

Series (Oct. 11 - Nov. 22): *Battles from the Boardroom of the Soul* by Colin S. Smith

Series Theme Verse: "Bless the Lord, oh my soul, and let everything in me bless His holy name!

Let my whole being bless the Lord and never forget all His good deeds!" -Psalm 103:1-2

Sun., Nov. 20: Pursuing One Holy Passion, Thanksgiving Sunday

Memory Verse: Psalm 34:8 "Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in Him is truly happy!"

Sunday Message: Battle from the Boardroom of the Soul #7: "Pursuing One Holy Passion"

Text: Revelation 2:1a, 4

Sermon Scripture: Psalm 63:1-5

Reading of Scripture: Psalm 63:1-8

Blurb: We can feel like we are drifting through life, doing okay but staying fairly shallow. But what we spend all of our time and energy on really doesn't seem all that fulfilling. This week, as we enter into the boardroom of the soul one last time, we hear the Holy Spirit calling us to put away our petty desires and to fully embrace our passionate love for God. Only when we pursue one holy passion can we live fully!

OPENING MUSIC: *King of Glory* -Sanctify

WELCOME -Pastor David

-Thanksgiving this week!

-Special video for Thanksgiving Day (meal time or morning).

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

"Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in Him is truly happy!" -
Psalm 34:8

WORSHIP MUSIC SET -Sanctify

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Oh God

Hymn of the Holy Spirit

Worship Prayer -Pastor Andrew

SCRIPTURE READING: Psalm 63:1-8 (CEB) -Reader: George Mix

In Psalm 63, David writes how his soul longs for God, and how God fully satisfies. Psalm 63:1-8,

1 God! My God! It's you—

I search for you!

My soul thirsts for you!

My body desires you

in a dry and tired land,

no water anywhere.

2 Yes, I've seen you in the sanctuary;
 I've seen your power and glory.

3 My lips praise you
 because your faithful love
 is better than life itself!

4 So I will bless you as long as I'm alive;
 I will lift up my hands in your name.

5 I'm fully satisfied—
 as with a rich dinner.

My mouth speaks praise with joy on my lips—

6 whenever I ponder you on my bed,
 whenever I meditate on you
 in the middle of the night—

7 because you've been a help to me and I shout for joy in the protection of your wings.

8 My whole being clings to you;
 your strong hand upholds me.

SERVE MOMENT:

Intergenerational Mission Trip -Cassi Betker
 St. Andrew's Family Shelter meals -Cassi Betker

PRAYERS: Prayer for Thanksgiving: Hannah's Prayer of Thanksgiving -Pastor David

1 Samuel 2:1-10 records Hannah's prayer of thanksgiving after the Lord granted her request to give birth to a son.

- We join praying this prayer of thanksgiving with her
- Although it may be for us a different context, we can adapt it for our own context
- We call to mind the great things God has done for us, thankfulness wells within us
- We proclaim a thankful confidence as we face trials
- We pray that God works to lift up the lowly and to humble the haughty
- We acknowledge that God controls all things, and that in all things we are blessed
- Thankful hearts grow us into a robust faith

1 "My heart rejoices in the Lord; My strength rises up in the Lord!
 My mouth says I am not afraid of my enemies because I rejoice in your deliverance.

2 No one is holy like the Lord—no, no one except you!

There is no rock like our God! ...

4 The bows of mighty warriors are shattered,
 but those who were stumbling now dress themselves in power!

5 Those who were filled full now sell themselves for bread,
 but the ones who were starving are now fat from food! ...

6 The Lord! He brings death, gives life, takes down to the grave, and raises up!

7 The Lord! He makes poor, gives wealth, brings low, but also lifts up high!

8 God raises the poor from the dust, lifts up the needy from the garbage pile.

God sits them with officials, gives them the seat of honor!

The pillars of the earth belong to the Lord; he set the world on top of them!

9 God guards the feet of his faithful ones,

but the wicked die in darkness because no one succeeds by strength alone.

10 The Lord! His enemies are terrified!
 God thunders against them from heaven!
 The Lord! He judges the far corners of the earth!
 May God give strength to his king
 and raise high the strength of his anointed one.

GENERATIONAL BRIDGE: “Song for All Ages: *Love the Lord*” - Pastor Andrew

MESSAGE: Battle from the Boardroom of the Soul #7: “Pursuing One Holy Passion”

PP#1: Battle from the Boardroom of the Soul: Pursuing One Holy Passion

“Write this to the angel of the church in Ephesus: ... I have this against you: you have let go of the love you had at first.” -Revelation 2:1a, 4

Battle from the Boardroom of the Soul. Pursuing One Holy Passion. Jesus speaks to the Christians at Ephesus, Revelation 2:1,4, “Write this to the angel of the church in Ephesus: ... I have this against you: you have let go of the love you had at first.”

Last week, we heard Jesus come into the inner boardrooms of our souls and invite each member there to come to Him: all the board members, our whole souls.

Today we hear Him tell all of our board members that He wants all of our lives. He wants our boards to make also our daily, ongoing, decisions as decisions for Jesus.

PP#2: *Image of a person trying to get into heaven with a “passport” that is his belief in Jesus*

Too often we treat our religion like a passport. We get our identity all documented: that we are Christians, that we profess that Jesus is our Savior, that we declare our allegiance to God, that we are citizens of His Kingdom, and that we have our eternity secured. But then, all too much like a passport, we put our faith away in a secure place, keeping it for when it’s time to take that journey out of this life and to go through customs into eternity, into heaven.

PP#3: *Image of a person serious about true discipleship, living radically for Jesus*

Here at Forest Hills, we lift up the radical calling of discipleship. The Bible calls us to living daily lives led and empowered by the Holy Spirit, ever growing spiritually, toward holiness, to perfection in love. Jesus didn’t come to just secure us for heaven, to issue us a passport. He came to offer an ongoing relationship with Him.

We can be saved, but not be disciples. We can choose Jesus without loving Him. We can have Jesus as our board’s named mission statement but not live lives hungry and thirsty after God.

PP#4: *Image of a person lukewarm about discipleship, loosely attached to Jesus*

In the boardroom of such a soul, the Holy Spirit is named the chair. But He often finds Himself talking to Himself, not listened to—even ignored—by the other board members.

One day, when the ruckus dies down a bit, the Holy Spirit calls the board to order: “For the last ten years, this soul has belonged to Jesus. It’s wonderful, for sure, but things are not as they

should be in this soul. When you came to Jesus, every one of you embraced Him. But now, what was once a great fire, has become a low glow. We need to talk! What has happened?"

Mind: "Well, I've learned a great deal over these years and I've come to understand that this soul is eternally secure. It's a great relief and release for all of us. It means our entrance into heaven doesn't depend on our performance."

Holy Spirit: "Very right! But where are you going with this insight?"

Mind: "Well, since the destiny of this soul doesn't depend on our performance, it seems to me that we are therefore free to do our own thing. I've talked it over with the others, and we agree that because we are secure, we can pursue our own agendas."

Conscience says weakly: "I didn't agree."

Mind: "Well, you certainly didn't put up much of a fight!"

Will jumps in: "I've found mind's suggestion very helpful. Since we are secure in going to heaven, we can put full focus on the ideas that *we* have."

Heart smiles and nods.

Memory: "Yes! It's just like the good old days. We're very busy again, you know."

Imagination pulls it all into view: "What it amounts to, is that this soul is now, 10 years later, a Christian version of our former life. It's the best of both worlds! We have the security of heaven, and we can each pursue our own desires. It's all good!"

But in the break of the conversation, they glance over to the Holy Spirit. He has his head buried in his hands. When they all fall silent, He finally looks up. With emotion in His voice, He says, "Gentlemen, we must adjourn this meeting. This is not the path of life. Somehow we've missed it! We need to do some soul searching! Each of us needs to go off for a while and search ourselves. I will pray for you. Then we will reconvene, and we will set a new direction."

Does this resonate with you at all? Was there a time when you had embraced Jesus and were excited to live radically for Him? But then, over time, you've "settled" and are now in reality following your own agenda?

PP#5: *Image for being the bride of Jesus*

This is not what Jesus came for!

In the Bible Jesus talks about coming as a groom for His bride. A marriage is not just a certificate we file away to be used some day. It's a relationship that begins at the wedding, but it is lived out each and every day. I'm in a grow group led by my wife. It's called Cherish, and its about how we as Christians can cherish our spouses so that our marriages can be all that God intended. And we have things to do each day between class sessions, because we're changing our daily behaviors. Our goal is to be closer now than we were when we were first married.

Our goal as Christians is to continue to grow in our love for Jesus, more and more, so that we are closer to Him now than when we first knew Him. The Bible is full of this language about our close walks with God. It's an intimate relationship, a growing relationship. We're not intended to be roommates with our Lord. We are to cherish Him!

Turn to Psalm 63. Again, the Psalms have all the emotions of the soul, all the feelings of God's people are there. And Psalm 63 shows a soul with an all-consuming fire for God. Spiritual passion, it says, is ignited by experiencing God.

PP#6: Psalm 63:1-8 (CEB)

- 1 God! My God! It's you—
 I search for you!
 My whole soul thirsts for you!
 My body desires you
 in a dry and tired land,
 no water anywhere.
- 2 Yes, I've seen you in the sanctuary;
 I've seen your power and glory.

“1 God! My God! It's you—I search for you! My whole soul thirsts for you! My body desires you in a dry and tired land, no water anywhere. 2 Yes, I've seen you in the sanctuary; I've seen your power and glory.”

This soul—the soul of David—hungers and thirsts for God. And as we see in verse 2, this person has seen God, has experienced God. He's tasted the glory of God, God's real power.

There's a difference between a scribe and a prophet, between a researcher and a witness. A scribe is a researcher: one who has studied and read and learned. But a prophet, a witness, has herself experienced the event, has met the person, has seen for herself. David, here, is a witness. He just hasn't *learned* about God. He has *experienced* God, and he testifies to how wonderful it is!

We have bodies, right. And we can experience the material world: it's joys, pleasures, griefs, and sorrows. We feel with our hands, we taste with our tongues, we see with our eyes. But we also have souls. And just as our physical bodies can experience the physical world, so our spiritual souls can experience the spiritual world, can experience God. And the Psalms—and the whole Bible—uses physical examples to help us understand our spiritual experiences.

Jesus says in John 10 that His sheep *hear* His voice. We can hear God's voice in our souls. We can know Jesus personally. Psalm 34:8 “Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in Him is truly happy!” We have the capacity to experience God this way in our souls. For now, in this life, it is a spiritual salvation. But yes, some day, we will have physical, bodily, salvation, when we get a new body that will never die, and we will walk and talk with Jesus physically.

Jesus says in Acts 1:8, “You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth.” We're not scribes, or research Christians. We are witnesses, for we have experienced—in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—the very presence of our Lord.

PP#7: One Holy Passion

1. Spiritual passion is ignited by experiencing God

So, as we pursue one holy passion for our souls, this Psalm—and Jesus!—urges us to not sell ourselves short. You can experience God like this! Spiritual passion is ignited by experiencing God. If you've never felt your spiritual heart beat with a palpable love for Jesus, if you don't know what David is talking about, don't be okay with that! That's not “just the way it is.” Don't settle until you do. There is more to Jesus than you know now. Ask for the Holy Spirit to spread through your heart so that you can feel God close, and experience His presence, and know in your inward being that you are Jesus' beloved. Ask, seek, knock! Don't settle for a profession of faith, and assent to a belief, a

proclamation of a creed. You can have a deep, burning passion for Jesus that sustains you through the years. God made you for a deep relationship with Him!

PP#8: Psalm 63:1-8 (CEB)

- 1 God! My God! It's you—
I search for you!
My whole soul thirsts for you!
My body desires you
in a dry and tired land,
no water anywhere.
- 2 Yes, I've seen you in the sanctuary;
I've seen your power and glory.

Let's go back to verse 1. David is crying out to God, because God feels distant to him. David wrote this prayer when he was on the run. His son, Absalom, had led a coup against him and tried to take over the throne. David had to flee Jerusalem and was out hiding in the Judean desert. And he looks around, and the desert describes how his soul feels. He feels desperate, despondent, desert. He feels lifeless, tired, dried up, thirsty. And as he yearns for an oasis, for refreshing cool water, he writes how his soul yearns for the refreshing closeness with God he once knew.

PP#9: One Holy Passion

1. Spiritual passion is ignited by experiencing God
2. Spiritual passion is intensified when God seems distant

Spiritual passion is *intensified* when God seems distant. Having God close can be taken for granted. When we don't tend to the close relationship we have, we can grow cool. Sometimes, what you need in marriage, is a healthy separation, so you miss your love, feel again what you have stopped noticing.

There are times when God does seem distant. That is true for us all. And some of those times, I believe, God hides Himself, on purpose. He draws back the feelings of closeness to us, because it is in these times that we will go and seek Him. Passionate Christians don't care if God seems distant. Passionate Christians go and seek more of God. We beg God to shake us out of our lethargy. Jesus affronts the Church in Laodecia, "You are lukewarm, neither cold nor hot." And Jesus says to them, "Look, I'm standing at the door knocking. Open the door, and I will come in and be with you, and have dinner with you." Seek out that deeper experience with Jesus, that deeper relationship.

Sometimes our best worship is when we feel God is distant and *we long* for Him!

PP#10: Psalm 63:1-8 (CEB)

- 3 My lips praise you
because your faithful love
is better than life itself!
- 4 So I will bless you as long as I'm alive;
I will lift up my hands in your name.
- 5 I'm fully satisfied—as with a rich dinner. ...

Psalm 63, verse 3, “My lips praise you because your faithful love is better than life itself! 4 So I will bless you as long as I’m alive; I will lift up my hands in your name. 5. I’m fully satisfied—as with a rich dinner.”

David proclaims, “Your love is better than life itself! I will glorify you!” David is on the run. There are soldiers looking for him. His future is uncertain, his life perilous. Yet, at this time of danger—when we expect him to seek safety first and above all else—David professes that there is something *better* than life, more important than life. That is God’s unfailing love!

PP#11: One Holy Passion

1. Spiritual passion is ignited by experiencing God
2. Spiritual passion is intensified when God seems distant
3. Spiritual passion is satisfied in the presence of God

As we pursue one holy passion in our souls, the third key piece, as we see in Psalm 63:3, is that spiritual passion is *satisfied* in the presence of God. It comes when we open the door and invite Jesus in, when we experience eating with Him. The longing you feel, the desire for more, it is, and it will be, satisfied when you experience God.

And the way to stoke our spiritual passion is through worship, and giving ourselves into full worship. Worship is coming into the presence of God. It is fully satisfying, just like Thanksgiving dinner. Worship is the way we experience God in our souls. So, in the list of the three things here for how we have one holy passion, substitute “worship” for “spiritual passion. Worship is ignited by experiencing God. Worship is intensified when God seems distant. And worship is satisfied in the presence of God.

PP#12: Image of kids dancing and worshiping God with exuberant joy

I don’t know what happens to us as we get older, but we get stuffy. As kids, we worship with our whole selves - our voices, our smiling faces, our moving bodies, our giggles, our running legs. *Kids, you show us how to worship!* Today, kids—and yes, even us stuffy adults—I want us to take a few moments sometime later today, and go off by ourselves so we won’t be embarrassed, put on our favorite worship music, and just worship with your whole body. Move your legs, arms, faces. Release yourself to worship. Kids, you do that...worship your way! And the rest of us, we’ll try to do it, too. For some of us, it’s been awhile since we’ve worshiped this way!

You know, sometimes older people get melancholy. They fear that their best years are behind them. They feel they have so little left ahead. But Christians know that no matter what our age on earth, the best is still yet to come! It’s only going to get better! We get to move from knowing God in our limited way here before death—even when we experience God in our souls—to being fully in God’s full presence: soul, mind, and body! “Now see as in a glass dimly, but then we will see face to face!” (1 Cor. 13:12)

Heaven is not 10,000 years singing “Amazing Grace” over and over again! We will worship God differently than we do now. Now—even at it’s best—worship is but a shade of what it will be. Worship is ignited by experiencing God.

PP#12: Image of adults worshiping God with exuberant joy

The Holy Spirit reconvenes the board members. He starts by asking them to remember. He asks, "Tell me about your experience of God."

Memory perks up, "O yes! We have tasted, we know that the Lord is good!"

Holy Spirit: "Don't you miss Him?"

Heart: "I do. I've never known a love like His before."

Holy Spirit: "Can you be satisfied to keep on going the way you are, pursuing your petty desires?"

Imagination, honestly, admits: "No. There's so much more for this soul."

Holy Spirit: "The problem here is that you've settled for a *contract* when God invited you into a *relationship*. We're missing out. We are made for more than this! What are you going to do?"

Mind butts in: "I want to be nourished by His truth."

Heart follows: "I want to be filled with His love."

Will: "I want to submit to his purpose."

Conscience: "I want to be quickened by His holiness."

Imagination: "I want to be purified by His beauty."

Memory: "I want to be focused on His faithfulness."

The Holy Spirit addresses the board, "Well, then, it seems we are all not really happy with the way we have slipped back into pursuing our selfish wants. We need a new direction. By consensus, then, the business of this soul will, from now on, be to seek the Lord and pursue one holy passion. All activity will be worship. And we are going to start right now. Clear your schedules, gentlemen! For the next while, we're hosting a dedicated time of authentic worship. So put away your personal wants, and let's move into God's very presence!"

So, church, let's join the board! Stand with me, as we worship fully!

CLOSING SONG: *All My Fountains* -Sanctify

ANNOUNCEMENTS -Pastor David

No Wednesday activities - Thanksgiving Eve

Video for Thanksgiving day!

Next week's message: Advent: "Do Good, Feel Good Christmas"

Next week: Packet for Advent devotional

OFFERING: -Pastor David

Give of your monies to God's work through this church. You can give in person, in the offering box as you leave the sanctuary. You can mail it or drop it off in the church office.

Or, most conveniently, you can make an automated transfer or a debit card payment using the square on the bulletin or by going to the church website.

MEMORY VERSE -Pastor David

"Taste and see how good the Lord is! The one who takes refuge in Him is truly happy!" - Psalm 34:8

BENEDICTION -Pastor David

CLOSING MUSIC -Sanctify