

**Tuesday, March 21, 2023 • Read Psalm 84**

*Questions from the Scripture text: Into whose hands was this Psalm committed (superscript)? Upon what was it played? Who wrote it? What does it begin by praising (v1a)? Whose is it (v1b)? How does the psalmist feel toward this place (v2a–b)? How does he summarize the entirety of his being in v2c? For what (Whom!), specifically, does his being cry out? As what sorts of birds does he describe himself in v3a–c? How does he describe what he needs for himself (v3a–b)? For whom else (v3c)? Where is this place of safety and nurture for the believer and his children (v3d)? Why—Who is there and whose is He (v3e)? Into what condition do they come, and how (v4a)? What sort of blessed life do they have there (v4b)? Where is the blessed man's strength (v5a)? Where does he set his heart upon going (v5b)? On their way to worship, what effect do such people have upon their saddest situations (v6)? To what do they come (v7a)? Why/how (v7b, cf. v5a)? How does the psalmist introduce the rest of the psalm in v8—what two things does he call God, and what does he ask God to do? What does he ask God to do in v9a? What (Who) is this shield (v9b)? How does time in public worship compare to time elsewhere (v10a)? How does lowliness in public worship compare to “home ownership” elsewhere (v10b–c)? What two things is Yahweh like unto His people in v11a? What two things does He give them (v11b)? How much of what is good will give to whom (v11c–d)? What does he ultimately call God (v12a)? What is the condition of whom (v12b)?*

**What comfort is there for those who long to gather to God again in worship?** Psalm 84 looks forward to the opening portion of morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these twelve verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **when we are pained by not being with God's assembly now, we may be gladdened by the hope of future gathering and the enjoyment already of Him Who is the blessedness of that gathering.**

It's obvious from the Psalm that this “son of Korah” has a painful longing to be back at the temple, where his priestly family were the ordained singers. He misses the blessedness of it all, and the Spirit now carries him to write a prayer-song about that blessedness.

**Blessed longing, v1–4.** Why is his soul longing for the temple courts to the point of fainting (v2a–b)? Because his whole being—heart and flesh—cries out for God Himself (v2c). The existence of a choirmaster and the ordination of the sons of Korah inform us that this is during the temple period, but he uses the tabernacle word in v1a to focus upon God's dwelling, God's presence.

Isn't God everywhere? Yes, He is, and the fact that the longing worshiper can have God's ear in v8 shows that he is well aware of it. But, the Lord communicates His presence to us in the worship assembly in a way that is special and different. We cannot, just anywhere, have Him in that way.

The psalmist has a memory from when he has been at the temple: tiny birds who even built their nests either in the great bronze altar in the court or the altar of incense in the holy place (v3). Those birds were happy enough with a home, but how the psalmist wishes he could be where they are! Yahweh of hosts is his own King. Yahweh of hosts is his covenant God. There's nowhere that he belongs more than at the public worship where that bird gets to be, where his own King and his own covenant God is. It's like Jesus's teaching in Matt 6:26. The birds of the air are blessed to be fed by God, but how much more blessed we are, when we are fed by Him, we are fed by the One Who is *our heavenly Father*.

This is the great thing about the temple, that is our Father's “house” (v4a). Children often have fond memories of their grandparents' house and can just imagine what they would be doing if they were there right now. Some adults who had happy childhoods remember fondly what they used to do in their father's home. The psalmist knows just what he would be doing if he was back in the house of his King and God: praising Him! Praising God is what they always get to do in that happy place (v4b).

**Blessed journey, v5–8.** The man who knows that Yahweh is his King and God longs to come appear before God in Zion (v7), but knows that even where he is, he may have God's ear (v8).

It is because God is already all the strength that we have (v5a) that our hearts should want more than anything (v5b) to be in the worship gathering of His people, where He makes Himself most known. So, He is already our strength, but we are eager to come be strengthened by Him, and we may rejoice that He is our strength all along the way (v7a).

What a blessing already to have Him as our strength (v5a), because there is much weeping to go through on the way home to God. “Valley of Baca” in v6a is literally “valley of weeping.” But they are not wasted tears. The image in v6 is exquisitely beautiful: tears that turn out to be not salty and deadly but a spring—fresh water that irrigates the valley and makes it wondrously productive.

Believers know that God is not wasting our pains. He Who is our strength, He Who is bringing us home to Himself, is blessing the entire journey. He makes us to flourish. He uses us to bring life to others. It is a blessed journey to belong to Him, even when it is wet with our tears.

**Blessed certainty of arrival, v9–12.** Finally, this journey is sure to reach its goal. For God has given Himself as our shield (v11a) in the Person of His Christ (v9b). The word “anointed” is Messiah. Christ. What does the Lord see in the assembly of His people? Christ! Whom are we to see, when we gather to God? Christ!

This is the glory of public worship. It is so great that it's more than a thousand times as good as everything else taken together. And it is so great that it is better to be there, even on the periphery as a servant (doorkeeper, v10b), than to have residential status among the wicked (v10c). Of course, this son of Korah wasn't a doorkeeper; he was a singer. An office that the Christ Himself now holds (cf. Heb 2:12), and an office that every single Christian now holds in Him (cf. Eph 5:19; Col 3:16).

When we realize that God considers us in Christ, we become absolutely certain that we must come into the full enjoyment of every good thing (v11c). If I walk uprightly (v11d, cf. Rom 5:19), it is because I have been made righteous in Christ (cf. Rom 5:18).

He radiates His infinite glory upon us like sun (v11a–b), and He wields His infinite power to strengthen us by His grace as a shield (v11a–b). What would He possibly withhold, since He has already given Himself to us (v11c, cf. Rom 8:32).

Here, then, is wonderful training for the pilgrim's progress from this world to that which is to come. Yes, this valley is a valley of tears, but the Lord is already our Shepherd in it. He is continually with us, and He will receive us into glory. Goodness and mercy will be hot on our heels all of our days, and He will bring us all the way home. We will dwell in His house forever.

And He has given us a weekly rhythm to train our hearts in this pattern. We delight in Him already, and He is our strength already. But we know that the Lord's Day is coming. We long to be back at the assembly, where He strengthens and satisfies our hearts in Himself. The more we learn to delight in that day, and its holy assembly, the more we will benefit from this weekly microcosm of life as a whole—learning both to enjoy the blessedness of how we have Him along the way and to long for the ultimate blessedness that we will enjoy when we come at last into His temple.

In what ways are the other six days a valley of tears for you, by comparison to the Lord's Day? Who is the sweetness of that day to you and the sweetness of its holy assembly? How does this lend sweetness to days when you do not have these other things? In what ways is your life in this world a valley of tears? How does the weekly pattern instruct your heart and your mind as you long for heaven?

*Sample prayer: How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts! Our souls have longed for You Yourself, and so we long for every Lord's Day, and especially for that great day when we finish our works in this world and enter Your rest. Guide us by the hand, we ask. Be with us continually, and receive us at last into glory. Look upon us in Christ, and show Yourself to us in Christ, withholding no good thing from us, we ask, in His Name, AMEN!*

**Suggested songs: ARP84B “Advancing Still” or TPH84B “O LORD of Hosts, How Lovely”**

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Psalm 84. These are the words of god. To the chief musician on an instrument of gath, a psalm of the sons of korra. How lovely is your tabernacle will y'all have hosts? My soul longs. Yes. Even faints for the courts of yahweh. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living god.

Even a sparrow has found a home even in the swallow and nest, for herself, which she may lay her young, your altars. Oh, you always have hosts? My king. And my god, Bluster, those who dwell in your house. They will still be praising you. Blessed is the man whose strength is in?

You Whose heart is set on pilgrimage. As they pass the valley of baca, they make it a spring. The rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength. Each one appears before god. In zion. Oh, y'all play god of hosts, hear my prayer. Say love No.

Oh god, give ear. Oh god of jacob. Say la. Oh god, behold our shield and look upon the face of your anointed. For a day in your courts, it's better than a thousand. I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my god. Than 12 and the tens of witness.

For y'all, he god as a son and shield. Y'all way will give grace and glory. No, good thing. Will he withhold? From those who walk uprightly. Oh, y'all have hosts. Blessed is the man. Who trusts in you? So far the reading of god's inspired and An airtwort. This is a psalm of the sons of korra korra.

The core heights were a family of priests. Who were the appointed ordained singers? In the temple. And, He apparently is not able to be at the temple. Of course, if he's from the sons of coral, we know that the temple exists and The. Title your house in the first part of verse 4.

I usually refers to the temple. Uh, but he uses a word for Uh, dwelling word. For tabernacle. In the beginning, go. Lovely. How lovely is your tabernacle y'all way of hosts? This is because his longing to be at temple is not a longing to be back at his job or back with his family.

But a longing for the lord himself. And so, we have his Um, Painful longing. Uh, for the The lord, which is a blessed. If we can call it that a blessed longing, lots of pain. To use the word from verse 4. And versus one through four. And then we have

Blessed condition already blessed. Hope if we can put it that way, In verses 5 through 8. And then, We have a blessed certainty. In versus nine through 12. So his long knee is a blessed one even though it's It's longing and it's painful. And yet. It is a crying out for the lord himself.

And he says, in verse, For blessed. Are those who dwell in your house? They will still be praising you. So, he knows. A happiness. In the lord. That makes him unwilling to live without public worship.

This reminds us that Although the lord is everywhere, he's praying to the lord. He knows that. Uh, he may have the lord's ear where he is, you can see that and verse 8. Hear my prayer. Give ear. Uh, yet. There is a certain experience of god, there's The lord's communication of himself.

Giving us to know him and Be present have his presence with us that you can only have in the public worship in this life. He? Our knowledge of god is entirely dependent upon his making himself. Known to us, giving himself to us. And, There is. An aspect of that that you cannot have.

Just anywhere. You can only have it in the public worship. Now, we know. The. Great reason for that is because Christ is the one through whom we come to the lord and that's already prophesied in this song. But in hebrews, the great reason for not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together is because it's the lord jesus.

Who's in the midst of the assembly. And so, he longs. To be back at the temple. Verse three implies, i think that he remembers seeing. Little birds who had nested. Whether in, even in the inside, But on the incense altar because the word alters is plural here. Or outside the big bronze.

Altar. And it's almost like he's saying. If it would be, it would certainly be Happy if i could be that burned because then that would mean that i had made my home in the temple and my children would grow up in the temple and that Uh, that blessed bird gets to lay her young right there.

And this is something that i hope. Each of you, when you have your own young, We'll teach them. The blessedness of. Of being in the And the gathering. The assembly. So that's his blessed desire. His blessed longing. And the second place. There is his blessed, hope. It's true that he does have part of that for which he longs already.

In the fact that He he may cry out to the lord. The lord is his strength. He's not just going to. The temple. There, it doesn't just desire to go to the temple, because he will find that the lord is his strength there, but the lord is already his strength.

Forgetting him where he needs to be. And so when we come to the worship of god, we rejoice that, he strengthens us in himself when we're at the worship of god. But you don't have to wait until the worship of god. To have strength from him. If that were the case, then we would all just perish.

Because we must have our strength from him and in him. All the time. And so, It begins the section in verses. Um, Five through eight. By saying blessed is the man who's strength. Is in you. And since his heart is, Since. Um, god is the strength of his heart.

His heart is determined to get back to worship now. The time between now and when he gets to worship, there's not necessarily going to be an easy one or a pleasant one. As they pass through the valley of baca, the valley of weeping They make it a spring, the rain.

Also covers it with pools. Um, This may be. An indication. That. Wherever he goes. With god as his strength, even if it's miserable, even if it's unpleasant with weeping, Uh yet those are not unproductive tiers. So, the picture is Uh, is Uh, he's weeping so much that he's like, A spring.

A. Continual source of Of water and he's filling up the valley with pools. But a valley that is watered by a spring, is actually a very fertile, very full of life, sort of thing. And so, It's comforting to us to know that whatever the lord takes us through. To bring us to himself.

Um, it's never wasted. It's producing. It's producing life and the weeping. Ends with joy. And so he says they go from strength to strength. Appearing before god. In zion. The lord is our strength already. Now he is our hope. He is our help. Um, And then, At the end, there's a blessed certainty that we shall arrive.

Not just the lord, being our help. Now, And the time of difficulty until we can be gathered to him. Uh, but the certainty that we shall be gathered to him. If the lord is already our strength as we've heard, but then especially if he hears our prayer, Uh verse 8 and even more than that, if he looks upon the face of our anointed, oh god, behold our shield verse 9 and look upon the face of your anointed.

And the word for anointed is the word messiah. Which when it gets translated into Greek and the new testament is the word christ. Look upon the face of your christ, the psalmist. Praise. That's the, that's how he is certain that he shall come at last and Um, And he is actually going to Uh, dwell with god or god will dwell with him?

In the temple. He says. That day. In, god's house is better than 10 thousand. Sorry, it's better than a thousand. Anywhere else. And, Whatever part he can have in the house. I've got yes, he's a son of coral which means he's ordained to be a singer. But even if he was just the lowly doorkeeper, Which would put him all the way outside and he would just be a lowly servant but at least he would be there.

I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of Michael. I've been dwell. And the tense of wickedness. For y'all who god is a son. And a shield. So, light and brilliance and glory. And strength and defense. Yahweh will give grace. And glory. No good thing. Well, he withhold From those who walk uprightly.

And the psalm finishes, oh, y'all way of hosts. Blessed, is the man who trusts in you. So you need to think of this in terms of your life as a whole, The lord is my shepherd and Uh, he leads us through this life and he leads us, even through the valley of darkest shadow, right?

The value of the shadow of death. He leads us in situations where we have enemies. But he is with us. And so, we have him as our hope in the midst of it. And we know, That we shall return to or dwell in. The house of the lord forever.

Praise god. But this This reality of our life, as a whole is something that we live. Uh, we live a out, a picture of it every week. Because, In this life, you can only have the lord's day assemblies, on the lord's day. And, The rest of the time. Is hard.

Painful. Slids lots of. Uh, sad things, lots of weeping. And yet. Um, If? Are delight has come to be in the lord. So much. That being well, instructed about the way that we have him himself. On the lord's day and its assemblies. We will look forward so much to the lord's day and look forward so much to the gathering.

Whoever else might be there, whatever else. They might be like or they might be thinking our heart and mind should first and foremost to be on god. Knowing that we have the lord jesus leading us in the assembly in a way that we don't get. Any other place in this life knowing that in the lord jesus, and his leading us and is helping us by his spirit, we have god himself and the assembly Then a way that we don't get.

And so, if we're If we're going to grow in understanding that, god is leading us through the valley of tears and none of the tears are wasted. It's all productive, it's all for our good. All for our learning to enjoy him. More long for him, that we will be satisfied when we come at last to heaven.

Then we need to learn to think of the lord's day and the corporate worship on the lord's day that way. So that we have that training of our hearts, in the, in the smaller weekly way, Of longing for god. Delighting in him as our help yes every day. Uh, but eager to get to the lord's to assembly.

To have that experience and enjoyment of him. Uh, that he gives us there. And as he does. So it's a spirit trains us to live that way in the weekly Pattern, the weekly rather. Then we'll find the spiritus training us. To live that way, and think that way. With respect to heaven itself.

And this life as a whole, And getting through the valley of tears. Looking forward to when we saw. Be with god. In his holy temple. That living. Temple. When the dwelling place of god is with men, and they don't need a temple and they don't need a son. Because god himself is the temple and god himself is Is the light of the place god himself.

And the lamb. So, My prayer and desire for you. My dear family. Is that you would You would have the blessing of the weekly pattern. And then even more than that, You would have the blessing of Of the reality. Of this life as a whole. Into eternity.

The father, thank you for. Your word, thank you for what i hope it is to us. Especially when we are. In seasons that feel like the valley of tears.

But we thank you that you are already our strength. That are longing for you as a gift from you. And that you will at last, bring us all the way home. We pray that you would help us to live that way, we thank you for The gift of the lord's day, and the lord's day assemblies.

And especially of your son, our redeemer. To lead the assembly that has been consecrated by his blood, And we pray that you would make us to delight in your day and to delight. And the holy assembly of your day. That. In the way that you have promised. Your spirit would train our hearts to delight in you.

So even this week lord, we pray that as we go through the difficult things. You would teach and to train our hearts to strain forward, To when we can be gathered again. In christ in glory with the congregation on earth. And the Lord stay assembly. And use it to train our hearts for the other longing.

And the light we ask. In jesus name, amen.