

The Pilgrim's Attitude

Completed Study Outline – Grace Bible Chapel

Psalm 84:1-12

Sunday – June 11th, 2017

CONTEXT of Psalm 84: - The context for this Psalm of the sons of Korah (those assigned for worship music) is obviously addressing their exiled condition longing to be back at the Temple once again. However, it also provides us the longing of all of God's true people to be with Him, in His presence - that has been true of God's people during all times. The application for us today, keeping the original meaning in mind, is that of the godly pilgrim who is homesick for heaven.

This Psalm addresses the love relationship between God and His people. God's people of all ages are strangers and aliens in a world in opposition to the Lord. During the era of this Psalm, the place to be near to God was the Temple built according to God's directions, and which in the particulars of ceremony displayed the coming Lord Jesus. It was the one place on earth that God dwelled in the midst of His people in some mysterious manner. It is no wonder the true Jewish believers of that time would have such a righteous longing to present at the Temple. The attitude of those who love the Lord in all times will long for His presence and His future promises. The confidence the believer has in God will give those who love Him continual comfort and gratitude in all present circumstances.

Introduction:

- Many of the Psalms give us portrait of something the Lord conveys through the writers. There are many pictures like this – a great example is Proverbs 25:11. This Psalm is like a painting for us of what a lover of God looks like.
- In dealing with the issue of being a lover of God, I want to begin with a striking passage (1 Cor. 16:22; 14; 1 Jhn 4:8). The fact of love for God is an issue of the utmost importance. This matter of love for God, just as the great commandment (Mat. 22:37) above all other matters is the significant mark of a Christian.
 - Remember the issue of restoration in John 21 after Peter had denied Christ, that Jesus asked Peter three times “Peter, do you love Me?”
 - John even addresses what love does in the life of a Christian “it casts out fear” (1 John 4:18) so that even a Christian facing death can handle it by faith, and through their love of God.
 - A Christian is not someone who has merely professed Christ, or prefers Christianity over other religions. Being a true Christian is life changing. It is a new birth, & with it comes a radical change – seen foremost in a love relationship with God.
 - Our study this morning is a Psalm (something to be sung) & that is why it is written “for the choir director” and is a writing by the “Son's of Korah” – Korah was either a title or the name of the person having to do with worship music.
 - This Psalm, like all others, is a transparent from the heart message. This one expresses affection for the true and living God – the God of Israel.
 - It is the longing of a heart to be where God is – in this context it was most likely written by those once exiled expressing their hearts desire to be at the Temple, and more importantly to be in the presence of the Lord.

Point: I have repeatedly brought up worship, our worship here, as a little bit of heaven on earth. I would rather be here or any place where God's Word is expounded, a place where God is loved & honored in His Word than Sandal's resort where you hear the TV jingle “*I had the time of my life.*”

I. Cherishing God's presence (84:1-4)

- **Vs. 1** – “How lovely are...places” – where do you want to be? I want to be where God is known, loved, seen through truth – back at the time of this writing it was the Temple – they alone had the true God. Today, it is with God's people, & where God's Word is taught.

Point: You see where the interest of the Psalmist is found – simply put, it is seen by his heart affections – all of us are known by our affections.

- “Lord of hosts” – Yahweh – the God of all authority & power! This is who God is, and the Psalmist wishes to give Him proper recognition.
- **Vs. 2** – Now he expresses those affections in the most graphic terms – this is a love letter, written energetically, realistically, but written appropriately so there is no doubt in any readers mind of this one’s love for the Lord.
 - Where does he want to be? “the courts of the Lord.”
 - It may well be this expression is not necessarily that he is now separated from the Temple – the phrase “my soul longed” would seem to indicate he was estranged at one time.

Point: his delight in the Temple (the place of God) is never satiated. It is ever where he longs to be.

- “longed for” – desire earnestly – an intense desire – something foremost.
- “heart” & “flesh” – all that I am “sing for joy” – this is a type of singing that is not so much the entertainment value, but the focus – that focus is the “living God” (the only true God).
 - This is singing from the heart. Our music here at GBC cannot be compared to nearby mega churches that have full orchestra’s & thousands of voices – but to me it is a matter of words, focus, & heart that makes the music special. Do you sing in love with God & express it?
- **Vs. 3** – This appears as an odd statement – but behind the picture is the true meaning. These birds have found homes in the cracks & crevices of the Temple. This is natural to these birds, & where their affections & cares are focused.
 - In the same manner should be those who are attached to God – there natural affections, focus, desires are found in the dwelling of the Lord.

Point: What the birds who reside within the Temple do by instinct, so do those whose affections are on the Lord.

- **Vs. 4** – “how blessed” – only Israel had the true and living God. Only the Christian today has the true & living God – “how blessed!” If you have Christ – you have everything, without Christ no matter what you have, it is nothing!
 - “They are ever praising you” – the gratitude, sense of joy, can never & will never cease. If there is no gratitude pouring from a heart claiming to know God & thru their lips there is something wrong.

II. **Composure in pilgrimage** (84:5-7) – Verse 5 is a new paragraph & a change from longing to be with God to a reflection of the blessedness in knowing God.

- **Vs. 5** – “how blessed is the man...You” – this is the person who is trusting in God no matter where they are – they are blessed! – Reflected Ps 1:1& 2:12.
 - “in whose heart are the...Zion” – in other words this is the person although not in Zion (Jerusalem), that is where their heart is – their love is attached to Zion, because to the Jew that was the place of special closeness to God.
- **Vs. 6** – he gives an illustration of what he means.
 - “passing through the....spring” – “Baca” means weeping, lamentations – so the idea is passing through a place or time of great grief, even in that place God provides a spring just because the person knows the Lord.
 - This very likely has reference to Engedi – a very unusual place. It resides in the midst of wilderness – stones, rocks, no plant life, & abundant heat – yet here in the midst of this is an oasis of trees, plants, animals, with a beautiful flowing steams & water falls – the place where David hid from King Saul.
 - “The early rain also covers it with blessings” – even when there are times of difficulties, God brings refreshment in His timing – this is waiting on the Lord.
- **Vs. 7** – “they go from strength to strength” – in leading the life of a pilgrim, the pilgrim moves from one situation of victory or overcoming, to yet another one – it is the very life of faith.

- “appears before God in Zion” – at the end of the pilgrim journey, of the trials & difficulties is the destination of being in the presence of God. For us that is the place of glory! There is a song sung at my brother’s funeral – *“it will be worth it all when I see Jesus.”*
- Paul stated it this way when he was about to finish his journey “I have fought a good fight, I have finished the course” (2 Tim 4:7).

III. **Cry for God’s care** (84:8-9) – now we have his prayer – showing the place of his confidence, where he looks for help.

- **Vs. 8** – Lord – Jehovah – self existent God – “of hosts” the God who rules & controls the mighty hosts of heaven – the God of all power. The Supreme being who has all things in His hands – the name above every name.
 - The “O God of Jacob” is a reference to the covenant relationship God has with Israel. Today, we pray to Him on the basis of the relationship thru Christ under the new covenant.
- **Vs. 9** – “Behold our shield” – is a reference to a protective instrument in battle – he is asking God for protection – this will be referenced by declaration in Vs. 11.
 - Psalm 5:12 – this figurative reference is made abundantly clear.
 - In Eph. 6:16 (context of full armor) it is referred as the “shield of faith.” We need faith in God to defend us from all the onslaught of continued evil.
 - I hope everyone here recognizes how we are in a constant battle – evil & destruction comes at us continuously from every conceivable source & direction. Without God as our protection, we will not stand.
 - “Look upon the face of Your anointed” – this has given many scholars to believe the ultimate author of this Psalm was David. That may well be.
 - The word “anointed” is the word Messiah. The direction in the near interpretation is not to Christ, but to those “set apart” which is the meaning behind the word.
 - In the near term this undoubtedly was referencing those of Israel not only under covenant, but who belonged to God by faith, love, & devotion. As Paul explains in Rom. 9:6 “they are not all Israel (in a spiritual relationship) who are from Israel.” By using “set apart” he is going beyond the covenant to those who truly belong to God – His elect.

Point: Therefore in a general application sense this same prayer would belong to those in Christ today – that is those who truly have a special relationship, who are born again, they are the anointed of God.

- To ask the Lord to “look upon the face of Your anointed” is to ask the Lord to do Romans 8:28 – consider the well-being, the disposition, the situation of those who are beloved of God.
- Last Sunday I brought up the promise of God in Luke 21:18 “not a hair on your head will perish” the ultimate promise of God for His beloved – things may look dyer in the present, but God will ultimately care for you & glorify you if you belong to Him.

Point: this prayer is consistent with God’s promises to all His beloved.

IV. **Comfort with gratitude for the future** (84:10-12)

- **Vs. 10** – What does the author have as his ambition, as his hope, as his desire? To be as close to God as possible.
 - This goes back to Vs. 2 – the longing of the Psalmist heart is not to be immersed in the affairs of this world, not the ambitions of the world to climb to the pinnacle of the mess of worldly affairs but to be in the presence of God.

Point: Put another way – he is not asking God to feather his nest, so to speak, in this world so he can attain to the top of the heap of fallen humanity – to overcome in that sense – but he is showing his real heart’s desire is to walk with the Lord.

- He wants peace from worldly distractions in order to worship his God.

- He wants protection so that he can live his life walking with His God instead of living in the chaos of the world for temporary worldly attainments.
- This prayer is not unlike what Paul commanded us to pray for in 1Tim. 2:1-2 “might lead quiet & peaceable lives in godliness & dignity” – so that we can worship our God without threat, & continual turmoil.

Point: This passage is therefore also describing more than an attitude, but literally glory (heaven) vs. the world. Heaven is the place of God of which we are moving.

- **Vs. 11** – In the meantime - “for the Lord is...sun & shield” – “sun” – the source of light, joy, good, happiness, refreshment, etc.. & at the same time a shield to that which is evil, harmful, terrible, destructive, etc..
 - Our God is not stingy – “no good thing” – these were under the Mosaic covenant with special promises (Deut. 28-29) – we are not under such a covenant today, but God is the giver of every good gift – all we have is under Rom. 8:28, & ultimately Rom. 8:32 “He that spared not...not with Him freely give us all things.”
 - Those who “walk uprightly” – in the near interpretation are those in compliance with the Mosaic Covenant, & in the general sense “all those who love the Lord” because they are following Christ – living for Him as their master and Lord.
- **Vs. 12** – So this is the bottom line – the real issue summarized!
 - Who is blessed? And who is exclusively blessed, & ultimately blessed? Only those “who trusts in You” (God)! Those who have genuine faith.

Closing:

- We have seen the heart of the righteous in this Psalm. The heart of those who have their trust in God, their affection for God, and look to Him for all their hope.
- This is a portrait given to us by God to let us understand what a lover of God looks like - can we overlay this portrait upon ourselves, & if not, why not?