

## **My Soul Faints** **By Sharon W. Betters**

### **Today's Treasure**

*My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.*  
*Psalm 84:2*

The writer of Psalm 84 holds nothing back in describing his heart-breaking hunger for the courts of the Lord. He longs, not just longs, but even faints with longing. He is consumed, in danger of dying from his desire. The literal meaning of longing is “to grow pale.” The literal meaning of faint is “faileth”. His words imply he will die if his desire is not met. The Psalmist longs for a building (the courts of the Lord) but not because it is physically beautiful. He longs for what the courts of the Lord symbolize – the presence of the Living God. The King James Version gives us an even deeper picture of the heart wrenching desire for more of the Lord:

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

C.J. Spurgeon describes how this crying out involves the whole being of the writer:

“**Crieth.** The word that is here rendered crieth, is from (Heb.), that signifies to shout, shrill, or cry out, as soldiers do at the beginning of a battle, when they cry out, Fall on, fall on, fall on, or when they cry out after a victory, Victory, victory, victory! The Hebrew word notes a strong cry, or to cry as a child cries when it is sadly hungry, for now every whit of the child cries, hands cry, and face cries, and feet cry. Thomas Brooks.” (Treasury of David, C.H. Spurgeon)

As some of you know, my husband is full-blooded Lebanese. Extended family gatherings rock with storytelling, deep belly laughter, and lots of ethnic food. By God's grace, this generational way of family permeates our extended family gatherings. Our boys start telling stories and tears roll down cheeks because of the good medicine of laughter. As I write this, we are still “sheltering in place” in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic. I long for those family times. My heart aches to fill our house with loved ones, laughter, and favorite foods. But I have also witnessed Lebanese funerals and the kind of crying described by Spurgeon. Perhaps you have, too. Uninhibited wails flood the rooms, a longing for what was. Every part of the body joins

the wails of the soul. The writer of this Psalm wailed for time in the House of God. He will not settle until the Lord fills him.

### LIFE-GIVING ENCOURAGEMENT

The Psalmist proclaims he is not looking for an emotional high, but he longs for the Lord to consume all of him:

*My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.  
Psalm 84:2*

To get a fuller understanding of his hunger, let's combine the modern English Standard Version with the words of the old King James Version:

*Every part of my being longs for the courts of the Lord. Not just my soul, but my heart and my body. If this longing is not met, something in me will die, I will not experience the fullness of the life my God has planned for me. As beautiful as the courts of God are, I hunger for what they symbolize – the presence of my Lord. Just being there pulls me into His heart and I want more. I cry out, I plead, but then my cries turn into songs of joy flowing from the confidence I have in my living God.*

The words “my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God” (Psalm 84:2) reveal the Psalmist’s heart is surrendered to God’s purposes. He can sing for joy because he trusts his Father to give him the desires of his heart when appropriate. He humbles himself and in doing so, opens up his hands and heart for whatever the Lord plans for his good.

Paul repeatedly declared a similar hunger for intimacy with God’s Son, Jesus:

*For I decided to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.  
1 Corinthians 1:2*

*For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.  
Philippians 1:21*

The words of the Psalmist and Paul challenge me to examine my own heart. Am I fully surrendered in humility to my Creator, my Savior, my Lord? Are you? As you ponder this question, I hope the words of this hymn helps you and me to better understand the meaning of “knowing nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified”:

## Whate'er my Lord Ordains is Right

Samuel Rodigast 1675

Whate'er my God ordains is right:  
his holy will abideth;  
I will be still, whate'er he doth,  
and follow where he guideth.  
He is my God; though dark my road,  
he holds me that I shall not fall:  
wherefore to him I leave it all.

Whate'er my God ordains is right:  
he never will deceive me;  
he leads me by the proper path;  
I know he will not leave me.  
I take, content, what he hath sent;  
his hand can turn my griefs away,  
and patiently I wait his day.

Whate'er my God ordains is right:  
though now this cup, in drinking,  
may bitter seem to my faint heart,  
I take it, all unshrinking.  
My God is true; each morn anew  
sweet comfort yet shall fill my heart,  
and pain and sorrow shall depart.

Whate'er my God ordains is right:  
here shall my stand be taken;  
though sorrow, need, or death be mine,  
yet am I not forsaken.  
My Father's care is round me there;  
he holds me that I shall not fall:  
and so to him I leave it all.

Source: Trinity Psalter Hymnal #231