

Sermon – 8/6/17 Psalm 84 Worship God!

Why go to church?

Psalm 84 expresses the joy of a pilgrim traveling up to Jerusalem to go to the temple to celebrate one of the Old Testament feasts.

The focus of the pilgrim is on the thought of being in the very presence of the Lord with other fellow believers. Psalm 84 is one of the songs the pilgrims sang as they traveled to worship God in the temple in Jerusalem.

One of the lies of Satan is that the Christian life is void of pleasure. Puritan Thomas Gataker wrote: “It is the purpose of Satan to persuade us that in the kingdom of God there is nothing but sighing and groaning and fasting and prayer, whereas the truth is that in His house there is marrying and giving in marriage...feasting and rejoicing.”

William Tyndale described the Christian Gospel as “...good, merry glad and joyful tidings, that maketh a man’s heart glad, and maketh him sing and dance and leap for joy.”

Psalm 34:8 “O taste and see that the Lord is good; how blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.”

Worship God!

I. With Expectation vv1-4

Verse 1 speaks about how “lovely” the house of the Lord is. The temple of the Lord was lovely because it was there that the believers came into the presence of the Lord.

Psalm 122:1 “I rejoiced with those who said to me, Let us go to the house of the Lord.”

Why do I love the church? In the presence of the Lord we find hope, help, fellowship, friendship, companionship, understanding and worship. We find the

things we need on our journey toward our heavenly home. O Lord, please put in my heart the desire to be with You and Your people!

In verse 1 the Lord we worship is the Lord Almighty. Almighty refers to the angelic armies. It is a reference to God's almighty power. God is an awesome God the Creator and Ruler of the universe and yet He is a personal God and Savior who took upon our flesh as Jesus died on the cross for our salvation.

We find great joy in praising our Savior.

In verse 2 the pilgrims "cry out" to be with God. The Hebrew word for "cry" is that of a child who is hungry. These pilgrims are hungry to be with the Lord.

We cry with our whole being to be with the Lord in worship. This verse describes a believer who yearns, thirsts, longs and faints to be with the Lord in worship. These worshipers are happy but have this intense desire to worship God.

They long to be with God's people in the temple.

Hebrews 10:25 "Let us not give up meeting together...but let us encourage one another..."

It is here we experience God's presence as we gather to worship together and express the unity we have in our faith. It is here we gather together in the joy of worship as we celebrate...

- Baptisms
- Holy Communion
- Absolution of our sins

The House of the Lord is an oasis in the desert of this world. The House of the Lord is a safe haven from the storm of life.

Psalm 27:4 "One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord..."

In verse 3 the Psalmist is jealous of the birds who have built their nests in the temple in Jerusalem. The birds are already at the Temple while the pilgrim is still

on his way. He admires the birds who have built their nests in the temple near the altar of God. The birds found a home in the God's house.

So do we!

It is interesting that the birds built their nests near the altars in the Temple where the animal sacrifices took place. In the midst of these dying animals they found protection. We, too, find protection from this world of death through the death of our Savior.

Another point of comparison with these birds in the temple is that the Bible tells us the birds found a place in the temple to raise her little ones. What a lesson for us. The church is the place to raise our children. Proverbs "Train up a child in the way he should go..."

The word for "nest" here implies a place of rest. The church through the Word and Sacraments is a place of rest for us. We come to find rest for our souls. We rest in the forgiveness of our sins.

When we are in the presence of God, when we are worshiping God, when we are focused on God, we are like the birds without a care in the world. We sing songs of joy to our Creator.

Blessed = Happy

Verse 4 reminds us that we are blessed as we enter the presence of the Lord. This word is used 3 times to describe the happiness of those who dwell in the House of the Lord. Psalm 84

Blessed is the person whose highlight of the week is when he or she gets to worship God.

What do we chase after to get satisfaction and fulfillment in life?

- Hunting...fishing...shopping?
- Making a big sale at work?
- Spending time with our family?

These may all be good. But none of them will satisfy us completely. Only the Lord can satisfy the soul. Fellowship with God is what we were created for. We all have that God-shaped hole in our lives. If we fill the hole with things of this world rather than the things of God, we will never fill that hole. We will never feel whole without God.

The Lord wants our hearts. Charles Spurgeon said: “Neither prayer, nor praise, nor the hearing of the Word will be pleasant or profitable to persons who have left their hearts behind them.”

The Psalmist desires to worship God with all of his heart. Jesus said: “Love the Lord Your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind.”

Worship God!

II. With Expedition vv5-7

As the travelers made their way to Jerusalem they came to Valley of Baca. This was an arid valley the travelers came to on their way to Jerusalem. The word Baca means weeping. As the travelers continued on to the Temple they were so filled with joy that they turned a dry arid valley into a place of joy and springs of water.

The journey to Jerusalem was difficult. Yet, these people had such a desire to get to the Temple that they made the rough desert into bubbling springs of water. The place of affliction became a place of anticipated joy.

There are times in our life when we feel all dry inside. We are empty of joy and we feel like a parched desert. If we stay away from God we will just get drier and drier.

Praying, singing, hearing the Word, fellowshiping with other Christians will be like water to our soul. The dry times suddenly diminish. The rains come. The wells overflow. We received refreshment at church like a rest stop for our soul.

Verse 7 says that the long journey to Jerusalem is made up of little rest stops on the road. These places are places of strength. Worshiping the Lord are the rest stops for us in our journey.

The anticipated joy the travelers had for worship overcame their weariness of travel. We don't know God's strength for us until we see our own weaknesses.

II Corinthians 12:10 "For when I am weak, then I am strong."

The road of life is hard. We need to stop and rest in the presence of the Lord. May we take life...

- One day at a time
- One prayer at a time
- One day of worship at a time

As these pilgrims traveled they kept their eyes on the goal: worshiping God in the Temple.

Hebrews 12:2 "Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith..."

I read about a group of Christians in Nepal and how long and difficult it was for them to get to their place of worship. Some of them had to walk for hours and then ride crowded buses to get to their place of worship. Once in their church they sat on the hard floor for hours to listen to God's Word. They kept their focus on worshiping God.

The Christian life is full of traps and snares. Satan is like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. He also has his fiery darts. And then there are the temptations of our sinful flesh which seek to lead us astray. But with God as our shield not one of us will be lost. We may trip and fall and get wounded but God will not allow any of us to be lost along the way.

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III. With Elation vv8-12

Jesus is our Shield and King. We have access to God through His blood and righteousness. Vv8-9

V10 Being in the House of the Lord 1 day is better than 1000 days anywhere else doing anything else. That is how great church is. We all have seen bumper stickers...

- I'd rather be fishing
- I'd rather be _____

The writer of this Psalm says: "I'd rather be in church."

Who was the doorkeeper mentioned here? He was the greeter standing at the door welcoming the people who came to worship God. It was one of the lowest positions in the temple. At the other end are those who dwell in the tents of the wicked. The word for “dwelling” indicates a lavish, rich life in the lap of luxury and ease. Having money and servants waiting on you “hand and foot” is the opposite of being a doorkeeper in the Temple of the Lord.

What would you prefer?

- The lowest position in the Temple
- The highest position in the world

What does it profit a man to gain the whole world, but forfeit his own soul?

Philippians 3:8 “I consider everything a loss compared to...knowing Christ Jesus...”

Psalm 73:25 “Whom have I in heaven but you? And being with you, I desire nothing on earth.”

“God’s worst is better than the devil’s best.” Spurgeon

In verse 11 we are reminded of God’s overall provision and protection.

God is our Sun to get through the darkness. The sun sustains all life and cheers our sagging spirits. God is the Sun to us. He warms us and gives us light on our journey. He protects us as our shield. Psalm 46

V 12 Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord.

James 4:8 says: “Draw near to God, and He will draw near to you.”

Like the Father running to meet his prodigal son, when we long to return to God’s presence, God will see us from far off and run to meet us.

In 1714 Matthew Henry the well-known pastor and Bible commentator was on his deathbed at the age of 52. He had endured the loss of his first wife and of three of his nine children. He could have complained about his hard life. But he said to a friend: “You have been used to take notice of the sayings of dying men. This is mine ---that a life spent in the service of God and communion with Him, is the most comfortable and pleasant life that one can live in the present world.”