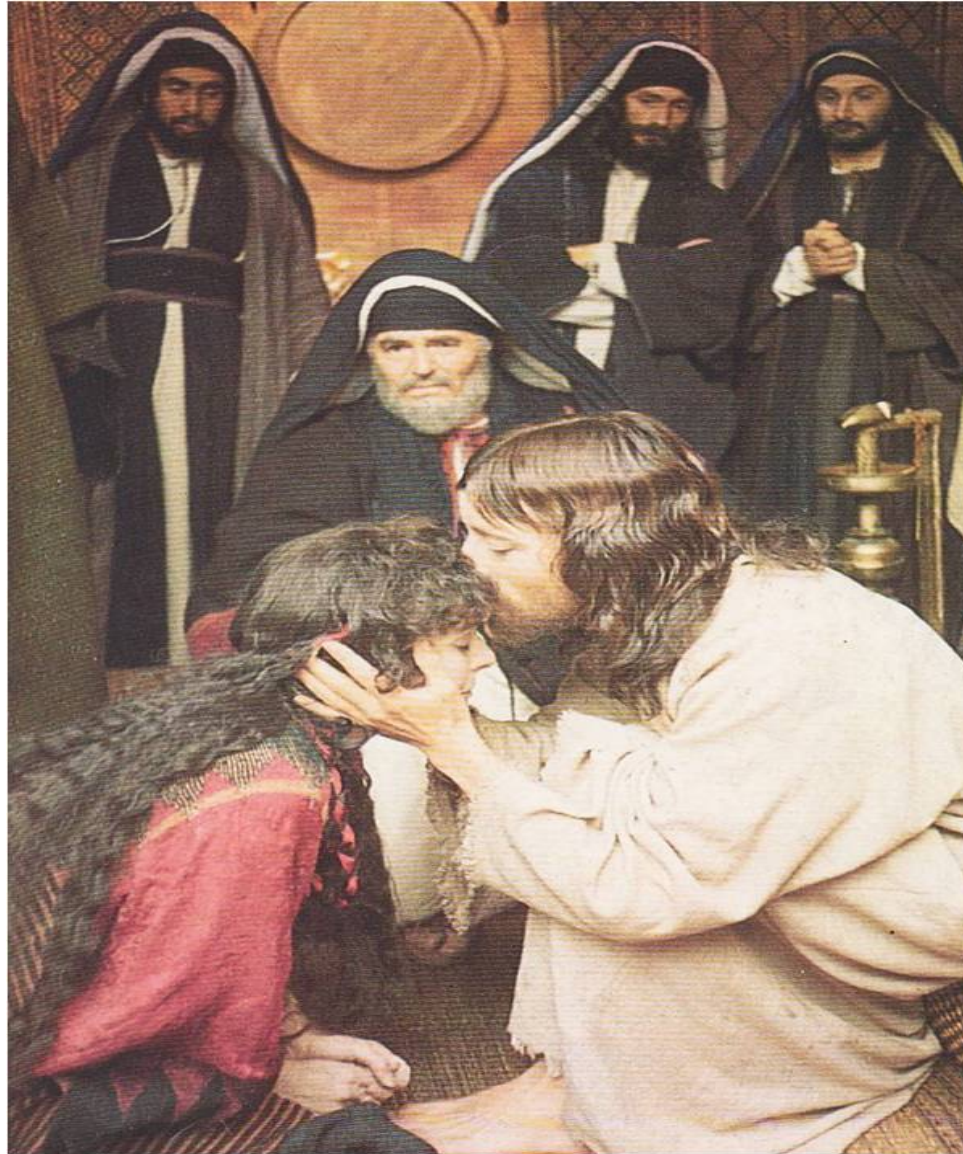


Psalm 63: Longing for and clinging to God



Psalm 63 (62) (Mode 3. 3....12 / 4.....271)

The psalmist thinks of God as he lies on his bed at night, and he rises in the morning to praise God in the temple. It is a prayer of especially intimate trust, addressing God in the second person throughout. Note the constant reference to the body - throat, hands, lips, flesh; seeing, tasting, touching, speaking. It is good to read the psalm in the light of God's Incarnate Word, Jesus.

O God, you are my God,
for you I arise at dawn.
My whole being thirsts for you;
for you my body pines,
like a dry and weary land
where there is no water.

‘I will satisfy the weary soul, and replenish the person who is faint’(Jeremiah 31:25).

‘I stretch out my hands to you; my soul (‘my whole being’) thirsts for you like a parched land’(Psalm 143:6).

So I gaze on you in the sanctuary,
to behold your power and your glory.

‘They beheld God, and they ate and drank.’

(Exodus 24:11).

The oracle of one who hears the words of God, who
sees the vision of the Almighty’(Numbers 24:4 and 16).

‘The upright shall behold his face’(Psalm 11:7).

Exodus 33:18-23

‘Moses said, ‘Show me your glory, I pray.’ And he said, ‘I will make all my goodness pass before you, and will proclaim before you the name, ‘The Lord; and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. But,’ he said, ‘you cannot see my face; for no one shall see me and live.’ And the Lord continued, ‘See, there is a place by me where you shall stand on the rock; and while my glory passes by I will put you in a cleft of the rock, and I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by; then I will take away my hand, and you shall see my back; but my face shall not be seen.’

‘I shall behold your face in righteousness; when I awake I shall be satisfied, beholding your likeness’(Psalm 17:15).

‘One thing I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: to live in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord’(Psalm 27:4).

‘In my flesh I shall see God’(Job 19:26).

Your love is worth more than life,
my lips will sing your praise.

I will bless you as long as I live.

I will lift up my hands and call on your name.

My whole being is filled as with a banquet,
and I praise you with joy.

They feast on the abundance of your house,
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.
For with you is the fountain of life'(Psalm 36:8-9).

'Why do you spend your money
for that which is not bread,
and your labour for that which does not satisfy?
Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good,
and delight yourselves in rich food'(Isaiah 55:2).

I think of you as I lie awake,
meditating on you throughout the night.

‘Know that their Lord
has set apart the faithful for himself;
The Lord hears when I call to him.
When you are disturbed, do not sin;
ponder it on your beds, and be silent’(Psalm 4:3-4).

‘Let the faithful exult in glory;
let them sing for joy on their couches’(Psalm 149:5).

‘Their delight is in the law of the Lord,
and on his law they meditate day and night’(Psalm 1:2).

You have been my help.

In the shade of your wings I sing for joy.

I cling to you with all my heart.

Your right hand holds me fast.

‘You shall fear the Lord your God; him alone you shall worship; to him you shall hold fast’(Deuteronomy 10:20).

‘Loving the Lord your God, walking in all his ways, and holding fast to him’(Deuteronomy 11:22).

‘The Lord your God you shall follow, him alone you shall fear, his commandments you shall keep, his voice you shall obey, him you shall serve, and to him you shall hold fast’(Deuteronomy 13:4)

Anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him'(1Corinthians 6:17).

'Who will separate us from the love of Christ?'

(Romans 8:35)

'How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings'(Matthew 23:37).

The following lines are not in the liturgy

Those who want me dead
will go down into the depths of the earth.
They will die by the sword,
their bodies food for jackals.

When their lying mouths are stopped,
The king will rejoice in God.
All who put their trust in God
will sing in exultation.