

Psalm 84 | Blessed Are Those

Psalm 84:1-12 (NIV)

- ¹ How lovely is your dwelling place,
Lord Almighty!
- ² My soul yearns, even faints,
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh cry out
for the living God.
- ³ Even the sparrow has found a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may have her young—
a place near your altar,
Lord Almighty, my King and my God.
- ⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house;
they are ever praising you.
- ⁵ Blessed are those whose strength is in you,
whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.
- ⁶ As they pass through the Valley of Baka,
they make it a place of springs;
the autumn rains also cover it with pools.
- ⁷ They go from strength to strength,
till each appears before God in Zion.
- ⁸ Hear my prayer, Lord God Almighty;
listen to me, God of Jacob.
- ⁹ Look on our shield, O God;
look with favor on your anointed one.
- ¹⁰ Better is one day in your courts
than a thousand elsewhere;
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house
of my God
than dwell in the tents of the wicked.
- ¹¹ For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
the Lord bestows favor and honor;
no good thing does he withhold
from those whose walk is blameless.
- ¹² Lord Almighty,
blessed is the one who trusts in you.

We find in this Psalm three times the phrase “Blessed are those” or “blessed is the one...”

Q: What does it mean to be blessed?

- Hebrew is (ash-ray) meaning happy, blessed is he who, highly favored, fortunate

I don't know about you, but I want to be blessed by God and know how to walk and live in that blessing.

3 Aspects of Being Truly Blessed (found in Psalm 84)

1. Blessed are those who *Dwell in the Presence of God*.
2. Blessed are those who *Live in God's Strength*.
3. Blessed are those who *Trust in God's Grace*.

****Note: that all the blessings outlined here focus on relationship with God and NOT material possessions.****

- For having a relationship with God, living and walking with Him, living in and by his strength along with experiencing the peace and joy that come from resting in His grace and care FAR EXCEED any temporary material blessing.

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1. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO DWELL IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD.

- **V1-4:** ¹ How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty! ² My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. ³ Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God. ⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.
- **V10:** Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

The Presence of God.

- The Psalmist writing from an OT perspective is talking about the Temple and Sanctuary of the Lord.
- The manifest presence of God was between the cherubim above the ark of the covenant in the holy of holies.
 - For the ancient Israelite... it's the temple.
 - The closer you could get to the temple (or the ark), the closer you were to the presence of the LORD.
- But now for those who believe, our bodies become the Temple of the Holy Spirit and He dwells in us!
 - So with that, one of the key things to dwelling in the presence of God is to be aware of His presence. That He is everywhere at all times and that He is with us always!
- But there is another aspect to the Presence of God – where beyond just knowing that He is around us and with us... **but experiencing His presence!**
 - There is nothing sweeter, more peaceful, more joyful, more glorious than being in His presence.
 - There is also nothing more dreadful and terrifying than to come into His presence – especially for those who are separated from God by their sins – haven't asked for forgiveness, haven't begun that relationship, haven't come to faith and repentance.

Notice those who are blessed – dwell – in His presence. Key word is dwell – not enter into from time to time or pass through once or twice a week... but dwell.

- We come into the presence of God usually through 3 ways:
1 – Worship. **2** – Prayer. **3** – The Word

Worship:

- Changes our perspective
- Brings our hearts and eyes to Him
- Reminds us of Who God is and all that He has done and capable of.
- **Psalm 22:3** – But thou [art] holy, [O thou] that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

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Prayer:

- Direct communication with the Lord.
- Not just a wish list, but a conversation (2 ways) - we need to remember to listen and be still before Him.
- Intercession: prayer isn't just asking God for our needs, but also standing in the gap for others.

The Word:

- Jesus is the Word made flesh.
- **2 Tim 3:16** - All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.
- **Hebrews 4:12** - For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.
- We need to spend time with the Lord, by reading, studying, and meditating on His Word.
 - That's how we can know God's will for our lives.
 - That's how we can discern God's thoughts towards us.

➤ **Can I challenge you to set your heart on dwelling in his presence - living daily with Him by regularly worshipping, praying, and spending time in His Word?**

- There is no shortcut to spiritual growth. No shortcut to growing in relationship. No shortcut to changing your life. You must put in the time with God - WHY? Because He doesn't just want to change you, but God wants to be with you and for you to know Him.
- For *it is in KNOWING GOD that our lives are changed* in the most profound and deep ways (not knowing about, but personally knowing).

➤ **Once you have tasted and experienced the Presence of God, you will begin to crave, long for, thirst for, and desire to be there and dwell there... In His Presence.**

- That's why the Psalmist cries out in v10 - I would rather be a doorkeeper in your house than to live in the tents of the wicked!
- I would rather be a servant on the exterior of your presence - the far edge... barely there.... Than to live in the hospitality of the wicked ones... with the spoils and the fleeting pleasures of sin.
- All the wealth and glory of the world pales in comparison to standing at the door of his temple!
- Note: this might sound absurd to those who have only lived in the 'tents of the wicked' and never experienced the presence of God.
 - Which house are you taking up residence in?

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2. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO LIVE IN GOD'S STRENGTH!

- **V5-7** - ⁵ *Blessed are those* whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage. ⁶ As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools. ⁷ They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.
- **Whose hearts are set on pilgrimage?**
 - Referring to the feasts and festivals that the Law had appointed (remember the Psalmist writes from an OT perspective).
 - He's saying, blessed are those who are committed to appearing before the Lord in worship and in prayer. Those who do so joyously and have their hearts set on it.
 - We all have our hearts set on something and when our heart is set on something, we will not settle for anything else.
 - Blessed are those who have set their hearts on appearing before God in worship, sacrifice, praise, and prayer.
 - Blessed are those who do this regularly and consistently!
 - Can I add that he's not just talking about God bestowing blessings and favor on those who live this way (although that is very well true), but when we live in God's presence, finding our strength from Him, living in obedience to Him – we find and experience true joy. Living for God and with God is the best possible life – It's why He gave the law – he knows the consequences of sin and disobedience in this life (as well as eternally).
 - Further, the ones who have their hearts set on pilgrimage live in a way, KNOWING that they are going to appear before God (one day//3 times a year).
 - Meaning, it goes beyond just the feast days or religious festivals, or worship services.
 - They live everyday with their hearts set towards the Lord!
- **Valley of Baka? Place of Springs?**
 - Sometimes the journey to placing ourselves before God takes us through difficult and challenging places.
 - The valley of Baka means 'valley of weeping' OR 'valley of balsam trees'
 - The balsam trees are usually associated with the dry (wilderness) places they thrive in.
 - 'Cover it with pools' could also be translated to say – 'with blessings'
 - When we find our strength and joy in God (by setting our hearts on Him) – He can turn the most troublesome and tearful valleys OR dry wilderness valleys in life into springs of joy and gladness. Only God can bring life and light out of darkness.
- **Strength to Strength.**
 - The pilgrims left their homes in the strength and excitement of going on pilgrimage.
 - But when faced with the valley of Baka, they somehow again experience strength when the Lord sends the autumn rains – the pools in the dry seasons and places.

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- No matter where you go or what your circumstances may be, God's miraculous strength is available to you and can recharge this strength as you appear before God (in Zion).

ISAIAH 40:28-31 (ESV) - ²⁸ Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. ²⁹ He gives power to the faint, and to him who has no might he increases strength. ³⁰ Even youths shall faint and be weary, and young men shall fall exhausted; ³¹ but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.

Elsewhere:

- Throughout the narrative of David's life, you will see that he "strengthened himself in the Lord"
- Throughout the narrative of the Gospels following the life of Jesus, you will see Jesus regularly separate himself from everyone and everything to go be alone with the Father in prayer. No doubt this was his strength.

3. BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO TRUST IN GOD'S GRACE!

- **V11-12** - ¹¹ For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. ¹² Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.
- **God as the sun and a shield?**
 - Poetically speaking, the giver and protector of life
 - God freely and graciously gives life
 - God freely and graciously protects that life that he gives us.
- **God's grace gives favor (and honor) to those trust him.**
 - What is trust?
 - Why does God reward it?
- **God gives us all we need - withholds no good thing from those whose walk is blameless.**
 - Our walk can only be blameless when we trust in His grace and set our lives to be obedient to Him.
 - Gives us all we need - God freely and lovingly provides all that we need as we live for him and dwell in His presence.

Blessed are those who *Dwell in the Presence of God.*

Blessed are those who *Live in God's Strength.*

Blessed are those who *Trust in God's Grace.*