

## SummerInThePsalms #12 – The Blessings Of Baca

### Psalm 84

Intro: **John Bunyan**, in his classic **Pilgrim's Progress**, described the Christian life as a journey. As he draws the reader into that universal experience, **he reminds us that from the moment of salvation to entrance into the Celestial City, there are many turns and twists.**

Some are wonderful; some aren't.

**Inevitably, in every life, there are times of difficulty and darkness.** Sometimes, life leaves us struggling. Longing. Holding on and hoping for better times. Homesick for Heaven.

**Our Psalm is a song of blessing.**

Each of the three sections emphasize ***"blessed"***.

- Movement 1, section 1, **ends, *"Blessed are they..."*** and then directs us – ***"SELAH" – "Think about it!"*** (vs. 4)
- Movement 2, vs. 5-8, **begins with *"Blessed is the man"*** and then ends with, ***"SELAH" – "Think about it!"***
- Then, movement 3 crescendos to the finale - ***"blessed is the man that trusteth in thee"***

**The purpose of this Psalm is God's blessing!** Yet, ***"blessing" can mean many things, right?***

In this particular experience, God met the Psalmist, the Pilgrim on his journey, right where he was.

- He is not where he had been... He is not where he would like to be.
- **In fact, he is in a difficult place.** But God meets him there. And **while the place and circumstances don't change, *he does.***

It becomes a meeting of grace, a time of refreshing, and **a song penned to make it possible for us to experience the same, this morning.**

**We're not sure of the composer.**

- Some says David, and it very well could have been.
- Others suggest a composer **during the time of King Hezekiah.**

**What we do know is that the composer delivered this Psalm to the sons of KORAH, a whole sermon in itself.**

They were **descendants of the survivors of the disastrous sins of Korah.**

**Disgraced, grateful just to be alive, the remaining children found a place of**

**service and grace.** Through the generations, they became the temple musicians – custodians and curators of songs of grace!

## **I. The Longing. (Section or movement 1 – vs. 1-4)**

Vs. 1- The Psalmist begins by closing his eyes to the world around him and **traveling to a place in his heart.**

- **“amiable”** = “The *lovely... intoxicating... breathtaking*” *tabernacles of God!*  
Some translations - **“the dwelling place of God”**  
He had been there.  
He remembered them.
  - The wonder.
  - The presence of God.
  - The worship.
  - The fellowship with those there!
- “O LORD of **hosts**” – Jehovah/Jesus

## **Vs. 2 – The longing of his aching heart!**

“Longing” - *Yearn for, ache for*

**\*\*Our lips may lie, but our longings are a reflection of what we really treasure.**

Notice how intense the longing: **“soul... fainteth” “flesh crieth out”**

**For Whom?**

**“the living God” “El Chay” (“Kay-ee”)**

## **Vs. 3 – A snapshot of memory – The little sparrow**

The Psalmist remembers the little sparrow that seeming no one noticed... but he had. Regardless of what might be going on in the world, their little world, nested right the in the center of God’s tabernacle, the little birds were oblivious... content...

## **Vs. 4 – The climax of this movement that sets the theme of the experience:**

***“Blessed are they that dwell in thy house!”***

- Then...
- Now:

- Church?
- Where does God dwell? “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee!”

“they that dwell” – **Personal choice**- Our choice. Our part.

**Practiced presence!**

“they are ever praising you” – This is what *should and can* be the reality...

## **II. The Look.** (Section or movement 2; Vs. 5-8)

### **A. Vs. 5 – The Principle**

The **Availability** to all: “*Blessed is the man...*”

The **Answer:** The “*whose strength is in thee*”

The songwriter is developing his theme – We are introduced to the need for strength in times of struggle!

The **Awareness:** “*in whose heart... the ways*”

“ways” - highway, raised way, public road

19x of 28 is translated “highway”

**Highways of the heart: Direction planted by grace!**

***In your heart are His paths... truths... to get you from where you are to where you want to go!***

### **B. Vs. 6-7 – The Picture – BACA**

**1. The PLACE:** The Psalmist looks around and takes us to a place called “BACA”.

He assumed they would know it. It is a little more difficult for us...

Sort of like some of my movie references or illustrations from 40 years ago... Some of you get it... Others just have this blank look. It was a metaphor they understood...

**There is much speculation.**

Some doubt it’s reality. Maybe it was just an imaginary place. Others offer other possibilities...

“baca” : “valley of weeping”, “valley of sorrow”, “valley of tears”

Here's what I was taught... (Tell it as a story)

Baca was located between Jericho and Jerusalem.

Travelers on their way from Gilgal up to Jerusalem must pass through it.

Many times of the year, this was a dry, barren stretch. It was difficult even for those prepared; it was treacherous for those who weren't.

Then – they would find pools of water that had been dug by those who had traveled before them, that had water to drink in a barren place.

### **Baca. Was it real?**

- Real in location? Probably.
- Real in significance? Absolutely.

### **Just as real as...**

- Youth... Old age.
- Life... death.
- Health... Sickness.
- Laughter... tears.

### **It was real for**

- **David**- He danced before the Lord, but wept...
- **Paul** – “Rejoice in the Lord” he wrote, but he admitted that there was a stretch where he despaired even of life!
- **Elijah** – 1 Kings 17 records his great victory; 1 Kings 18 reveals him sitting under a juniper tree asking to die!

### **• For us?**

- The list of possibilities is endless, isn't it. In fact, we can't travel very long or far without finding ourselves there.

### **Baca – the valley of tears or sorrow” – is real!**

## **2. The Passing: “who passing through”**

It reminds us of “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...”

We will come to BACA – but we won’t stay there! We will get through!

### **3. The Pools: “*make it a well*” – A Peculiar statement, usually lost...**

#### **The reference:**

There were those who took the time to dig wells, hollows, where water would gather and be available for travelers in the dry season

Then, those who stopped there, would drink of that water.

#### **When we come to Baca, a couple of things will help get us through:**

- **Drinking water from the wells left by those who have gone before us;**
- **Digging a well before we move on for those who come after us.**

#### **We could spend all day, and probably should, just here.**

- **Recognizing those who have gone before us and made it possible for us to be here... to live.. to drink deeply and live!**
- **Realizing the solemn privilege, and responsibility, of digging wells with our lives that will not only impact those around us now, but those who follow.**

#### **A poem I ran across years ago captures the thought perfectly:**

##### **The Bridge Builder, By Will Allen Dromgoole**

An old man going a lone highway,  
Came, at the evening cold and gray,  
To a chasm vast and deep and wide.  
Through which was flowing a sullen tide  
The old man crossed in the twilight dim,  
The sullen stream had no fear for him;  
But he turned when safe on the other side  
And built a bridge to span the tide.

"Old man," said a fellow pilgrim near,  
"You are wasting your strength with building here;  
Your journey will end with the ending day,  
You never again will pass this way;  
You've crossed the chasm, deep and wide,  
Why build this bridge at evening tide?"

The builder lifted his old gray head;  
"Good friend, in the path I have come," he said,  
"There followed after me to-day  
A youth whose feet must pass this way.  
This chasm that has been as naught to me  
To that fair-haired youth may a pitfall be;  
He, too, must cross in the twilight dim;  
Good friend, I am building this bridge for him!"

#### 4. The Pleasure: vs. 6b-8

- *"from strength to strength"* – We grow stronger as we pass through BACA and learn!
- *"every one of them in Zion appeareth before God"* -  
***Every single traveler – every child of God – on the pathway way of grace will arrive at the Celestial City!***

**III. The Lord** (Section or movement 3 – vs. 9-12) **It's almost more than a song – it's a symphony!** The volume builds, the tempo increases, the excitement builds as the Psalmist turns from his longing heart and barren surroundings to his LORD!

#### A. Vs. 9 - "Behold..."

This passage begins by appealing to Almighty God to look first to His Beloved – Jesus – and then see us through Him! Amazing!

**Everything begins, continues and ends with Jesus!**

#### B. Proclamations –

- Vs. 10 – Perspective –  
A day

A doorkeeper

- **Vs. 11 –**

- ***The LORD is Sun and shield*** – Provision and protection.

Only time God is described this way!

Cf. The wilderness journey – A Pillar of fire by night and a cloud by day...

- ***The LORD will give grace and glory!***
- ***“No good thing will He withhold...”***
- ***“them that walk uprightly”***

**C. It ends where it began –**

**LORD of hosts...**

**Blessed is the man...**

**“trusteth in thee”**

**CLOSE:**

**If you’ve never trusted Jesus, began the eternal journey...**

**If you have,**

**Recognize Baca...**

**The Psalmist knows valleys—Baca—but he also knows how God turns dry places into springs. Today, God wants to meet you where you actually are, not where you wish you were, and move you from strength to strength.”**

**Refocus on HIM: and let Him meet me where I am and change me while He’s leading me through...**

**Respond: “This week I will drink from \_\_\_\_\_’s well and dig a well by \_\_\_\_\_”**