

Blessings from the Living God

Psalm 84

1. Blessed are those who long for Yahweh. Vs 1-4

Vs 1-2 - God's presence is so desirable that our whole being longs to dwell with him.

An emotional longing: yearn & long, heart & flesh cries out

In a world of temporary fixations that lust after our attention and affection, this psalmist makes clear for whom we long — *the living God*.

Vs 4 - The first beatitude: Happy are those who reside in your house, who praise you continually.

Even though we **already** have the Holy Spirit in us, we can all know and experience that we are **not yet** fully in God's presence in his throne room.

2. Blessed are those who find their strength in Yahweh. Vs 6-7

Vs 5 - The second beatitude: Happy are the people whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage

The word 'pilgrimage' means roads and highways often traveled, literally translated: "in whose hearts are highways."

This word "carries the reminder that the way to God's presence is not as lonely or trackless as it may seem, but well prepared and well frequented." Derek Kinder

The road to God is well traveled!

Therefore, since we also have such a large cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us lay aside every hindrance and the sin that so easily ensnares us. Let us run with endurance the race that lies before us, Hebrews 12:1

Vs 6 - as they pass through the Valley of Baca

A valley of literal dryness.

A valley of sin.

A valley of thirst.

A valley of calamity.

A valley of suffering.

A valley of grief.

A valley of weeping.

What do they do? Because their strength is in God they make it a source of spring water that brings forth life:

- Sorrow over sin leading to gratitude for the cross
- Comfort from the Holy Spirit, our Great Comforter
- Ability to empathize with others

- Detachment from the world —stronger faith, deeper humility, a new sense of the value of prayer and of the preciousness of God’s promises
- Hope instead of despair

Vs 7 - “strength to strength”

Refusing to be hindered by the valley, they keep their focus on the goal to appear before God in Zion.

In a pilgrimage, the nearer the goal, the stronger the pull.

The Camino de Santiago: The Camino de Santiago (the Way of St. James) is an extensive network of ancient pilgrim routes stretching across Europe and coming together at the tomb of St. James in northwest Spain. It covers about 500 miles exploring some of Europe’s most beautiful landscapes.

Strength to strength is closely linked to glory to glory in 2 Corinthians 3:18-19.

*Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. We all, with unveiled faces, are looking as in a mirror at the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from **glory to glory**; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit. 2 Corinthians 3:18-19*

He is continually changing us, building our faith, providing strength for our pilgrimage. Our strength comes from seeing and knowing God, even in the Valley of Baca.

“Indeed, the closer they get, the stronger they become (*they go from strength to strength*), until they finally arrive at the sanctuary.” Tremper Longman III

Isaiah 3:3-4, 8,10

*Strengthen the weak hands,
and make firm the feeble knees.*

Say to those who have an anxious heart,

“Be strong; fear not!

Behold, your God

will come with vengeance,

with the recompense of God.

He will come and save you.”

*And **a highway** shall be there,*

*and it shall be called **the Way of Holiness**;*

the unclean shall not pass over it.

It shall belong to those who walk on the way;

even if they are fools, they shall not go astray.

And the ransomed of the Lord shall return

and come to Zion with singing;

everlasting joy shall be upon their heads;

they shall obtain gladness and joy,

and sorrow and sighing shall flee away. Isaiah 3:3-4, 8,10

3. Blessed are those who trust Yahweh. Vs 10-12

Vs 10 - another expression of deep desire to be in God's presence. A small place (the doorkeeper) worshipping God is better than a great place (a comfortable tent) anywhere else.

Vs 11 - Yahweh provides for us on the pilgrimage. He is a sun and a shield!

Sun - illumination

Shield - protection

The Lord is my shepherd; I have what I need. Psalm 23:1

*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. We observed his glory, the **glory** as the one and only Son from the Father, full of **grace** and truth. John 1:14*

All the promises of God are "yes and amen" in Jesus. 2 Corinthians 1:20-22

"He does not withhold good for those who walk with integrity."

He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything? Romans 8:32

*I say, then, **walk by the Spirit...***

*If we **live by the Spirit**, let us also **keep in step with the Spirit**. Galatians 5:1,25*

Vs 12 The third beatitude: Happy is the person who trusts in you, Yahweh, Living God.