

- Sunday before Holiday Club, evening service with team around; include communion in service

## Introduction

- A psalm of David. When he was in the Desert of Judah.
- Day and night:
  - peculiar mixture of usage!
  - we use the phrase for contrast, or to say something goes on all the time
  - all sorts of associations with the day and with the night too
- Final Psalm in our series...

## Day (vs.1-5)

- (1) *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.*
  - "earnestly" would be better as "early" - the thought is that he gets up and first thing on his priority list is seeking God, hence "earnestly"...
  - so, as he composes, in his minds eye are morning times in the desert, as the heat builds up...
  - his situation is that he is fleeing from his son Absalom who has usurped the throne; at this point Absalom is functioning as king...
  - desert is literally "a dry and weary land where there is no water"
  - David and his companions, as any desert travellers are, would have been acutely conscious of their water supply....
  - **but**, what did he thirst after above all else? **God!**
- (2) *I have seen you in the sanctuary and beheld your power and your glory.*
- (3) *Because your love is better than life, my lips will glorify you.*
  - in vs.2 & 3 he reflects on past experiences of God, which enable him to face the challenges of today
  - and not just face them stoically, with a stiff upper lip!
  - but face them with **praise!**
  - in particular he has experienced God's **power**, God's **glory** and God's **love**
  - (note how radical v.3 is! In our world there is nothing more important than life... that something could be more important than life is simply not credible to many of our contemporaries!!)
- Encouragement here for us to reflect back on our experience of God...
  - one of the things that helps re-establish and affirm relationships, bwhether friendships or marriage relationships or whatever, is a rehearsing or re-telling of shared stories...
  - "do you remember when we....?" will often remind us and reinforce in us those remembered experiences, perhaps of love or of friendship
  - so with us of God... and there is power in telling one another how God has and is worked in our lives
  - so, for instance, folk on the team who will be working in close proximity to one another - don't just share how bad or good your kids were, share also how you became a Christian, how you have grown, ask one another how you have experienced God's power, his glory and his love
- (4) *I will praise you as long as I live, and in your name I will lift up my hands.*
- (5) *My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise you.*
- At beginning of v.2 and again at beginning of v.4, where he says "I....", there are hints in the Hebrew of "So I...."
  - these stand in response to the longing expressed in v.1
  - he's longing for God, so he remembers how he has experienced God in the past
  - he's longing for God, so he looks forwards, remembering that though places

- change - he's in the desert, not the Temple - God does not change
- satisfaction will come as he worships the Lord

## Night (vs.6-11)

- (6) *On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night.*
- (7) *Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.*
- (8) *My soul clings to you; your right hand upholds me.*
- Where the setting for the first section was the desert by day, the setting for the second is David's night time experiences
  - "on my bed" - night time...
  - through the watches of the night is suggestive of someone who can't sleep; he's seeing all hours of the night, stuff is running through his mind (like his son is trying to kill him and permanently wrest his throne away!)
  - but where we might think of the night time as the time of despair, the time when everything looks blackest and bleakest, David's response is different
  - he is more like a small child, waking up in the night but easily comforted and sheltered in their parent's bed... snuggled under mum & dad's duvet for 5 minutes, whatever the bad dream was soon goes away
  - so David is snuggled, not under a duvet, but under the shadow of God's wings - bird with its chicks picture!
- (9) *They who seek my life will be destroyed; they will go down to the depths of the earth.*
- (10) *They will be given over to the sword and become food for jackals.*
- (11) *But the king will rejoice in God; all who swear by God's name will praise him, while the mouths of liars will be silenced.*
- Some might read all of what has led up to this point and say: "mere escapist super spirituality..."
  - think nice thoughts about God... but don't actually deal with your situation!
  - but that is precisely the opposite of what is really happening!
  - for what David is expressing is a practical trust in God's providence
  - he is secure in the situation, not running away from it, in his turning to God
  - look at v.11: *the king will...*
  - that's David! he's currently in the middle of the desert, but his confidence in God's promise to him as anointed king, his trust that God's call and not man's power is the determining factor!
  - so though Absalom might be on the throne, he is not the king!
- Truly, for David, God's love is better than life:
  - nothing else comes close; with God, his thirst is relieved, there is life giving water, there is praise, there is satisfaction, there is protection
  - without him... can't even be contemplated!

## Conclusion

- Alex Motyer in his commentary: *David's deep love prompts in us the prayer, "Oh for grace to love you more"*
  - to know, love and serve God - nothing else matters!
  - in Holiday Club, in work, in study, in retirement.... to know, love and serve God - nothing else matters!
- May God grant to each of us a stirring of our love for the Lord!