

## **MY SOUL LONGS FOR THE COURTS OF THE LORD – PSALM 84**

### **INTRODUCTION**

1. How do you feel about being in God's presence with God's people (**Ps. 122:1; Mal. 1:12-13**)?
2. The blessings of being in God's presence with God's people should ignite a fire, a burning desire, in our hearts for God.
3. Let us consider the blessings that God enumerates here in Psalm 84 about the goodness of being in His house.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **I. LONGING FOR GOD'S HOUSE**

- A. This psalm opens with how lovely or beloved God's dwelling place is (**Ps. 84:1**).
  - i. The word translated "dwelling place" is plural (i.e. "tents" LXX).
  - ii. Some think that this is a "plural of intensity" while others think it may refer to different places in the tabernacle/temple where God's presence was manifested.
  - iii. Note also that the psalmist highlights the sovereignty of God with the title, LORD of hosts or armies (**Ps. 84:1, 3, 8, 12**).
- B. Based on the description we find in Scripture both the Tabernacle and Solomon's temple were ornate and beautiful edifices to behold (**Exod. 36-40; 1 Kings 7**).
- C. But their physical beauty was pointing to something far greater, the very presence of God dwelling and being with His people (**Exod. 25:22; 29:42-43**).
- D. It is a "beloved" place because God is there.
- E. Some have observed that the psalmist's language is "the language of love poetry."<sup>1</sup>
- F. And that fits with the picture of his deep yearning for God expressed in the next two verses (**Ps. 84:2-3; cp. 42:4; 43:4**).
  - i. The psalmist says his soul, heart, and flesh faint and, at the same time, he sings for joy to be near the living God, **his** King, and **his** Sovereign.
  - ii. He expresses almost an envy of the sparrows and swallows who are able to make their nests in the eaves of the temple.
- G. All of this leads to the psalm's first beatitude.
- H. "*Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise! Selah*" (**Psalm 84:4, ESV**)
- I. The psalmist values a relationship with God and longs to be in God's house, in God's presence, along with God's people.
- J. Today in Christ we don't have to make a long journey to Jerusalem to the temple to be in God's presence.
- K. God doesn't dwell in temples made with hands but in His people, both individually and collectively (**1 Cor. 3:16-17; 6:19-20; Eph. 2:21-22**).
- L. Do we share the psalmist's longing to be with God and to be with His people (**Heb. 10:19-25; cp. Amos 8:5; Mal. 1:12-13**)?

#### **II. JOURNEYING TO GOD'S HOUSE**

- A. The second stanza of the psalm begins with the second beatitude of the psalm.
- B. "*Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.*" (**Psalm 84:5, ESV**)

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<sup>1</sup> Kidner, D. (1975). [\*Psalms 73–150: An Introduction and Commentary\*](#) (Vol. 16, p. 334). InterVarsity Press.

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- i. The psalmist says that the one whose heart is set on God and who depends on God is one who is living the good life.
  - ii. Even though the psalmist is not in Jerusalem, whether he is making the pilgrimage there or is unable to go, he is longing to be in God's house.
- C. This picture of a pilgrimage continues in the next two verses (**Ps. 84:6-7**).
  - i. Recall there were three annual feasts where people were required to travel to Jerusalem (**Deut. 16:1-17**).
  - ii. The Valley of Baca could refer to a certain type of tree that grows in an arid place or Baca may refer to weeping.
  - iii. But the point here is that even though the journey is not easy, God will give strength and blessings on the way to those who trust in Him and seek Him (**Prov. 4:18; Isa. 40:31**).
- D. The second stanza culminates in a prayer for God to hear (**Ps. 84:8**).
- E. Today, as God's people, we are still pilgrims though we aren't on the road to Jerusalem, but something even greater (**1 Pet. 2:11-12; Heb. 12:18-24**).
- F. Along the way there will be trials and troubles.
- G. How will we approach each day and every trial?
- H. Will we trust in God and look to Him for strength (**Eph. 6:10; Phil. 2:12-13**)?
- I. Will we beseech Him in prayer and look to Him to bring us home to Him (**1 Pet. 5:7; Jas. 1:2-8**)?

### **III. DWELLING IN GOD'S HOUSE**

- A. The third and final stanza begins with another urgent and impassioned prayer; it isn't for the psalmist, but for the king of Israel (**Ps. 84:9; cp. 89:18**).
  - i. There is nothing in the psalm to tell us when it was written so we can't be certain if there was some crisis threatening the nation of Israel.
  - ii. But if there wasn't a godly and strong king on the throne, it would make things difficult for those who were journeying to Jerusalem to worship.
- B. And being in God's house and in His presence is where the psalm ends.
- C. The longing is over and the journey is done as the psalmist makes three powerful points about the goodness of dwelling in God's presence in His house (**Ps. 84:10-12**).
- D. First, just being close to God one day is better than a thousand days with the fleeting pleasures of sin (**Ps. 84:10; Jer. 5:25; Heb. 11:24-26; Phil. 3:8; Luke 14:33**).
- E. For only in God can one find constant life, joy, protection, grace, glory, and goodness both now and in eternity (**Ps. 84:11; Jas. 1:17; Deut. 6:24; John 10:10; Rom. 8:31-39; Phil. 4:6-9**).
- F. But these blessings can only be found by those who walk uprightly and who trust in God and who remain loyal to Him (**Ps. 84:12; Ps. 2:12; 1 John 2:1-6**).

### **CONCLUSION**

1. Today God doesn't dwell in temples made by humans but has dwelt among us in Christ (**John 1:14**).
2. And in Christ, God has sent His Spirit to dwell in us as individuals and as His church, the house of God (**1 Cor. 6:19-20; Eph. 2:19-22**).
3. May we not let indifference or apathy sap our longing for being in God's presence.
4. May we not let our love grow cold for King Jesus, our Savior, who died to save us and our brethren.
5. Let us heed the psalmist and seek the blessings of trusting in God and dwelling in His presence.