

END OF PSALM 62

You are Psalms

Some people think you never get discouraged, but the fact is, when you do, you know where to run. Your prayers are open and honest because you realize that God already knows your heart, He's just waiting to hear you spill it. And when you do, what starts out as heavy ends up becoming a song of praise. You may struggle... and often you do... but each time, you grow in your understanding of God's faithfulness. You're just a song waiting to happen.

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PSALMS (SONGS OF PRAISE)

TRUST
IN THE
LORD *and do good;
dwell in the land and
enjoy safe pasture.*
PSALM 36: 3

PSALM NUMBER: 62

The Prophet aspireth after God.

1. O God my God, to thee do I watch at break of day. For thee my soul hath thirsted; for thee my flesh, O how many ways?
2. In a desert land, and where there is no way, and no water: so in the sanctuary have I come before thee, to see thy power and thy glory.
3. For thy mercy is better than lives: thee may lips shall praise.
4. Thus will I bless thee all my life long: and in thy name I will lift up my hands.
5. Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness: and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips.
6. If I have remembered thee upon my bed, I will meditate on thee in the morning.
7. Because thou hast been my helper. And I will rejoice under the covert of thy wings:
8. My soul hath stuck close to thee: thy right hand hath received me.
9. But they have sought my soul in vain: they shall go into the lower parts of the earth:
10. They shall be delivered into the hands of the sword, they shall be the portions of foxes.
11. But the king shall rejoice in God, all they shall be praised that swear by him: because the mouth is stopped of them that speak wicked things.

The Psalms are songs of praise and cover a period of about 1000 years, from the time of Moses (ca. 1400 B.C.) to the Israelites' return from exile (ca. 450 B.C.). They deal with selected events of that period and provide us with the thoughts and feelings of those who went through the experiences recorded. After being made a Cardinal by Pope Clement VIII, Saint Robert Bellarmine, prepared for posterity his very own commentary on each of the Psalms. Enclosed are his interpretations on each of the Psalms.

PSALM NUMBER: 62

EXPLANATION OF THE PSALM

1. "God my God, to thee do I watch at break of day. For thee my soul hath thirsted; for thee my flesh, O how many ways!" A just man tells us his first impulse at the dawn of day, and that is to seek God, to desire God, to confess his misery to him. "O God, my God;" my help, my strength, for without you I am nothing, can do nothing. "To thee do I watch by break of day." The moment I open the eyes of my body, I open those of my mind, to behold you, the increased light; and thus I watch to look for you, instead of looking for the things of this world. I do so, because "for thee my soul hath thirsted;" it longs for thee as its meat and drink; it's light and gladness. My flesh thirsts in various ways for thee, the fountain of all good. Though the flesh, properly speaking cannot be said to thirst for God, it is said to thirst, because by reason or its manifold miseries, it needs his mercy, just as parched land is said to thirst for rain, without which it can produce nothing. Everyone has experienced the necessities, wants, and miseries of our corruptible flesh, which he alone, of whom it is said, "we heals all your infirmities," can heal.

2. "In a desert land, and where there is no way, and no water: so in the sanctuary have I come before thee, to see thy power and thy glory." The characteristics of a desert are three, uninhabited, inaccessible, without water; the second being the effect, in the third the cause, of the first; for a country is generally deserted by reason of a want of water; but that makes the ground dry and barren, and when so deserted and barren, it becomes inaccessible. The Prophet means to convey that such uncultivated land, wanting not only the luxuries, but even the necessaries of life, was of great use to him in finding God. For the more the soul is destitute of the goods of this world, or, certainly, the more it takes its affections off them, and betakes itself to a spiritual desert, the more easily it ascends to the contemplation and enjoyment of things celestial. "In that desert land, and when there is no way and no water;" here I come to thee in spirit, raising up my soul to thee, as if I were "in thy sanctuary," so that the desert became a sanctuary to me, "to see thy power and thy glory."

3. "For thy mercy is better than lives: thee my lips shall praise." The word "for" must be referred to the following, and not to the preceding; and the meaning is: I will not only see thy power and thy glory, but my lips shall daily praise you, for your mercy is better to me than life itself; for it was your mercy they gave me that life, that preserves that life, and the same mercy will make that life a much happier one to me, should I lose it for your sake; but if, for the purpose of preserving that life, I should fall from your grace and mercy, I will lose both my life and your mercy.

4. "Thus will I bless thee all my life long: and in thy name I will lift up my hands." With such daily praise: "I will bless thee my life long;" whatever may befall me, whether in prosperity or adversity. I will bless you forever; "and in thy name I will lift up my hands." Whenever I invoke your name, I will raise up my hands in prayer, expecting help from you alone in adversity; and,

on the other hand, thanking you alone in my prosperity. The custom of raising the hands in prayer was practiced in both the old and the new law; for, when Moses lifted up his hands to God, the people conquered. And the apostle, 1 Timothy 2, says, "raising their pure hands." St. Augustine reminds those who raise their hands to God in prayer, that if they wish to be heard, they should also raise their hands to do good works. Raising the hand also was used by the Jews as a form of oath; thus, we find Abraham saying "I lift up my hand to the Lord God, the Most High, the possessor of heaven and earth, that from the very woof thread unto the shoe latchet, I will not take of anything that are thine." And, in Apocalypse 10, "he lifted up his hand to heaven, and swore by him that liveth forever and ever." The expression, then, may mean, I will swear by your name, and thus worship you alone as the true God.

5. "Let my soul be filled as with marrow and fatness and my mouth shall praise thee with joyful lips." Here is what he asked when he lifted his hands in prayer to God, that his "soul should be filled as with marrow and fatness;" that his soul should become replete with the spiritual marrow and fatness that acts upon the soul as the natural marrow and fatness do upon the body. Those who enjoy it are generally sound, strong, active, ruddy, and good-humored; on the other hand, those who lack it are shriveled, weak, deformed, and gloomy; so those who are full of grace, of the spiritual richness here described, are devout, fervent, always in good temper; while, on the contrary, those who have it not, nauseate everything spiritual, are wasted away by listlessness being quite weak and infirm, they can neither resist anything bad, nor do anything good. St. Augustine properly observes that while we are in the desert, we cannot ask for and desire the feast of wisdom and justice, which we can only enjoy when we shall have arrived at our country; then will the expression of the Psalm, "and filleth thee with the fact of corn," be fulfilled, as also that in Matthew 5, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice, for they shall be filled;" and then, "my mouth," for praise shall succeed to prayer, shall perfectly, without end, without tiring, praise God, "with joyful lips;" what we shall be so full that we shall want nothing; for, at present, no matter what we have, we always want something still; and thus we must have recourse to daily and constant prayer.

6. "If I have remembered thee upon my bed, I will meditate on thee in the morning." Not only in the next life, when "filled with marrow and fatness," he will praise God with exultation, but also, while in this world, will he remember God and his gifts. "If I have remembered thee upon my bed;" in the depth of the night, as I lay thereon, much more so will I do it by day; and, therefore, "I will meditate on thee in the morning;" I will think and reflect on your power and glory for the following reason:

7. "Because thou hast been my helper. And I will rejoice under the covert of thy wings."

8. "My soul hath stuck close to thee: thy right hand hath received me." No wonder I should always reflect on your power and glory, "because thou hast been my helper," always remembered me by helping and protecting me. St. Augustine gathers a useful lesson from this passage, for those who, while at their work, wish to remember God and to keep his fear and love before their eyes. To do that they must, while lying on their bed at night, remember him, and reflect on his mercy and his promises. Most people go through their daily work as if God were not over them at all, and that because they have no fixed time for reflection or meditation. "And I will rejoice under the covert of thy wings." Having said, "because thou has been my helper," for fear he may be considered as looking upon himself as now secure and indifferent as to God's protection, he now adds, "and I will rejoice under the covert of thy wings." I will keep myself under the cover of your wings, trusting in your protection. "I will rejoice," the perfectly secure from the

birds of prey. "My soul hath stuck close to thee." Such protection, so many favors so moved me, that "my soul hath stuck close to thee," united by a tie of charity so strong, then nothing can separate it; and for fear it may be supposed he was taking credit to himself for being so ardently attached to God, he adds, "thy right hand hath received me." I follow you, because you draw me; I love you, because you first loved me, and by loving me made me love you. Happy is he, who, however perfect he may be, ascribes all to God, and like a chicken, shelters himself under God's wings. More happy is he who can truly say, "my soul hath stuck close to thee," who, not only puts his trust in the covering of God's wings, but also loves him so entirely, with his whole heart, that he can say with the apostle, "who shall separate me from the love of Christ?" And more happy than that again is he, who, by his own experience, or by the testimony of his conscience, has learned "that thy right hand received me," for of such the Lord says, "and no man shall snatch them out of my hand. And no one can snatch them out of the hand of my Father, I and the Father are one."

9. "But they have sought my soul in vain: they shall go into the lower parts of the earth:"

10. "They shall be delivered into the hands of the sword, they shall be the portion of foxes." In the three last verses the Prophet foretells the ultimate destruction and extermination of the persecutors of the just, and the everlasting happiness and felicity of the same just. "But they," the wicked persecutors, "have sought my soul in vain," endeavored in vain to have my life, to put me to death; for the wicked persecute the just, with a few of becoming masters of everything, and revel in pleasure and power; but to no purpose, for instead of being masters of the earth, they will be swallowed up by it: and when so condemned to hell, instead of the luxuries, the ease, and enjoyment they set their hearts on, they will never be allowed even a moment's rest, but will be consigned to eternal punishment, inflicted by the demons who tear them more cruelly than so many ravenous wolves and foxes. "They shall go into the lowest parts of the earth." See why they labored in vain, they thought to become masters, but instead of that, they will be hurled beneath the earth, into its very heart, and compelled to take up their abode forever in hell. "They shall be delivered into the hands of the sword." They will have no rest in hell, much less will they enjoy the blessings of the earth, but will be "delivered into the hands of the sword," given up for torment; for God's punishments, as coming from a supreme and angry Judge, will be both grievous and interminable. "They shall be the portion of foxes." Instead of lording it over the just, they will be lorded over by the unjust demons, as being now their "lot and inheritance." These demons are styled foxes, rather than lions or wolves, because they entrap sinners, and enslaved them more by the cunning of the fox, than the strength of the lion.

11. "But the king shall rejoice in God, all they shall be praised that swear by him: because the mouth is stopped of them that speak wicked things." How vain have been all the labors of the wicked! They will not only be disappointed in what they set their hearts upon, but they will not be able to deprive the just of their own, for "their king," Christ, of whom the Jews said, "away with him, away with him, crucify him," whose name the pagans, with all their power, endeavored to eradicate, and which is blasphemed by all the wicked, will live and reign forever, and "shall rejoice in God," sitting in glory on the right-hand of the Father; and "all they shall be praised (on the day of judgment) that swear by him," they, who in this life, in spite of all persecution, religiously worship him as the true God, and swear by his name, or rather swear faithful obedience to him. All Christ's faithful "will be praised," because the mouth is stopped of them that speak wicked things." And the day of judgment, the mouth of all the wicked will be stopped, but then the truth will be manifest, and cannot be demurred to or gain said; and then the wicked will exclaim, as we read in Wisdom 5, "therefore we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of justice hath not shined unto us, and the sun of understanding hath not risen upon us. Behold, how they are numbered among the children of God, and their lot is among the saints." Thus the just will be praised by their very enemies, when the truth having been exposed by God's judgment, shall shut up the mouths of those who now, by their blasphemies, maledictions, calumnies, detractions, reproaches, and lies, "speak evil things." Some apply those verses to David, others to Christ. Saul and the other enemies of David, who sought to kill him, that they might reign in security, truly "labored in vain," for they were destroyed, and David had a glorious reign of it. So with the Jews, who sought to put Christ to death, "lest the Romans should come and take away their place and their nation," they would not have a Lamb for their King; they preferred a fox and a lion together, for the Romans sacked their city, took away their kingdom, nearly annihilated themselves; while Christ rose again, had a glorious reign of it, "and of his kingdom there shall be no end."