

Series: Psalms

Title: Longing to Assemble

Text: Psalm 84: 1-12

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Psalm 84: 1: «To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah.» **How amiable *are* thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! 2: My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. 3: Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. 4: Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah. 5: Blessed *is* the man whose strength *is* in thee; in whose heart *are* the ways of them. 6: *Who* passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. 7: They go from strength to strength, *every one of them* in Zion appeareth before God. 8: O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. 9: Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. 10: For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. 11: For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. 12: O LORD of hosts, blessed *is* the man that trusteth in thee.**

This Psalm appears to be penned by David. Read verses 1 & 2 again then compare them with Psalm 63 and we see the language of David in both.

Psalm 63: 1: «A Psalm of David, when he was in the wilderness of Judah.» O God, thou *art* my God; early will I seek thee: my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is; 2: To see thy power and thy glory, so *as* I have seen thee in the sanctuary.

Psalm 84 was to the chief Musician upon Gittith for the sons of Korah (singers). “Gittith” was an instrument played during the feast of tabernacles. This was a song they sang as they journeyed up to Jerusalem to the feast. Then they sang it together at the feast. The feast of tabernacles was to remember God’s provision throughout Israel’s pilgrimage through the wilderness on their way to Canaan. That is what this song is about.

This Psalm expresses the believer’s love for two assemblies: 1) The love to assemble in God’s house with God’s people for public worship under the gospel because this is how it pleased the living God to save and strengthen his people on this pilgrimage through this life. 2) It also speaks of our longing to appear before God in the heavenly assembly in heavenly Zion.

Israel made their annual pilgrimage from their homes on the difficult paths up to Jerusalem to Zion. So we are travelling the path God has set before us on the way to heavenly Zion. On our way we assemble together to be fed of our Lord for this journey.

Psalm 84: 6: *Who* passing through the valley of Baca...this was the valley of weeping; it represents this life. They **make it a well...by their tears;...the rain also filleth the pools...God providing through his gospel as we journey. Thereby...**7: They go from strength to strength,...**God giving more grace, strengthening his child as we go through the preaching of the gospel. So that...***every one of them in Zion* appeareth before God.****

So it speaks of the two great assemblies of God’s people: 1) assembling weekly in God’s house under the preaching of the gospel is how he strengthens us. 2) As we make our pilgrimage to the ultimate assembly in heavenly Zion.

THE LOVE OF ASSEMBLING IN GOD’S HOUSE

Psalm 84: 1: How amiable *are* thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!

“*Amiable*” falls short of the meaning of the word used by the Psalmist. It means “be-loved.” This is the new heart of every child born-again of the Spirit of God. Where God has created a new heart to receive the love of the truth—the love of the gospel, the love of Christ our Redeemer himself—there is a love to

assemble where the gospel of Christ our Redeemer is declared in truth. By God first loving us in Christ, we love Christ and we love those begotten of him. We love to assemble under the gospel because God gives a longing for the living God himself. Notice verse 2.

Psalm 84: 2: My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

It was not the tabernacle itself; not merely the form of assembling, not the ceremony. The gospel is vital because Christ is our Life—*"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."*

Brethren is that how earnestly we need our living God? Then it is how earnestly we need the preaching of the gospel of Christ.

David knew the blessing God had given him. He uses the plural "*tabernacles*" but he speaks of the "*courts*" of that one tabernacle. In all the world there was only one tabernacle where God promised to meet with his people over one mercy seat through the blood of the lamb by his high priest representing the children of Israel. It typified Christ our one Tabernacle, Christ THE Lamb of God, Christ THE High Priest, Christ THE Mercy seat. Holy God will only meet with a sinner through faith in Christ the mercy seat.

Our triune God has tabernacled among men as the GodMan, Christ Jesus. He is the true tabernacle which God pitched and not man. Christ has glorified God in making his people righteous by his own blood. He honored and magnified the law for us. Now our sanctuary is not on earth but in heaven. Our altar is not a piece of furniture but Christ alone. Like as the believing Israelite longed to go up to the tabernacle in Jerusalem, so the desire of those born of God is for our living God—Christ Jesus—seated in heavenly Jerusalem in heavenly Mt Zion.

In this gospel age, *it pleased God through foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*. It this means by which God is pleased to minister to us in spirit and in truth. Just as there was one tabernacle in all the land so it is a rare and precious blessing of God where God has established his gospel in truth and assembled his people. It is here that the living God meets with his people. Here that he feeds his people through the preaching of our living, victorious Redeemer. It pleased God to give his Son all preeminence. So it pleased God to save through the preaching that gives Christ all the glory.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF DWELLING IN THE LORD'S HOUSE

Psalm 84: 3: Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, *even* thine altars, O LORD of hosts, my King, and my God. 4: Blessed *are* they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

"*Selah*" means pause, take in what is being said. David was in exile far away from the tabernacle. He considered the sparrow and the swallow, who had their nests in the tabernacle, to be blessed compared to him.

Believer Christ said, 'Ye are of my value than many sparrows.' If God takes care of sparrows then we can trust the sovereign "*LORD of hosts*" to bless you and your brethren. You can trust God to keep you and your brethren who own him as "*MY King, and MY God.*"

David thought of the priests and Levites who ministered in the sanctuary. He said—"*Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee.*" Every believer washed in Christ's blood is made a priest unto God. We shall "dwell" in Christ forever. Therefore, our greatest blessing on this earth is to assemble publicly in "his courts" to worship our Redeemer together with our brethren under the gospel.

David thought of the sparrow and swallow as having a dwelling place while he had none so long as he was away from public worship. Christ said, "*Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head.*" When Christ walked this earth he was a pilgrim, a wanderer passing through. Though he made the earth he made it not his home. He said, '*I am from above, ye are from beneath.*' He redeemed his people and ascended back to the Father. Now, with the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us, we have the same spirit as our Lord. We are pilgrims and strangers passing through this

earth on our way to Zion. Like as they journeyed up from their homes to earthly Zion we are going up to appear in that grand assembly before the living God in heavenly Zion. So God will have us assemble together to worship him because this most resembles how we shall worship Christ there in heaven.

RAIN IN THE VALLEY

Psalm 84: 5: Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. 6: Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.

As they made their pilgrimage up to Zion the valley of Baca presented great difficulty for the travelers. It is called the valley of weeping. He uses imagery saying they wept so much that their tears made wells of water.

In ourselves we are weak and our enemies are numerous and strong. We have the warfare between our sin-nature and the new spirit. We have tribulation in the world. Often we weep. We need continued supplies of grace to preserve us. As we pass through this valley of weeping called life, on our way to heavenly Zion, it is in the Lord's tabernacles that he rains down grace to strengthen us and keep us through the preaching of the gospel. So God assembles us here together and through his gospel he strengthens us by making us look to Christ alone.

Psalm 84: 5: Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways; the rain also filleth the pools....6:...the rain also filleth the pools.

The Lord keeps *THE WAYS* in our hearts. They knew the way up to Zion in their heart. So they kept in the ways. The Spirit keeps us knowing the way is Christ alone. The way is faith alone. The way is grace alone. The way is through the gospel alone. By the Spirit God's regenerated children are those "*in whose heart are the ways.*" And Christ by his Spirit keeps raining down grace—"The rain also filleth the pools." The Spirit of God reigns down into our hearts making 'the wilderness rejoice and blossom as the rose.' The result will be the same for us as it was for them.

Psalm 84: 7: They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

"God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19.). The God of all grace will dispense all grace which is necessary for you. He will give grace and more grace to the humble (James 4:6). So all who God chose, all who Christ redeemed, all who the Spirit regenerates shall appear before him in Zion and not one will be missing!

Psalm 84: 8: O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. 9: Behold, O God, our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.

Behold, O God, Christ our Shield and look upon the face of Christ thine anointed and keep us and protect us for his sake. Assemble us. Strengthen us for the journey. Bring us to appear in heavenly Zion one day.

Psalm 84: 10: For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Let me give a few things to close. You will find it in Hebrews 10 and 12. If our true desire is for the living God then

One, knowing it pleased God to save by the foolishness of preaching, let nothing cause us to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is. Instead, exhort one another so much more as ye see the day approaching. Someone might object that they can worship God privately. Private worship is good but never to the exclusion of assembling with God's people. If any man could have done without public worship, the man after God's own heart could. But David longed to assemble with God's people publicly as God commanded.

Two, continue by faith pressing toward that heavenly tabernacle in heavenly Zion. Look at all the cloud of witnesses who went before us. These all continued in faith and died in faith. Therefore, let us lay aside the weight and the sin that doth so easily beset us. God is able to chastens his child and keep us partaking of

his holiness. Trust him to do so. Let us run the race God has set before us looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, despising the shame and is set down at the right hand of God. Let us continually consider Christ lest we be weary and faint in our minds. We have not resisted unto blood striving against sin.

Three, knowing this path is through this Valley of Bacca for as our Lord said, “ye must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God.” Therefore as Joseph told his brethren, “See that ye fall not out by the way.” Let us lift up our own hands that hang down and those of our brethren as Aaron and Hur did Moses. Let us strengthen the feeble knees. Let us take away the stumbling stones and make straight paths for our feet and for our brethren straight to Christ. As we do remember the Lord shall provide.

Psalm 84: 11: For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

Who walks uprightly? Remember Habakkuk? “Behold his soul which is lifted up is not upright within him; but the just shall live by his faith.” He gives grace to the humble who walk humbly with God by walking by faith trusting God, casting all our care on Christ. That is the happy man. That is what he says next.

Psalm 84: 12: O LORD of hosts, blessed *is* the man that trusteth in thee.

Amen!