

• Do you remember when you felt “Distant from God?”*Background to Psalm 61*

- This psalm is about one who has a sense of “far-awayness from God” (v.2)
- Psalms 61-63 comprise a cluster of 3 songs of a man who HUNGERS FOR GOD.
- David wrote this for the Choir Director - according to Jeduthun. Jeduthun was a “choir-master” appointed by David (together with Heman & Asaph). See 1 Chron 16:41-42 & 1 Chron 25:1-6.

THESIS — when you feel THE FAR-AWAYNESS from God — what do you do?

Some devotional & pastoral applications from the divine song.

I. PRAY SCRIPTURE!

“I have seen that those whose prayers are most saturated with Scripture are generally most fervent and most effective in prayer. And where the mind isn't brimming with the Bible, the heart is not generally brimming with prayer”
(John Piper)

II. UTILIZE METAPHOR!

Ps 61 incorporates images by way of metaphor and language that speak of protection, loftiness, military protection, security, impenetrable, the presence of God, and comfort.

III. PLEAD FOR GRACE!

IV. FIXATE ON CHRIST!

V. CHOOSE TO SING & GIVE THANKS!

Nahum 1:7 — The LORD is good, A stronghold in the day of trouble, And He knows those who take refuge in Him.

From *When I Don't Desire God*, by John Piper:

- ➡ “Most of your unhappiness in life comes from the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself.”
- ➡ “Well, God does not mean for us to be passive. He means for us to fight the fight of faith—the fight for joy. And the central strategy is to preach the gospel to yourself.
- ➡ “God and God alone is the final, ultimate goal of our quest. All that God is for us in Jesus is the Object of our quest for joy. When I speak of fighting for joy, I mean joy in God, not joy without reference to God. When I speak of longing for happiness, I mean happiness in all that God is for us in Jesus.”

Specific Prayer Requests:

- Good Friday service
- Resurrection Morn Service
- St Patrick Day outreach/evangelism
- Abortion mill evangelism
- SLU/Meramec College evangelism
- Kate - salvation
- Brandon B - biblical counseling schooling
- Courtney T - vehicle provision
- Heisslers - direction & provision with missions in Hungary
- Biblical Counseling Conf @ Brookes - April 19-20 (Fri night/Sat morn)
- Phelans - house provision
- CFBC folks battling sickness, difficulties, trials

Praying Ephesians 3 Together:

- Ephesians 3:14-21 — petitions ...
 - Strengthened with God's power
 - Astonished with Christ's love
 - Filled with God's fullness

Extolling God's Grace in the Gospel Together:

To the question: what must I do to be saved? The old gospel replies: believe on the Lord Jesus Christ.

To the further question: what does it mean to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ? Its reply is: it means knowing oneself to be a sinner, and Christ to have died for sinners; abandoning all self-righteousness and self-confidence, and casting oneself wholly upon Him for pardon and peace; and exchanging one's natural enmity and rebellion against God for a spirit of grateful submission to the will of Christ through the renewing of one's heart by the Holy Ghost. (J.I. Packer)

- 1 Pet 2:24 — and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness
- 1 Cor 15:3-4 — For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.

ROCK OF AGES

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
 let me hide myself in thee;
 let the water and the blood,
 from thy wounded side which flowed,
 be of sin the double cure;
 save from wrath and make me pure.

Not the labors of my hands
 can fulfill thy law's demands;
 could my zeal no respite know,
 could my tears forever flow,
 all for sin could not atone;
 thou must save, and thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
 simply to the cross I cling;
 naked, come to thee for dress;
 helpless, look to thee for grace;
 foul, I to the fountain fly;
 wash me, Savior, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
 when mine eyes shall close in death,
 when I soar to worlds unknown,
 see thee on thy judgment throne,
 Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
 let me hide myself in thee.

PSALM 61: *Psalter*

Tune: "Come thou fount of every blessing"

Hear my pleading cry, O God, and
 listen to my prayer below.

From the ends of earth I call You,
 as my heart grows faint and low;
 Lead me to the rock that's higher,
 higher than I e'er could go.
 You have been my constant refuge,
 a strong tow-er 'gainst the foe.

How I long to dwell with You, God,
 in Your tent forevermore,
 And take refuge in the shelter
 of Your wings amidst the storm.
 For You've heard the vows I've made, God,
 and You've given unto me
 the inheritance of all who
 fear Your name so faithfully.

Now increase the days the king lives;
 generations his years be.
 May he be enthroned forever,
 in God's presence gloriously.
 Send Your love and faithful mercy
 to protect him all his days;
 Then I will fulfill my vows and
 to Your name ever sing praise.