



BETHEL
PRESBYTERIAN

MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Volume 20 Issue 13

March 28, 2021

God's Lovingkindness

Psalm 63 & Select

In 1986 the Pabst Brewing Company produced a series of commercials featuring an outdoor activity like fishing or camping in which men (which was their target group) were shown enjoying the great outdoors. After a series of incredible images featuring great weather, incredible fish catches, no insects, big smiles and great friendships, the 29 second commercial ended with the men gathered around a campfire or sitting on a porch raising an Old Milwaukee



bear can saying, *“It doesn’t get any better than this!”*

Now this is saying something, as one who suffers from altitude sickness, those commercials were good enough to make even me want to go up and enjoy the best that this world has to offer. And yet, if he could, *“capture the best that this world has to offer,”* King David would NOT have chosen it in comparison to the Lovingkindness of God!¹ That essentially is what he says in the text before us...

Psalm 63:3b, *“...Thy lovingkindness is better than life...”*

This is amazing. David is saying that the best that this world has to offer — life at its finest — cannot compare with knowing and enjoying God’s Lovingkindness! That is quite a claim; yet it’s NOT overstated! As part of our ongoing series on God’s grace we are going to look at the glory of God’s lovingkindness! As we begin, let me Introduce you to this Psalm.

Introduction to Psalm 63.

Did you notice the Inscription at the beginning of this Psalm? It is part of the Hebrew text.

Psalm 63. *“A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.”*

That places this Psalm during that horrible time in David’s life when he had been chased from Jerusalem by his son, Absalom (cf. 2 Samuel 15:23)². And how was that? Why at this time did God allow David — *“a man after God’s own heart”* (1 Samuel 13:14). God’s choice for King as opposed to Saul (2 Samuel 16:9) — to be run out of Jerusalem with his life in serious peril? Listen to Nathan’s rebuke of David after committing adultery, deceit, and murder, the Lord said:

2 Samuel 12:10-11a, 13a: *“Now therefore, the sword shall never depart from your house, because you have despised Me and have taken the wife of Uriah the Hittite to be your wife.’ Thus says the Lord, ‘Behold, I will raise up evil against you from your own household...’ Then David said to Nathan, ‘I have sinned against the Lord.’ And Nathan said to David, ‘The Lord also has taken away your sin...”*

Did you get that? God had NOT let David down NOR did the Lord abandon him; in fact, God forgave his sin. Rather, David was on the run as the consequence of his own sinful acts! And yet from the ashes of David’s rebellion, the Lord brought forth amazing growth in this man’s life. He learned that God is NOT after religious acts of service; He wants our hearts! In his confession, David wrote this:

Psalm 51:16-17, *“Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, otherwise I would give it; Thou art not pleased with burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.”*

Our sin — though it be egregious — cannot compromise our relationship with God, just our joy.

Recall David's prayer of contrition:

Psalm 51:12, "Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and sustain me with a willing spirit."

David did NOT ask God to restore his salvation, just the joy he lost on account of his sin! God loves us so much that when we are living in unrepentant sin, the Lord will allow our hearts to be tormented by guilt and grief. Describing his spiritual health as he lived with the unrepentant sins of adultery, deceit, and murder, David wrote this:

Psalm 32:3-5, "When I kept silent *about my sin*, my body wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Thy hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was drained away *as with the fever heat of summer*. [Selah]. I acknowledged my sin to Thee, and my iniquity I did not hide; I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'; and Thou didst forgive the guilt of my sin.' [Selah]."

And yet, more than all of this, David learned of the greatness, glory, riches, and majesty of God's Lovingkindness.

Psalm 63:3, "Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise Thee."

Boice wrote of this

This background helps us appreciate the emotional passion of the psalm. Separated from God's sanctuary, which was in Jerusalem and which David loved, David is longing for a sense of the presence of God as a friend longs for one from whom he is separated, or as a lover longs for his beloved. This makes the psalm almost a love song for God, especially when David says, 'My soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you' (v. 1). Commentator Derek Kidner says, 'There may be other songs that equal this outpouring of devotion; [but there are] few if any that surpass it.' (Boice, 2005, p. 517)

In other words, David would rather be on the run in the wilderness of Judah and there enjoy the lovingkindness of God than to go back to the life of ease and plenty he had prior to this time where he indulged in his sin!

David was so zealous to love and know the Lord because of "the Lovingkindness of the Lord"!

- It was "better than life" (Psalm 63:3).
- It is that which "upholds the servant of Christ when their foot slips" (Psalm 94:18-19)!

That you and I might see this, let's examine what the Bible means by "the lovingkindness of the Lord."

God's Lovingkindness Defined

The word for "lovingkindness" in the Bible is **חֶסֶד** (*hesed*). For centuries in Bible translations and Lexicons, the word was translated as "mercy," "kindness," or "love." In fact, the Septuagint, LXX primarily used the Greek word, *ἔλεος* (*eleos*)- meaning "mercy"- to translate this word.

It wasn't until 1927 that a theological student published his doctrinal dissertation which brought light to this word. Talk about an earthquake that rumbled throughout Christianity! Nelson Glueck contested that the word **חֶסֶד** (*hesed*) could NOT be explained by just one word! The term is as a multifaceted diamond that must be taken as a whole to capture its essence! Glueck's work literally inspired volumes to be written on just this one Hebrew word! So, let's look at this word.

חֶסֶד (*hesed*) encompasses no less than nine glorious truths about God — which obviously we don't have time this morning to explore in detail. However, let me at least introduce you.³ When we speak of the "Lovingkindness" of God we are talking about God's Integrity/truth, Genesis 24:27; Exodus 34:6; 2 Samuel 2:6; Psalm 25:10; 40:10; 85:10; 89:14; 138:2; Proverbs 16:6. The fact that what God says and does is never a lie and therefore, in an absolute context, could never change or be altered. Speaking to the men of Jabesh-gilead after they buried Saul, David said this:

2 Samuel 2:6a, "And now may the Lord show lovingkindness and truth to you."

The 'and' here is expegetical meaning the second word explains the first⁴. That means when we speak of God's lovingkindness we are speaking of the fact that the love God has for His people is true, will not change nor be withdrawn! And it is more than this.

When Christ told Thomas that He is "the truth" (John 14:6), He was making an incredible statement. Do you know the opposite of "truth"? It is NOT "false" per se, BUT fantasy/romanticism. Now we are NOT talking here about "fantasy" as in C. S. Lewis' Chronicles of Narnia. That is fantasy literature which comports with reality/truth. Rather, we are talking about fantasy which comports with reality 80%. That is the opposite of truth which is reality!

Accordingly, when God speaks of His Lovingkindness as being "truth" He is saying that if you and I want to live in the real world, it will only be as we participate in His Lovingkindness which will never change or be withdrawn (Lamentations 3:22-23)!

Notice God's Faithfulness— Genesis 32:10; Deuteronomy 7:9; Psalm 40:10; 86:13; 89:2, 24; 98:3 — the fact that He is able to be trusted!

Psalm 89:2, "For I have said, "Lovingkindness will be built up forever; in the heavens Thou

wilt establish Thy faithfulness.”

This is an example of Progressive Parallelism where the second statement explains the first, but then furthers it. God’s Lovingkindness means that NOT only what God promises He most certainly will bring it to pass, BUT because of that, He is able to be trusted!⁵

And yet, we can take this one step further. NOT ONLY can God be trusted, BUT He is worthy to be entrusted with our lives (cf. Romans 8:18; 2 Timothy 1:12)! That is God’s Lovingkindness!

God’s Compassion — Exodus 34:6; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 25:6; 31:7; 51:1; 69:16; 103:4, 8; Isaiah 54:8; 63:7; Lamentations 3:32; Hosea 2:19; Jonah 4:2.

Psalm 25:6, “Remember, O Lord, Thy compassion and [once again epexegetical and so translated as, ‘that is’] Thy lovingkindnesses, for they have been from of old.”

Do you know what the “compassion” of God is? It is His being moved on account of our struggles and difficulties. The word for “compassion” is *σπλαγχνίζομαι* (*splagchnizomai*) and refers to being deeply moved- as in Matthew.

Matthew 9:36, “And seeing the multitudes, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and downcast like sheep without a shepherd.”

This facet of God’s Lovingkindness tells us that God will never be disgusted by us, BUT rather will always be burdened for us! Because God “knows our frame” and “is mindful that we are but dust” (Psalm 103:14), He genuinely understands the struggle we have as sinners living in a sinful world! He understands:

- When we don’t do the things that we ought.
- When we purposely sin.
- When we are easily distracted.
- The difficulty we have in doing any good!

That’s God’s Lovingkindness!

God’s Goodness — 2 Samuel 2:6; Ezra 3:11; Psalm 69:16; 86:5; 100:5; 106:1; 107:1; 109:21; 118:1; Is. 63:7.

When the Temple foundation was finished following the exile, we read of the people.

Ezra 3:11, “And they sang, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, *saying*, ‘For He is good, for [this explains what the people meant by God’s ‘goodness’] His lovingkindness is upon Israel forever.”

If you want to begin to comprehend “goodness” you have to consider its opposite; wickedness/sinfulness. In fact, as ones who have been forgiven, we are the only ones who can begin to understand this facet of God’s character. C. S. Lewis made this incredible observation:

When a man is getting better he understands more and more clearly the evil that is still left in him. When a man is getting worse he understands his own badness less and less. A moderately bad man knows he is not very good: a thoroughly bad man thinks he is all right. This is common sense, really. You understand sleep when you are awake, not while you are sleeping. You can see mistakes in arithmetic when your mind is working properly: while you are making them you cannot see them. You can understand the nature of drunkenness when you are sober, not when you are drunk. Good people know about both good and evil: bad people do not know about either. (Lewis, 1960, p. 73)

As that is the case, as Christians we can begin to understand God’s goodness because we know something of the opposite, our own wicked heart and the sins of man. Accordingly, when we say that God is good, we begin by professing what He is not; in Him there is no sin, malice, envy, evil, wickedness, ill-intent, pride, getting even, etc. This is part and parcel of God’s lovingkindness!

[God’s Graciousness — Exodus 34:6; Nehemiah 9:17; Psalm 51:1; 145:8; Jonah 4:2.](#)

Psalm 51:1a, “Be gracious to me, O God, according to Thy lovingkindness...”

David understood that God’s graciousness is an overflow of His Lovingkindness. What is God’s “graciousness”? It is the kindness of God, His mercy, longsuffering, and pity! It is the fact that God is “gentle and humble in heart” such that we can “find rest for [our] souls.” For truly, His “yoke is easy, and [His] load is light” (Matthew 11:28-30)!

[God’s Forgiveness — Exodus 34:7; Numbers 14:18, 19; Psalm 25:7; 119:41.](#)

In response to Moses’ request to look upon God, the Lord hid him in the cleft of a rock and then showed him a toned-down version of His glory:

Exodus 34:6-7a, “Then the Lord passed by in front of him and proclaimed, ‘The Lord, the Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands [and because of that, He...], who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin...”

Christian, do you understand that the only reason we can be forgiven is because of God’s Lovingkindness? Get this; it just isn’t His love, it is the conglomeration of the nine facets of God’s character which we are talking about! That is why you can’t

- Lose your salvation,
- Ever again be an enemy of God, or
- Have God be repulsed by you!

In Christ you enjoy a beauty which daily sin could never tarnish!

God's Righteousness — Psalm 36:10; 44:26.

Psalm 36:10, "O continue Thy lovingkindness to those who know Thee, and Thy righteousness to the upright in heart."

Once again, we have here Progressive Parallelism where God's Lovingkindness is explained by His righteousness. Now when it comes to God's righteousness, we are talking about two things:

- The fact that God is pure, morally upright, and therefore One who has no darkness at all in Himself (1 John 1:5).
- The fact that God could NEVER violate His own character. When we say that God is just/right, we are saying that His actions are in perfect agreement with His nature.⁶

As this is true of His lovingkindness that means that God could never violate it! If you are one who has benefited from God's goodness and grace — that is, you are saved — then God could NOT be anything other to you than kind, merciful, gracious, compassionate, sympathetic, etc.!

God's Strength — Psalm 59:16.

Psalm 59:16, "But as for me, I shall sing of Thy strength; yes, I shall joyfully sing of Thy lovingkindness in the morning, for Thou hast been my stronghold, and a refuge in the day of my distress."

This is chiasmic whereby as we consider God's strength- His ability to protect us absolutely and always- we gaze upon His lovingkindness. This facet of God's lovingkindness tells us that nothing can thwart His love, mercy, kindness, etc., in our lives! In the words of Paul:

Romans 8:38b-39, "...neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Lastly, built into God's lovingkindness is character quality which we would call loyalty.

God's Loyalty — 1 Kings 8:23; Nehemiah 1:5; 9:32; Psalm 89:28; cf. also Psalm 37:28; Amos 5:15.

Nehemiah 1:5, “And I said, “I beseech Thee, O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and [that is] lovingkindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

This facet of God’s lovingkindness means that God keeps covenant with His people. Now translated to our world, that means God remains loyal to all the promises and commitments He made when He entered into a saving relationship with you! In the words of David:

Psalm 37:28a, “For the Lord loves justice, and does not forsake His godly ones; they are preserved forever...”

“Loyalty” in our world means that when you are not present, your friends have your back! They don’t speak ill of you, nor allow others to do the same. They defend you and support you through thick and thin. That is a large part of God’s covenant loyalty.

- How many times have you thought in the midst of trial and difficulty that somehow God has changed His mind when it comes to you? *My sin really does disgust Him such that He now wants nothing to do with me!*

Christian, God’s Lovingkindness means that God could never do that! Even when you and I are at our worst, in Christ He will always have our back! He will always be loyal to us!

- And the reason why has NOTHING to do with what we do or what we are! It has everything to do with God’s character. In the words of Paul:

2 Timothy 2:13, “If we are faithless, He remains faithful; for He cannot deny Himself.”

Even when we are at our worst, God in Christ remains Loyal NOT only to His promises, BUT also to you!

With all nine of these concepts in mind, we can venture a definition of “God’s Lovingkindness.” It tells us that God is a good, gracious, compassionate, and forgiving Being whose love toward each of us is never a sham, could never change, nor ever be thwarted (by you- the object of His love- or any other created thing). The net result is a saving God who henceforth and forevermore will have your back and therefore One whom we can always trust and so rely upon!

It was because of this that David — in the midst of exile when the world was against him, including his own family members — could profess in the Psalm before us that “God’s lovingkindness is better than life!” That clearly is the theme of Psalm 63.

With that, let’s close out our study enjoying, marveling, and praising God on account of His lovingkindness — for that is what David does in this Psalm.

God's Lovingkindness Enjoyed — Psalm 63:1-11.

Psalm 63:1, "O God, Thou art my God [no doubts... no worries that his sin with Bathsheba and the subsequent murder cost him his relationship with God. Accordingly...]; I shall seek⁷ Thee earnestly; my soul thirsts for Thee, my flesh yearns for Thee⁸, in⁹ a dry and weary land where there is no water."

If the little we have spent on this facet of God's character has moved you in any way this morning, may it move you — as it did David here — to long to fellowship with and so come to know better this Amazing Being! Boice wrote of this:

Verse 1 is a wonderful expression of the very heart of religion. David is in the desert of Judah, one of the most barren regions on earth, and he uses that as a poetic background for his condition apart from God. He has been driven from Jerusalem, where God was present in his sanctuary and where he regularly worshiped and beheld God's glory. He sees himself now as thirsting for God as a man might thirst in the desert, 'where there is no water' ... (Boice, 2005, p. 517)

Derek Kidner adds:

The longing of these verses is not the groping of a stranger, feeling his way towards God, but the eagerness of a friend, almost of a lover, to be in touch with the one he holds dear. (Kidner, 2009, p. 242)

Truly, in light of who our God is, cultivate in your walk the relationship John had with Christ where he leaned his head upon the Lord!

How do we do that? For starters we ourselves become *חסיד* (*hasid*) which is the adjectival form of *חסד* (*hesed*) and used of those who respond to God's Lovingkindness with love, trust, commitment, and loyalty- never allowing anything in this life or in their person to move them from their devotion to the Lord, "Thou Art My God!!!" And this affirmation led to David longing to know God more.

Psalm 63:2, "Thus I have beheld Thee in the sanctuary, to see Thy power and Thy glory."

That is one reason David attended worship, to behold the glory of God! Yet because he was removed from Jerusalem and so the sanctuary, David longed to go to church that he might behold the Lord! That is what grace does in the life of a believer: it makes them want to know the Lord all the more (just like Moses who prayed to God, "Lord, show me Thy glory!" Exodus 33:18)! And this naturally resulted in praise.

Psalm 63:3-5, "Because Thy lovingkindness is better than life, my lips will praise Thee. So I will bless Thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Thy name. My soul is satisfied as

with marrow and fatness, and my mouth offers praises with joyful lips.”

This is amazing in light of what David was experiencing at this moment in his life on account of his sin. So, why don't we long for Christ more? You say because:

- Life has gotten me down!
- My sin is so egregious before God; I dare not enter into His presence!
- I'm not the greatest Christian!

Could you possibly be in a worse place than David when he wrote this? Christian,

- Be done with human reasoning when it comes to God which results in a tit-for-tat relationship and
- Accept the glorious truth that your unchanging God loves you with an everlasting love which cannot be thwarted or diminished by you! That is the Lovingkindness of God... which most certainly is better than life!

At this point David utilized the Hebrew tool of progressive parallelism to express further his awe over God's Lovingkindness. Notice the repetition but then the advancement of thought

Psalm 63:6-8, “When I remember Thee on my bed, I meditate on Thee in the night watches¹⁰ [clearly God was David's muse, his longing, his joy, and so his glory! And once again this led to worship...], for Thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy [Christian, if ever you understood- as David did here even though he was on the run- that in Christ you are always safe/secure, your life would be filled no longer with doubts or misgivings, BUT with joy, rejoicing, and dedication...]. My soul clings to Thee [KJV, 'my soul followeth hard after Thee' Why? Because...]; Thy right hand upholds me.”

It truly is, “when we are weak, then we are strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10b)!! That again is where David found himself as he wrote this Psalm. Though his advisors would have thought that he couldn't have been in a more vulnerable position, David knew better! For he knew his God- which brought a confidence even in the midst of his dire situation! And this led to the closing words of this Psalm where David gives a contrast between God's dealing with him and His dealings with His and our enemies.

Psalm 63:9-11, “But those who seek my life, to destroy it, will go into the depths of the earth. They will be delivered over to the power of the sword; they will be a prey for foxes¹¹. But [even though everything in this world might say otherwise...] the king¹² will rejoice in God.”

Don't miss it: God's lovingkindness won't keep us from the consequences of sin and its miseries. What it does do is enable us to rise above the pain and suffering and so behold “the glory that is to be revealed to us” in Christ (Romans 8:18)! Accordingly, David ends this Psalm with this final affirmation:

Psalm 63:11b, "...everyone who swears by Him will glory, for the mouths of those who speak lies will be stopped."

Christian, what is your glory? Your boast? Your joy?

Listen, there's no *condemnation* in this Psalm, Just the *realization* that if in the midst of your struggles, weakness, and sin, your glory and joy is NOT in God's Lovingkindness, then clearly you are making much of the creature and/or creation.¹³ Come to know the Lovingkindness of God and truly in your life, "the valley of weeping will become a spring" (Psalm 84:6)!¹⁴

References

Boice, J. M. (2005). *Psalms 42-106*. Grand Rapids: Baker Books.

Kidner, D. (2009). *Psalms 1-72 (Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries)*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic.

Lewis, C. S. (1960). *Mere Christianity*. New York: Macmillon.

Morgan, g. C. (1947). *Notes on the Psalms*. Grand Rapids: Fleming H Revell.

End Note(s)

¹ "Everyone acknowledges that life is good. Therefore most of us try to hang on to life at whatever cost. We will give up our money rather than be shot by a thief who wants our wallet. We will submit to painful surgical procedures or even to amputations of a limb if those things will restore us to even partial health and prolong our days. Satan used this truth to slander righteous Job: 'Skin for skin! A man will give all he has for his own life' (Job 2:4). For nearly everyone, life is the most precious of all possessions. However, says David, there is something even better than life, and that is the love of God." (Boice, 2005, pp. 519-520)

² "There were only two periods in David's life this can apply to, either (1) when he was in the wilderness early in his life fleeing from King Saul or (2) later when he was in the wilderness fleeing from his son Absalom. The second must be the case here, because in verse 11 David refers to himself as "the king," and he was not yet king when he was fleeing from Saul." (Boice, 2005, p. 516)

³ What it does: (a) it saves us, Genesis 24:27; Psalm 103:4; 109:26, (b) it leads us into fellowship with God, Exodus 15:13, (c), it gives life, Job 10:12. Its Duration: (a) it is everlasting, 1 Chron. 16:34, 41, Psalm 89:33; 103:17; 118, 136, (b) it extends to the Heavens, Psalm 36:5, (c), it is as high as the heavens are above the earth, Psalm 103:11, (d), it outlives the mountains and the hills, Is. 54:10, and (e) it never comes to completion, Lamentations 3:22. Its Human Impact- it results in (a) Worship, 2 Chron. 7:3; Psalm 5:7; Psalm 23:6; 59:16; 89:1; 101:1; 107; 117:2, (b) calling upon God, Psalm 6:4, (c), trusting in God, Psalm 52:8, (d) hoping in God, Psalm 130:7, (e) seeking to be revived on account of God's Lovingkindness, Psalm 119:88, 149, 159, (f) meditating upon it, Psalm 48:9, (g) not being shaken in life, Psalm 21:7, (h) holing us up, Psalm 94:18, (i) reviving the heart, Ezra 9:9, and (j) the comforting of our soul, Psalm 119:76. Its Enjoyment: (a) we must take refuge in God's Lovingkindness, Psalm 17:7; 32:10; 33:18; 36:7; 144:2, (b), we must wait upon the Lord, Psalm 147:11, and (c) we must frequently consider/meditate upon it, Psalm 107:43.

⁴ Accordingly, the relationship here is one of hendiadys where the second noun serves to describe the first as in "hot and steaming coffee."

⁵ Think of Paul when he wrote, "I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day." (2 Timothy 1:12b)

⁶ As in Genesis 18:25b where Abraham asked God, "...Shall not the Judge of all the earth deal justly?"

⁷ "The verb *seek* is an unusual verb that is related to the Hebrew noun for dawn, and it can be translated two ways, either as 'to seek early' or 'to seek earnestly.' The New International Version has chosen the second option ('earnestly I seek you'), probably rightly, but many of the older versions, including the King James Version, had 'early.' This caused Christians to think of Psalm 63 as a morning psalm, and in many places it was sung at the beginning of each day. For example, it was used this way by the early Greek churches and remains such in the liturgy of the Armenian church." (Boice, 2005, p. 518)

⁸ James Boice, after describing two kinds of people typically in a church: (1) false sheep/goats, (2) those like Peter who stand at a distance from Christ (Luke 22:54), described a third type of Christian- what David was here, "The third type are those who, as Murdoch Campbell suggests, 'in storm and sunshine, cleave to him and enjoy daily communion with him.' These people want God, and they want him intensely, because they know that he and he alone will satisfy the deep longing of their souls. David was a person who desired God above everything else, and Psalm 63 is a classic expression of this longing." (Boice, 2005, p. 516)

⁹ "The word *as* is not in the text of verse 1 (Heb. 2), which simply says that David is praying in parched and cheerless surroundings (which the title defines as the Wilderness of Judah). The implication is that the longing which this desolate spot arouses is only the surface of a much deeper desire." (Kidner, 2009, p. 243)

¹⁰ "The contrast to 'my soul thirsts for thee' (1) is unexpectedly strong with My soul is feasted—as if the mere slaking of thirst would be too weak a metaphor. The praise is now exuberant: the Hebrew word for joyful (5), like 'sing for joy' in verse 7, has a full-throated ring: cf. NEB 'I ... wake the echoes'. Yet the chief difference is one of mood. In both stanzas it is to God himself, not some lesser goal, that David is drawn; in both he praises him, and in both he is humbly dependent. If the wilderness of verse 1 sharpened his appetite for God, his wakefulness through the watches of the night (an expression which stresses the slow progress of the hours) enlisted time and thought for the same Lord. Both kinds of hardship yielded 'streams in the desert' and 'honey from the rock'." (Kidner, 2009, p. 244)

¹¹ "Jackals make sense here, rather than the 'foxes' of some older translations (one Hebrew word serves for both). They are the final scavengers, consuming the remains of the kill rejected by the larger beasts. The wicked are, in other words, the very leavings of mankind." (Kidner, 2009, p. 245)

¹² "We have already noticed David's term for himself, the king, as a clue to the circumstances of the psalm (see opening comments). But it is surely more than a synonym for 'I'. If this is written from his banishment at the hands of Absalom, the royal title becomes a reassertion of his calling, which was from God, and an avowal that this cannot fail. A Christian parallel, one of many, can be found in the doxology of John the prisoner, who praises God even from Patmos for the liberty and royal priesthood which are his birthright and ours (Rev. 1:5f.). If David's faith in his kingly calling was well-founded, still more is the Christian's." (Kidner, 2009, p. 245)

¹³ "How little this is found today! Most people do not even know that it is God their souls truly desire. They are seeking satisfaction in other things. Others know God but do not cultivate his presence; they do not long after him. Is it not this above everything that explains the weakness of the contemporary church? Is it not this that makes us so hollow spiritually?" (Boice, 2005, p. 518)

¹⁴ G. Campbell Morgan wrote of this Psalm, "Two things are necessary for such triumph as this. These are indicated in the opening words of the psalm. First, there must be the consciousness of personal relationship, 'O God, Thou art my God'; and secondly, there must be earnest seeking after God, 'Early will I seek Thee.'" (Morgan, 1947, p. 112)