesus, helping people find Jesus, and helping people talk to Jesus. But, then people only want a crisis manager. Jesus, in my understanding also takes this personally. Imagine your prayer life being crisis management. Jesus is listening but, once we drop our crisis on Him, we walk away.

Jesus wants a relationship. Jesus wants to help us avoid the crisis. Jesus wants us to help others avoid the crisis. Jesus wants to build up our thinking and our attitudes so that we first say, my God can handle this. Then we tell others that my God is handling my life. I am in the palm of His hand. My longing and craving for the Lord is continual and based on the crisis or the circumstances.

How would your life be if this were your attitude?

Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you. I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands. Psalm 63:3-4 (NIV)

All the outside factors keep us from openly glorifying the Lord. Giving glory to God is another way of praising God. Do you experience the love of God as being better than life? We cling to life. On our dying beds people cling to life. People are afraid of death.

As people we think of life as what we want out of life. We look at what we enjoy, what makes us feel, and what benefits us. Now, don't be surprised that I said that. Everyone of us has this in our nature. It started the moment you popped out the womb. Even the best of Christians fall back into this lowest common denominator. We fall back to the me first attitude because of our circumstances.

Any person can have 364 days that are looking to Jesus, doing the will of God, sharing His grace, doing Kingdom work, giving glory to God. But then there is day 365 and catastrophe strikes. Your crisis might not be earth shaking, but it felt like it to you. On that day, in that moment you weren't giving glory to God.

But my life and your life are not that simple. It seems like there is a challenge built into everyday. When the first challenge comes we give God the glory. He is with us. He makes us strong. Then comes the second, third, fourth challenge. God is receiving less glory, less praise. Our words and our thoughts aren't filled with praise, giving glory to God.

We praise Jesus for who He is. We don't offer praise because of our circumstances. Do you think that God will not be gracious to you when you fall back into your sin? God will offer you grace, call you out of your sin, and back to the place where you are glorifying Him.

This begins when we feel the nudge of the Holy Spirit. Don't make me describe to you the Holy Spirit's nudge. It happens frequently and we miss it. So, the nudge comes again and again. The nudge gets stronger and stronger. Then we feel the gut punch, the kick in the pants, the head slap. Why do we wait so long? That's a rabbit hole, I'm not chasing it today.

The Holy Spirit nudges you and you give glory to God. You remember God is with you. Your mind has flashed that you need Jesus. Your spirit cries out to the Lord, asking the helper to help you. This is the crisis prayer, right?

Giving glory to God is praising Jesus for who He can be in your life all day and all night. Tell Jesus who He is: Savior, Redeemer, Deliverer, Lord, King, Hope, Peace, Power. You're telling Jesus not because He has dementia, but because you suffer from short-term memory loss. You and I keep forgetting who Jesus is. We tell Jesus to remind ourselves who He is.

We tell Jesus to regain the Attitude of Gratitude: My God can handle this.

My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you. On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. Psalm 63:5-6 (NIV)

As we glorify the Lord there is hope and peace in our souls. Our daily lives are starving for hope and peace. Not wishful thinking and absence of activity, but hope and peace. The assurance that whatever happens God will provide. In the midst of any situation giving glory to God is the belief that the Lord will do what is right.

Therefore, as life happens good or bad, we're holding tight to the Lord. We are lifting up our voices in song. Alright, that sounds a little crazy to all of you who only sing in the shower or alone in the car. It is a little bit out of this world.

This attitude of holding onto the Lord regardless of our circumstances is not rational. The circumstances of our daily lives are of this world. The Lord we worship, the God we love, is not of this world. So, how we live each day in this world must be above and beyond this life.

There are things that are of this life. There are things that are spiritual, beyond what we see, feel, and touch. Our God is spiritual. Our God transcends this life. Our God sees and knows this life, but is not bound by this life. My God, our God, is worthy of all praise. Our God is worth of all the glory. So, day or night our voices are lifted to Him.

There is nothing better in life than the love of God. The love of God satisfies every fiber of our being. From the hairs on our heads to the blood flowing through our veins the love of God satisfies us. As our heart beats, our eyes see, our ears hear the love of God satisfies us. When we are pushed beyond our limits the love of God satisfies us. When the pain and suffering are overwhelming the love of God satisfies us. When the darkness approaches the love of God satisfies us.

We were created to live in the love of God. We were not created to live in the darkness of sin, despair, depression, but in the love of God. We were not created to live in the emptiness and loneliness of this world but in the love of God. We were created to stand in the love of God. We were created to lift our voices for the love of God.

When we stop giving God the glory, our hope and peace fade away. When we stop singing praises to the God of love, our hope and peace fade away. Through praise we place God in the right place, the God over every thought. As we give God the glory we return the Lord to His place of authority and power in our lives. We have hope. We are at peace. Anyone who lifts up the name of the Lord finds hope and peace. Everyone who lifts up the name of Jesus finds hope and peace.

Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me. Psalm 63:7-8 (NIV)

Make your daily practice to cling to God and sing for the glory of God. To have a better relationship with Jesus we need to remember that we are under His protection, power, grace, and love.

Non-believers, non-Christians, sinners are not under Jesus' protection, power, grace, and love. Those who are sinners have no protection and power other than their own. Some sinners live with great pride in their achievements. Sinners don't know grace and love. They use words like grace and love but have never experienced God's love and grace.

Sinners don't have hope but wishful thinking. Sinners don't have peace but pleasure and temporary enjoyment. Sinners have nothing to stand upon or cling to but their own individual ideas and attitudes. They may spend everyday, every part of their day with no song to sing. Their only songs are of their unfulfilled dreams and wishes. Their songs are things of fantasy or disappointment. Their daily activities are spent seeking what that can't achieve.

The writer of this psalm, David, knew Jesus even though he never met Jesus. He knew the protection that Jesus provides. He knew the power that Jesus gives. He experienced the grace of Jesus all day and night. He stood in the midst of the love of Jesus.

To have a better relationship with Jesus give yourself to Him fully and completely. Give yourself to Jesus who saw you as a sinner. He decided you were worthy of being loved. Not because of you what you had done, but because He loves you.

Give yourself to Jesus who left the glory and praise of heaven and came to this earth. He put aside all the honor of being at the righthand of God. He laid down all the majesty and praise of the angels in heaven. He came into our world, and become one of us. He experienced the pain and suffering of this life. He endured the temptations and never sinned.

Give yourself to Jesus who decided to surrender His sinless life to be our sin. He willingly died the death every sinner, including you and me, deserved. He became our sin, taking the punishment intended for every sinner. He carried my sin and your sin, being separated from the Father in heaven. He took away the sin of every sinner who believes in Him.

Give yourself to Jesus and rise from the dead with the same power that raised Jesus from the dead. Jesus is alive today. Jesus has forgiven you. Jesus has given you a new life. Jesus is covering you with His grace and love. Give yourself fully and completely to Jesus by praising Him.

Give all the glory to Jesus through every song you sing, every word you speak, every thought you think.