

Dwelling with God

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Psalms / Psalm 15

Please open your copy of God's most holy and authoritative Word with me to [Psalm 15](#). As you are turning there, I have entitled today's sermon: *Dwelling with God*.

This leads us to an obvious opening question that we each must consider today.

Do you want to dwell with the Lord?

As I studied this week, I felt myself pondering places where we dwell. In that, places where we may dwell oftentimes have requirements for entry. Even places that we would argue do not have requirements for entry, still have requirements for entry. For instance, your home has a requirement for entry. Only certain people have the right to enter your home. The right is given by belonging to the family. Guests are welcome to enter upon invite or permitted on the basis of friendship. However, the ultimate requirement for entry is being a member of the immediate family.

Today, we find David pondering the question of dwelling with the Lord. He asks two prominent questions that demand an answer which causes examination within ourselves.

Let's turn our attention to the sermon text this morning.

If you are able, please stand in reverence for the reading of God's Word this morning.

Psalm 15 ESV

This is the Word of the Lord. Let us pray.

As we have situated ourselves in [Psalm 15](#), the main idea of today's sermon is:

Main Idea: Those in Christ have been brought to salvation resulting in a change of life and a promise of eternal dwelling with God.

Setting the Stage: Up to this point in the psalms, the psalmist organizes the Psalms in such a way that [Psalm 1-2](#) established the direction of the psalms. There is the way of the righteous and the way of the wicked. Then, the psalms turned in [Psalms 3-9](#) to that of asking the Lord to save as David was confronted with the threats of the wicked. Then, in [Psalms 10-14](#),

the psalms detail the descent of surrounding wickedness leading to a plea to the Lord to bring salvation as the wicked are declaring that there is no God. Now, a shift takes place from [Psalm 15-24](#). In these psalms, the psalmist begins to situate himself in the protection of the Lord and the refuge that He provides. Specifically in [Psalm 15](#), David writes reflecting upon the holiness and righteousness of God. He begins to question how he, as the anointed king, can come before the eternal and holy God.

Sermon Structure: From this, we will be called to ponder the same. We will make three observations from today's psalm. We will see a question to be answered, an answer to be pondered, and a promise to be enjoyed.

- › Let's turn our attention to our first observation this morning.

The Question to be Answered. (v. 1)

Explanation: David begins this psalm with a question. This question is posed to the Lord. It is a question that can be asked by each one of us.

Look back with me in verse 1:

Psalm 15:1 ESV

David begins by calling to the Lord. He is calling to Yahweh that is the only God the God of Israel. Then, David begins to ask his questions of God.

He begins with the question of who shall sojourn in your tent. David is drawing heavily upon prior psalms as well as the Old Testament. The word sojourn carries the idea of dwelling or remaining among a person. To sojourn somewhere indicates that of being an invited guest. David is considering who would be an invited guest to arrive at the tent of the Lord.

David also mentions the 'tent.' The tent would be referencing the tabernacle in which the Israelites worshipped prior to the building of the temple. It was a tent or tabernacle that could be moved and set up as the Israelites moved in the wilderness toward the promised land. The tent was where the manifest presence of God would dwell among His chosen people.

We see the tent of meeting explained in [Exodus 33](#).

Exodus 33:7-11 ESV

Now Moses used to take the tent and pitch it outside the camp, far off from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting. And everyone who sought the LORD would go out to the tent of meeting, which was outside the camp.

Whenever Moses went out to the tent, all the people would rise up, and each would stand at his tent door, and watch Moses until he had gone into the tent.

When Moses entered the tent, the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the LORD would speak with Moses.

And when all the people saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, all the people would rise up and worship, each at his tent door.

Thus the LORD used to speak to Moses face to face, as a man speaks to his friend. When Moses turned again into the camp, his assistant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man, would not depart from the tent.

The tent of meeting was the central location wherein God would speak to Moses and the center of corporate worship of the Israelites for a time.

The question David is asking here appeals back to the time preceding the building of the temple. The question is who or what person can dwell or remain or sojourn in the presence of God.

David continues further. He is not introducing a new thought but the same thought in a different way. He is still making the appeal to Old Testament imagery here. He asks who can dwell on your holy hill. This is

the holy hill of God otherwise known as Mount Zion. The terminology of a holy hill draws back from [Psalm 2:6](#)

Psalm 2:6 ESV

“As for me, I have set my King on Zion, my holy hill.”

The anointed King, the Messiah has been set upon the holy hill of God as seen in [Psalm 2](#). Now, David is drawing upon Mount Zion where the permanent structure signifying the manifest presence of God would dwell among His people. He is referring to the temple.

David’s question has not changed. Again it pertains to this, who or what person can dwell or remain in the presence of God?

In asking such a question, David is articulating the holiness of God. God is holy, righteous, just, and without any blemish or sin. He is unapproachable by humanity. He is unapproachable in His glory, majesty, splendor, and supremacy. In that, we know that humanity is fallen to sin. Humanity is totally depraved as we saw previously in [Psalm 14](#).

Psalm 14:2–3 ESV

The LORD looks down from heaven on the children of man, to see if there are any who understand, who seek after God.

They have all turned aside; together they have become corrupt; there is none who does good, not even one.

All of humanity has become corrupt in their sin-fallenness. David is seeking to ask the question regarding the character of man that can dwell among or enter into the presence of God and remain.

We see the question has been asked. What is the character that enables a person to go and remain in the presence of the holy and righteous God who is sovereign over the entire universe?

Herein, the question has been asked. In David asking the question, the answer to the question is provided in the Psalm.

- › This leads us to reflect upon our next observation which is...

The Answer to be Pondered (vv. 2-5a)

Explanation: The answer to the question reveals the level of character required for a person to dwell in the presence of God. It is debated by scholars as to whether or not this Psalm is an entrance liturgy psalm which was a question and answer time that a priest would have with worshipers before entrance into the place of worship (ESV Commentary). Whether it is or is not, this psalm certainly reveals an answer to David's

questions that must be pondered by ourselves this morning.

Pick up in verse 2:

Psalm 15:2 ESV

David reveals that the character required to dwell among God is that of blamelessness. This is reflective of the overall character of the person worthy of entrance into the presence of God's tent and holy hill. The character of the person is upright and unable to be blamed or accused of wrongdoing. David uses the word, "walks," which points to a manner of life that is impeccable. It is a life that cannot and is not associated with wrongdoing that would lead to blame being placed. It is life characterized by moral and spiritual rightness.

In having such blameless character, the blameless one also speaks what is right and the truth. He is not one who lies and speaks wrongly to others or of others. He is not like the wicked in the sense that he does not slander or flatter others.

David has reflected upon the speech of the wicked previously writing:

Psalm 10:7 ESV

His mouth is filled with cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue are mischief and iniquity.

Psalm 12:2 ESV

Everyone utters lies to his neighbor; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak.

Psalm 14:1 ESV

The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, they do abominable deeds; there is none who does good.

The wicked have speech that reflects their character. It reflects their disregard for God and their sinfulness.

The upright and blameless one who can enter God's presence is not at all like the wicked. He speaks the truth at all times and this speaking of the truth is drawn from the nature of his heart. David writes that he speaks the truth in his heart. He is a trustworthy and a truth-speaking person. He speaks the truth because the truth is rooted in his heart.

The character list continues in verse 3:

Psalm 15:3 ESV

The speech of this blameless individual is further evaluated. He does not slander others. He does not gossip and speak lies against his fellow neighbor. The text literally means that he does not walk on his

tongue. He is not seeking out ways in which to speak poorly of another person. He is not looking for opportunities to speak ill of another person or to say things that would destroy another person.

Again the blameless one here is set in contrast to the wicked that have been highlighted in the Psalms. The wicked and their sinful speech of flattery and slander have been highlighted through the psalms thus far. Now, the blameless one able to enter the Lord's presence has been distinguished in his speech.

Furthermore, to dwell in the presence of God, David reveals that one must not do evil to his neighbor or take up reproach against his friend. He is not to seek an ill-will or desiring any wrong to come upon his fellow neighbor or another person. He does not engage in anything that would be to the detriment of another person.

The wicked have been described as arrogant and scheming against others.

Psalm 10:2 ESV

In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor; let them be caught in the schemes that they have devised.

Psalm 11:2 ESV

for behold, the wicked bend the bow; they have fitted their arrow to the string to shoot in the dark at the upright in heart;

The wicked are not blameless in their actions. They are detestable in their actions seeking to harm others.

The word “reproach” in verse 3 of [Psalm 15](#) is giving further appeal to the thought of evil toward another person. The blameless who can dwell in the presence of God does not take up or seek to attack his friend. He does not seek to diminish, discourage, and utterly bring to desolation another person. He does not need the destruction of the life of another. He does not even seek or delight in the destruction of another life.

The character of the blameless one is articulated further. The quest for understanding this blameless person continues:

Psalm 15:4 ESV

The blameless one who can dwell with the sovereign and holy Lord is one who despises the vile person. The blameless and holy person despises the vile person because the vile person does not have regard for the Lord.

We have seen this despising of the wicked by the Lord made known in previous psalms as well.

Psalm 5:4–5 ESV

For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you.

The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers.

Psalm 11:5 ESV

The LORD tests the righteous, but his soul hates the wicked and the one who loves violence.

The Lord looks upon the wicked and despises them because He despises every wicked act, word, and deed. They bring disgrace to the Lord and are disobedient to His Word and will. The NASB articulates this sinful person is a reprobate. This is an individual who has rejected God.

Because of this, the righteous or blameless will despise the reprobate due to the way in which the reprobate or vile person despises God. The blameless one will despise the actions and intentions that are sinful of the vile person. The blameless one does not delight in sin. In fact, the sinfulness of the reprobate brings the blameless one heartache and anger as the sin of the reprobate is against the holy and righteous and only God. The blameless one despises anything that is contrary to the Lord.

But, the blameless one honors those who fear the Lord. The blameless one delights in respecting and being among those who acknowledge and fear the Lord. He delights in those who revere and worship God. There is an alignment with those who love the

Lord and a distance from those who do not love the Lord.

The blameless one swears or keeps his word even if it hurts for him to be faithful to his word or promise made. This verse is highlighting that the blameless one is one who if he gives his word or commitment to something and it ends up being an inconvenience or even a detriment to him, he will keep his word even still. He will not change in his commitments. His word is unchanging. He keeps his word.

Lastly, he is blameless even in his money. Look at the first half of verse 5.

Psalm 15:5 ESV

The blameless one is generous with his funds. He does not lend his money to others at interest nor does he seek to take a bribe to distort justice. He is upright in his business and personal financial dealings. He is upright in all things.

- › As we have seen the character of the blameless one who can approach the presence of God and dwell with Him, we turn now to our final observation...

The Promise to be Enjoyed (v. 5b)

Explanation: David concludes this Psalm with a promise. It is a certain promise for the blameless one who can enter the presence of the Lord and remain.

Look with me at the second statement in verse 5:

Psalm 15:5 ESV

The blameless one who does all of these actions out of the abundance of his character will never be moved. The word “moved” can also be translated as shaken. It carries the idea of being shaken or moved from the right course. The blameless one will never be moved from the right way of living for God’s glory. However, it extends further than merely living according to God’s holy standard. The blameless one will never be moved from the presence of God. He will remain in the presence of God forever because the promise is that he will never be moved from his place.

- › We have examined the question to be answered, the answer to be pondered, and the promise to be enjoyed. Now, we must turn the matter to ourselves.

Application: This psalm calls for examination of ourselves. The question remains: Do you want to dwell in the presence of God?

Per such a question, we are called from this psalm to examine ourselves against the character of the blameless one described in this passage. This Psalm calls forward echoes of the Ten Commandments before us and the need to live faithfully to them. We

will see the way in which Scripture testifies and calls for examination.

The first call is for you to walk blamelessly. In other words, the first way in which you must examine yourself is in regard to your overall life. To dwell with God, you must be blameless. You must have no blame of wrongdoing applied to your account. You must have never done anything that would lay the blame of wrongdoing upon you.

Jesus echoed this reality when he said in [Matthew 5:48](#)

Matthew 5:48 ESV

You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

The overall call is that of perfection. What does this perfection look like?

The character of the blameless one continues and reveals to us this perfection. Starting first, you must evaluate your speech. Do you lie?

The command of God is found in the Ten Commandments.

Exodus 20:16 ESV

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Believer, you are saved by grace through faith in the Lord Jesus and must not be characterized by lying. Much more, you must acknowledge both believer and those yet to come to Christ that you have lied.

Furthermore, do you slander? Do you gossip? If so, you are falling short of the perfection and blamelessness required to enter the presence of God and remain.

Do you take up reproach against another? Have you ever sought harm against another person?

Exodus 20:13 ESV

“You shall not murder.

Jesus said in [Matthew 5:21-22](#)

Matthew 5:21–22 ESV

“You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’

But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire.

If you have even been angry to the point of hating another person, you have committed murder in your heart and therefore reproached another.

David further articulated that the blameless one despises the vile person. The blameless one looks upon sinfulness with hatred. Do you see sinful things with your eyes and hate them?

Exodus 20:4 ESV

“You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

The commandment calls for us to look upon nothing with the same delight we would reserve for the Lord.

Moreover, this applied to sexual immorality as well.

Exodus 20:14 ESV

“You shall not commit adultery.

When you see inappropriate content on your TV or your phone screen, the blameless one would hate and despise it. Do you hate it or do you look just a bit longer? Do you quickly scroll away despising the vile nature of the content or do you scroll back just to watch it again?

Jesus said in [Matthew 5:27-30](#)

Matthew 5:27–30 ESV

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’

But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell.

And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. For it is better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell.

The vile sinfulness of our world is evident and our faith in Christ must cause us to despise the wickedness we see. This is not just inappropriate content on our phone or lust.

The Law commands:

Exodus 20:3 ESV

“You shall have no other gods before me.

Exodus 20:15 ESV

“You shall not steal.

Exodus 20:17 ESV

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

The blameless despise all sinfulness. It includes all forms of sin such as idolatry, stealing, mocking, adultery, sexual immorality, using the Lord's name in vain, dishonoring God through the worship of false gods, lying, coveting, gluttony, drunkenness, and hate. Do you despise all these things?

Furthermore, the blameless one honors those who fear God. He does not look upon those seeking to honor the Lord with scorn. He does not consider them to be overly ridiculous because of their devotion to the Lord.

Moreover, the blameless one is faithful to his word and does not abandon it when it is inconvenient.

Jesus said in [Matthew 5:33-37](#)

Matthew 5:33–37 ESV

“Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.’

But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,

or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King.

And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot

make one hair white or black.

Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything more than this comes from evil.

The blameless one says “Yes” or “No” and stands by his word. Do you tell someone something and then abandon your word because it became a little inconvenient? Do you give someone your word that you will show up, but if something better comes along you abandon them? Do you tell someone that you will help, but then turn back when you are just a little too tired? That is not what a follower of the Lord Jesus Christ does. You stand by your word.

The psalm calls for an evaluation of how you manage your funds. Do you give your funds to others at interest or expecting something in return? Maybe you give your money out and expect some type of recognition. Maybe you give to someone in order to manipulate them in their feeling of indebtedness. Do you give your offerings to the Lord expecting an immediate reward? Or, do you give to be faithful?

This Psalm calls for us to evaluate and examine all of our lives. In doing so, the point is eventually made abundantly clear. The point hits us directly in the heart. As we examine our life, we quickly recognize that we have lied. We recognize that we have slandered and gossiped. We recognize that we have

sought evil against our neighbor. We see that we have reproached a friend. We see that we have not despised sinfulness but delighted in it. We see that we have dishonored those who honor God. We recognize that we have abandoned our word. We recognize that we have not been generous with our money.

In the recognition of all our sinfulness, we recognize that we are not blameless. In fact, we are full of blame.

Then, the question hits us with alarm. The initial question of [Psalm 15](#) becomes a heavy and weighty question to us. It is a question that shouts to our heart and echoes to our emotions to jar our spirit. It shouts “Not me!”

O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill?

NOT ME! I cannot and who else possibly ever could.

This Psalm hits us and leaves us initially with no hope at all. But, the point of this Psalm is to point us to the only blameless One who can sojourn to the tent of the Lord. It points us to the only blameless One who does dwell on the holy hill of God.

This psalm proclaims to you this morning that you are not blameless. Yet, there is One Who is.

It proclaims to you that there is One Who spoke the truth from a heart of truth.

John 14:6 ESV

Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

The blameless One is Himself the way, the truth, and the life.

The blameless One did not slander, revile, or commit evil against His neighbor. In fact, even when He was reviled, He did not open His mouth.

We see this when Jesus was before Pilate.

Matthew 27:13–14 ESV

Then Pilate said to him, “Do you not hear how many things they testify against you?”

But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Jesus despised the sinfulness of this world. He confronted the Pharisees in their hypocrisy and oppression of people.

Matthew 23:27–28 ESV

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people’s

bones and all uncleanness.

So you also outwardly appear righteous to others, but within you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

He drove out the moneychangers who were taking advantage of people through interest and extortion.

Matthew 21:12–13 ESV

And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons.

He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.”

Jesus was and is the blameless One. He fully lived in full accordance with what is demonstrated here in [Psalm 15](#).

In doing so, Jesus came to fulfill the law that we could not.

Matthew 5:17 ESV

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.

In fulfilling the Law, He did what we in fact could not do. In every way that we have just seen our own

fallenness to be blameless, Jesus Christ was and is perfectly blameless.

1 Peter 2:22 ESV

He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

There was no sin committed by Christ nor did He speak anything deceitful or wrong. Yet, He was rendered a criminal by the sinful world. This resulted in Him being considered accursed for our sake.

Galatians 3:13 ESV

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

As we have seen our own sin-fallenness through the Law of God, we must reflect upon Jesus Christ who became the curse of the law for us as He was nailed to the tree that is the cross of Calvary.

While on the cross, Scripture testifies:

2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

Jesus Christ became our sin and bore the wrath of God in our place. He died on the cross and was buried in the tomb. Then, on the third day, He rose

victorious. Now, those who call upon Him are made the righteousness of God.

You see, in Jesus Christ becoming our sin for us, He died, rose from the grave and ascended to the right hand of God. Jesus Christ descended from the tent where God the Son was in the presence of the Father. In doing so, He descended and lived the blameless life that we could not to die the death in our place that we deserve. Then, upon His resurrection and ascension, He ascended to be enthroned upon His holy hill as the Anointed King reigning over His people back in the presence of God the Father. Now, by grace through faith, those who turn to Christ in repentance and faith become the righteousness of God. They are considered blameless.

By the grace of God, those in Christ can sojourn in the tent and dwell on the holy hill with God because of the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ that declares them righteous.

Romans 5:1–2 ESV

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

We have access to God because of the work of God the Son to bring us to salvation in Himself. Moreover,

Hebrews 4:14–16 ESV

Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

In Christ, we can boldly approach the throne of grace because we are united with Christ and His victory is our victory.

Conclusion

Do you want to dwell with the Lord?

Call upon the Lord Jesus Christ alone and you will dwell with the Lord. You will be the blameless one who will never be moved from His presence.

Believer, live for the Lord Jesus Christ. Rejoice in the fact that you will never be moved from the Lord's presence.

May those who have ears hear what the Spirit says today.

Let us pray.