

Psalm 63

A Desert Prayer

Children:

Recap of last week – “I’m Sorry”

This week – The Red Phone. A Direct line. Help! 911!

You always have a direct line to God.

How long does it take for someone to come? 7 minutes.

It sometimes takes time to get an answer

and sometime a lot of things happen that you cannot see.

Trust and keep calling.

Adults:

A Poem is about a feeling.

But like most poetry or feelings, it is impossible to know its meaning

Without the context.

Psalm 63 is all about the story behind it.

David is in the desert of Judah.

In fact, he is in exile.

How did he get here?

Here’s the story in brief.

David had many wives and children.

Amnon rapes his half-sister Tamar.

Tamar’s brother Absalom kills Amnon.

David exiles Absalom for 3 years.

Absalom returns and plots to overthrow his father and does.

David grew complacent in his older years.

He was in fact a terrible father.

He does not discipline his family or lead and teach them.

He does not guide Amnon’s lust and curb his evil.

He does not comfort Tamar and bring about justice.

He does not understand Absalom.

It wasn’t what he did, but what he did not do.

In fact, David also grew complacent and proud.

Amnon suffered, Tamar suffered, Absalom suffered.
And eventually, he suffered.

In his suffering, David regained what he had once lost: humility.
He remembered in the desert the one he forgot when he was in the palace.
And thus this psalm was born.
He realises the dryness of his own soul, his life of ruins.
At the very bottom of the pit, a fugitive in his own land,
He returns to a simple trust again.

I don't know what your suffering is.
You may be a frustrated Amnon, living without guidance.
You may be Tamar, a victim of abuse or violence without being given justice.
You may be Absalom, sick and tired of the way things are, and willing to fight.
You may be David, sick and jaded, tired and complacent.
It could be your work, your family, your loneliness, yourself.
But does it make you humble or bitter?

David may not have known the outcome when this psalm was composed
But we do.
When he began to turn the tide against Absalom,
he tells his generals to spare Absalom.
But they do not.
Absalom, his hair entangled in a tree, is killed by David's men.
David's generals could not understand David's reaction.
And neither did I until this week.
Why did David mourn so bitterly for his son Absalom?
Did not Absalom deserve David's wrath, instead of mercy?

David, in the desert returned to God.
He saw his own waywardness and God's constancy.
He realised that all could have been different if he had been a better man.
Absalom could have been a beloved son rather than a rebel.
David, in his own humiliation and humility
learned to have compassion even on the one who would betray him.
I begin to understand how I might also learn compassion on others.

How does your desert experience shape you?