

LONGING FOR GOD

(No. 1258 – 12/16/24 – Sermon Online Zoom)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Desires are very powerful—we will pursue what we desire!

B. God has promised to give us the desires of our heart:

1. **Ps. 37:4:** *Delight yourself in the LORD and **He will give you the desires of your heart.***
2. **Ps. 103:1-5:** *¹Of David. Praise the LORD, O my soul; all my inmost being, praise His holy name. ²Praise the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits— ³who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, ⁴who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, ⁵who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.*

C. But *which* desires? All desires are not good! Our own hearts can deceive us:

Jer. 17:9-10: *⁹The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? ¹⁰“I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.”*

1. **Prov. 11:6:** *The righteousness of the upright delivers them, but the **unfaithful are trapped by evil desires.***
2. **Prov. 13:4:** *The **sluggard craves and gets nothing, but the desires of the diligent are fully satisfied.***
3. **Mark 4:18-19:** *¹⁸Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹but the worries of this life, the **deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for OTHER THINGS** come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.*
4. **John 8:44:** *You belong to your father, the devil, and **you want to carry out your father's desire.** He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.*
5. **Rom. 1:24:** *Therefore, **God gave them over in the sinful desires** of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another.*

6. **Rom. 6:12:** *Therefore, do not let sin reign in your mortal body so that you obey its **evil desires**.*
7. **Rom. 7:8:** *But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me **every kind of covetous desire**. For apart from law, sin is dead.*
8. **James 1:13-16:** ¹³*When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He tempt anyone; ¹⁴but **each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire**, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵**Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin;** and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. ¹⁶**Don't be deceived, my dear brothers.***
9. **James 4:1-4:** ¹*What causes fights and quarrels among you? **Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?** ²You want something but don't get it. You kill and covet, but **you cannot have what you want**. You quarrel and fight. You do not have, because you do not ask God. ³When you ask, you do not receive, because **you ask with wrong motives**, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures. ⁴You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.*
10. **1 Tim. 6:9-10:** ⁹*People who **want to get rich** fall into temptation and a trap and into many **foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction**. ¹⁰**For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil**. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.*

D. We need a new heart controlled by the Holy Spirit

1. **Ps. 51:10-11** (NKJV): ¹⁰**Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast** [“right” - KJV] *spirit within me. ¹¹Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*
2. **Ezek. 36:26-27:** ²⁶**I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;** *I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷And **I will put My Spirit in you and move you** [“motivate, inspire you”] *to follow My decrees and be careful to keep My laws.**

3. **Eph. 4:22-24:** ²²You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is **being corrupted by its deceitful desires**; ²³to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ²⁴and to **put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.**
4. **Rom. 8:5-9:** ⁵Those who live according to the sinful nature [“flesh” – NKJV] have their minds set on **what that nature desires**; but those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on **what the Spirit desires.** ⁶The mind of sinful man is death, but the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace; ⁷the sinful mind is hostile to God. It does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. ⁸Those controlled by the sinful nature cannot please God. ⁹You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.
5. **Gal. 5:16-23:** ¹⁶So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the **desires of the sinful nature** [“flesh” – NKJV]. ¹⁷**For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit what is contrary to the sinful nature.** They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want. ¹⁸But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under law. ¹⁹The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; ²⁰idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions ²¹and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. ²²**But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control.** Against such things there is no law.

II. WHAT DO YOU WANT?

A. God will test our heart to see what we really want:

2 Chron. 1:7-12: ⁷That night God appeared to Solomon and said to him, “**Ask for whatever you want Me to give you.**”

⁸Solomon answered God, “You have shown great kindness to David my father and have made me king in his place. ⁹Now, LORD God, let Your promise to my father David be confirmed, for You have made me king over a people who are as numerous

as the dust of the earth. ¹⁰Give me wisdom and knowledge, that I may lead this people, for who is able to govern this great people of Yours?" ¹¹God said to Solomon, "**Since this is your heart's desire** and you have not asked for wealth, riches or honor, nor for the death of your enemies, and since you have not asked for a long life but for wisdom and knowledge to govern My people over whom I have made you king, ¹²therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. **And I will ALSO give you wealth, riches and honor**, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have."

B. When our heart is right, we will desire right things

1. **Prov. 10:24:** *What the wicked dreads will overtake him; what the righteous desire will be granted.*
2. **Ps. 40:6-8:** ⁶*Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but my ears You have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings You did not require. ⁷Then I said, "Here I am, I have come—it is written about me in the scroll. ⁸I desire to do Your will, O my God; Your law is within my heart."*
3. **Ps. 145:18-20:** ¹⁸*The LORD is near to all who call on Him, to all who call on Him in truth. ¹⁹He fulfills the desires of those who fear Him; He hears their cry and saves them. ²⁰The LORD watches over all who love Him, but all the wicked he will destroy.*

III. LONGING FOR GOD

A. Our greatest need is a close relationship with God; the more we realize that, the more earnestly we will seek and long for Him and Him alone!

1. **Ps. 73:25-26:** (Asaph) ²⁵*Whom have I in heaven but You? And earth has nothing I desire besides You. ²⁶My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.*
2. **Ps. 42:1-6:** (Sons of Korah) ¹*As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for You, O God. ²My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God? ³My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me all day long, "Where is your God?" ⁴These things I remember as I pour out my soul: how I used to go with the multitude, leading the procession to the house of God, with*

shouts of joy and thanksgiving among the festive throng.

⁵Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise Him, my Savior and ⁶my God. My soul is downcast within me; therefore, I will remember You from the land of the Jordan, the heights of Hermon—from Mount Mizar.

3. **Ps. 63:1-8:** ¹A psalm of David. When he was **in the Desert of Judah**. O God, You are my God, **earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for you, my body longs for you, in a dry and weary land** where there is no water. ²I have seen You in the sanctuary and beheld Your power and Your glory. ³Because **Your love is better than life**, my lips will glorify You. ⁴I will praise You as long as I live, and in Your name I will lift up my hands. ⁵**My soul will be satisfied as with the richest of foods; with singing lips my mouth will praise You.** ⁶**On my bed I remember You; I think of You through the watches of the night.** ⁷**BECAUSE You are my help, I sing in the shadow of Your wings.** ⁸My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me.

B. How much do we need God?

1. **John 15:1-7:** ¹I am the true vine, and My Father is the gardener. ²He cuts off every branch in Me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit He prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴Remain in Me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. **Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in Me.** ⁵I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from Me you can do nothing.** ⁶**If anyone does not remain in Me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.** ⁷**IF you remain in Me and My words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you.**

2. Jesus is the Bread of Life and the Water of Life—we will die without Him!

C. Moses wanted God's Presence more than the Promised Land

1. **Ex. 33:1-5:** [After the golden calf in Ex, 32] ¹*Then the LORD said to Moses, "Leave this place, you and the people you brought up out of Egypt, and go up to the land I promised on oath to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, saying, 'I will give it to your descendants.' "* ²**I will send an angel before you** and drive out the Canaanites, Amorites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. ³*Go up to the land flowing with milk and honey. **BUT I WILL NOT GO WITH YOU**, because you are a stiff-necked people and I might destroy you on the way."* ⁴*When the people heard these **distressing words**, they began to mourn and no one put on any ornaments.* ⁵*For the LORD had said to Moses, "Tell the Israelites, 'You are a stiff-necked people. If I were to go with you even for a moment, I might destroy you. Now take off your ornaments and I will decide what to do with you.' "*
2. **Ex. 33:12-16:** ¹²*Moses said to the LORD, "You have been telling me, 'Lead these people,' but You have not let me know whom You will send with me. You have said, 'I know you by name and you have found favor with Me.' "* ¹³*If You are pleased with me, teach me Your ways so I may know You and continue to find favor with You. Remember that this nation is Your people."* ¹⁴*The LORD replied, "**My Presence will go with you**, and I will give you rest."* ¹⁵*Then Moses said to Him, "**If Your Presence does not go with us, do not send us up from here.** "* ¹⁶*How will anyone know that You are pleased with me and with Your people **unless You go with us**? What else will distinguish me and Your people from all the other people on the face of the earth?"*

IV. CONCLUSION

- A. What are the "other things" (Mark 4:19) that we desire more than the Presence of God? Money, power, possessions, fame, friends, worldly or carnal pleasures?
- B. When we put God first and desire Him above all else, He can give us other things as well:
 1. **Ps. 37:4:** **Delight yourself in the LORD** and He will give you the desires of your heart.
 2. **Mat. 6:33** (NKJV): **But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**

- C. May God draw us away from every other distraction unto Himself:
1. **Song 1:4** (NASB): ***Draw me after You** and let us run together! The king has brought me into His chambers.*
 2. **John 6:44**: ***No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day.***
 3. **John 12:32**: ***But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself.***
- D. When we draw closer to God, He will draw near to us
1. **James 4:8** (NKJV): ***Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.** Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.*
 2. **Heb. 10:19-22**: *¹⁹Therefore, brothers, since we have **confidence** to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, ²⁰by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, His body, ²¹and since we have a great priest over the house of God, ²²**let us draw near to God** with a sincere heart in **full assurance of faith**, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*
- E. Let us pursue God, not for what He can do for us or give us, but just to be closer to Him!