

BIBLE STUDY

Psalm 63 (OSB 62): Your Mercy Is Better Than Life: Finding God in the Wilderness

Bible Study Preparation and Materials Needed:

Reflecting on: Psalm 63 (OSB 62) Your Mercy Is Better Than Life: Finding God in the Wilderness

For the Lesson: Orthodox Study Bible or Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition

Recommended Orthodox Study Bible [HERE](#).

Recommended Holy Bible: Armenian Church Edition [HERE](#).

Optional Practice

If time permits, begin or conclude this Bible study with an antiphonal Psalm reading. Have students read the psalm aloud in two groups, line by line. Encourage them to hear David's emotion, allowing it to become their own prayer.

Leader Notes

Things to Watch For:

Some students may have experienced real trauma. Don't push for details or force sharing.

If discussions stall, that's okay. Silence is better than forced responses.

Be ready to follow up individually with students who seem especially affected.

Adaptation Options:

For smaller groups (under 8), skip partner discussions and keep everything as full group.

For larger groups (over 15), use more small group time.

If your group is less familiar with Holy Scripture, add more context about psalms in general.

For groups that are more reserved, extend individual reflection time and reduce sharing time.

Memory Verse:

**“Because Your mercy is better than life,
my lips shall praise You.”**

- Psalm 62:4 (OSB)

Psalm 63 (OSB 62)

*1 A psalm by David, when he was in the desert of Judea.**

*2 O God, my God, I rise early to be with You;
My soul thirsts for You.
How often my flesh thirsts for You
In a desolate, impassable, and waterless land.*

*3 So in the holy place I appear before You,
To see Your power and Your glory.*

*4 Because Your mercy is better than life,
My lips shall praise You.*

*5 Thus I will bless You in my life;
I will lift up my hands in Your name.*

*6 May my soul be filled, as if with marrow and fatness,
And my mouth shall sing praise to You with lips filled with rejoicing.*

*7 If I remembered You on my bed,
I meditated on You at daybreak;*

*8 For You are my helper,
And in the shelter of Your wings I will greatly rejoice.*

*9 My soul follows close behind You;
Your right hand takes hold of me.*

*10 But they seek for my soul in vain;
They shall go into the lowest parts of the earth.*

*11 They shall be given over to the edge of the sword;
They shall be a portion for foxes.*

*12 But the king shall be glad in God;
All who swear by Him shall be praised,
For the mouth that speaks unrighteous things is stopped.*

Bible Study Lesson

Open with prayer:

Իմաստութիւն Յօր՝ Յիսուս, տո՛ւր ինձ իմաստութիւն, զբարիս խորհել եւ խօսել եւ գործել առաջի Քո՝ յամենայն ժամ. ի չար խորհրդոց, ի բանից եւ ի գործոց փրկեա՛ զիս. եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Eemasdootyoon Hor Heesoos, door eents eemasdootyoon uzparees khorel yev khosel yev kordz arachi ko hamenayn jham. Ee char khorhrtos, ee paneets yev kordzots prgya zees yev voghormya ko araradzots eents pazmameghees. Amen.

Wisdom of the Father, O Jesus, grant to me the wisdom to think, speak, and do that which is good in Your sight. Save me from all evil and distracting thoughts, words, and deeds. Have mercy upon your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.

A Reflection on Psalm 63 (OSB Psalm 62):

Have you ever felt spiritually empty, as if you were wandering through a desert? Not necessarily because of sin or struggle, but simply because God felt far away? Psalm 63 is a prayer from that place. Written by David while he was in the wilderness of Judah, it's not a cry of despair, but a song of longing, a heart that aches not for comfort, but for God Himself.

“O God, my God, I rise early to be with You; my soul thirsts for You. How often my flesh thirsts for You in a desolate, impassable, and waterless land. So in the holy place I appeared before You, to see Your power and Your glory. Because Your mercy is better than life, my lips shall praise You.” (vv. 2-4)

Desire, Not Desperation

David isn't asking to escape the wilderness. He's asking for God's presence in the midst of it. That's a powerful shift. Sometimes our prayers are all about changing our circumstances. But David models something deeper, that is finding God in the dryness.

In the Orthodox Church, this is the heart of asceticism: learning to hunger for God more than for what God can give. Real maturity in faith is when our souls say, “Your mercy is better than life.”

Q: *What are some things you usually pray for when life feels dry or difficult? How would your prayer change if your first desire was simply to know God better?*

Lifting Hands in the Desert

“Thus I will bless You in my life; I will lift up my hands in Your name. Let my soul be filled as if with marrow and fatness, and my lips will praise You with joyful lips.” (vv. 5-6)

Even in the wilderness, David worships. This is not forced positivity, but spiritual resistance. Praising God in the dry season is one of the boldest things a believer can do. It says, “God, You are enough even when nothing else is.”

Orthodox worship invites us to participate in this spirit of offering. Lifting our hands, our voices, our hearts, even when we don't “feel” like it, can reawaken the soul. The physical act of worship can carry us when our emotions cannot.

Q: *Have you ever experienced worship or prayer giving you strength in a season when you felt spiritually dry?*

Remembering in the Night

“If I remembered You on my bed, I meditated on You at daybreak. For You are my helper, and in the shelter of Your wings I will greatly rejoice. My soul clings to You; Your right hand holds me up.” (vv. 7-9)

David chooses to dwell on God morning and night. These are habits of trust. When he feels empty, he leans into memory: I remember who You've been. This is a form of spiritual discipline. When we can't see clearly, we recall what we know is true.

The image of the soul clinging to God is tender and powerful. It reminds us that even in times of distance, relationship remains. We are held even when we don't feel strong. Notice the dynamic: David's soul clings to God, but it is God's right hand that actually holds him up. Our effort meets God's sustaining grace.

Q: *What helps you remember God's faithfulness when you feel spiritually dry or distant?*

Trusting God with Justice

"But those who seek my soul to destroy it shall go into the lowest parts of the earth; they shall be delivered into the hands of the sword; they shall be portions for foxes. But the king shall be glad in God; everyone who swears by Him shall be praised; but the mouth that speaks unrighteous things is stopped." (vv. 10-12)

The final verses mention enemies being defeated, but notice, this is not the center of the psalm. David is not obsessed with vengeance. He mentions his enemies, entrusts them to God's justice, and then immediately returns his focus to joy in the Lord.

This is spiritual maturity. Because David trusts God to handle his adversaries, he doesn't have to spend his energy plotting revenge or nursing bitterness. He's free to worship. Letting God be the judge liberates us to stay centered on what matters most: knowing and praising Him.

His focus returns to joy in God. That's how the psalm ends: not with revenge, but with rejoicing. David teaches us how to stay spiritually centered in the wilderness: through praise, memory, longing, and trust.

Q: *What distracts you most from staying centered on God when life is hard? How can this psalm help you refocus?*

Let's Discuss! (Optional)

1. What does "spiritual wilderness" look like for you?
2. How can you develop a heart that thirsts for God even when prayers feel dry?
3. What practical ways can you worship God in hard seasons?
4. Why is it important to remember God's past faithfulness when He feels distant?
5. What does this psalm teach you about the kind of relationship God desires with you?
6. How does trusting God with justice free you to focus on worship instead of worry?

Close with prayer:

Պահապան ամենայնի Քրիստոս, աջ Քո հովանի լիցի ի վերայ իմ, ի տուէ եւ ի գիշերի, ի նստիլ ի տան, ի գնալ ի ճանապարհ, ի ննջել եւ ի յառնել, զի մի երբեք սասանեցայց եւ ողորմեա՛ Քո արարածոց եւ ինձ բազմամեղիս: Ամէն

Bahaban amenayn Kreesdos, ach Ko hovanee leetsee ee vera eem; ee dveh yev ee keesheree, ee nsdeel ee dan, ee knal ee janabarh, ee nunchel yev ee harnel, zee mee yerpek sasanetsayts yev voghormya Ko araradzots yev eents pazmamyghees. Amen.

O Christ, guardian of all, let Your right hand guard and shelter me, by day and by night, at home and abroad, in sleeping and in waking, that I may never stumble. Have mercy upon Your creatures and upon me, a great sinner. Amen.