

I. Introduction

- A. Psalm 84 is a hymn, a song of praise
- B. Written by:
  - 1. Different perspectives: Some, like Calvin, say it is a Psalm of David when he fled from Absalom. Some say it was written by a pilgrim who was far away from the temple.
  - 2. Sons of Korah: They were among the Levites who served in the tabernacle, and then later in Solomon's temple. They would have been the leaders, organizers, and singers in the temple choir. (1 Chron 6:31 – 37, 9:19)
- C. Out of 150 Psalms this is the only one that uses the word "blessed" 3 times
  - 1. Blessed: Hebrew word "Ashrey". Three meanings considering context:
    - a) "under God's blessing:
    - b) happy in what one is doing or how one is placed;
    - c) doing what is morally justified/right, what is deserved

II. Who does the psalmist say God is? Names, attributes and activities of God

- A. Lord of Hosts (vs 1,3, 8, 12):
  - 1. The word LORD, capitalized, refers to Yahweh, the self-existent, covenant-keeping, redemptive God. Yahweh is linked to how God described Himself in Exodus 3:14.

***(Exodus 3:14-15) God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.***

- 2. The word hosts is a translation of the Hebrew word sabaoth, meaning "armies"—a reference to the angelic armies of heaven. Thus, another way of saying "LORD of hosts" is "God of the armies of heaven." As the LORD of hosts, God is the all-powerful Ruler over the entire universe. All power and authority are His.
- B. The living God (v 2)– He is alive and active in the lives of His people. He is not like the dead and impotent idols.
- C. My King (v 3)– The sovereign ruler and creator
- D. My God (v3)– He is their God. The living and true God has entered into covenant with Israel and is their God and Israel is God's particular people.
- E. God is the provider of rain in dry places (vs 6)
- F. God is the provider of strength on the journey (vs 7)
- G. God of Jacob (v 8)- He is the faithful God. He's the God who made promises to Jacob centuries before—promises He's still faithful to today. Jacob was a weak, undeserving man who wrestled with God and prevailed. Thus the God of Jacob is the God of weak and undeserving people who put their trust in Him.
- H. God is a Sun (v 11) - God is the source of all light and life to His people

- I. God is a Shield (v 11)– God is the source of protection for those who find refuge in Him
  - J. God is the bestower of favor - He showers His people with His grace.
  - K. God is the bestower of honor (v 11)– literal meaning of honor is glory - God is giving glory to us. God will give you all the power to accomplish much for Him.
  - L. God shows His people His goodness (v 12) - The effect of being in God's presence is that the psalmist lacks no good thing. With God's grace on Him and glory around Him, the psalmist rests in God's goodness to him.
- III. Blessing 1 - It was a blessing to work in the temple. (v4)
- 1. Vs. 10 "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness," This is what the psalmist does, he is a doorkeeper at the temple and he loves what he does. (1 Chron 9:17 – 19)
  - 2. The psalmist longs and faints to be in the dwelling place of God.
  - 3. He is even jealous of the lowly sparrows and swallows because they get to live in the temple.
    - a) The sparrow is used throughout scripture to describe the humble, lowly, common and seemingly worthless. In Matthew 10 Jesus says that 2 of them are sold for a penny. And we are like them, lowly and common but we can find joy and peace in the presence of God.
    - b) The swallow is a fast moving, frenetic kind of bird that flits from place to place. However, here in the presence of God, they build their nest and settle down. It's a great illustration of what Augustine, a church father, said: "Our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."
- IV. Blessing 2 - It was a blessing to journey to the temple (v5)
- A. In their covenant with God the Israelites have promised to obey God . One of the stipulations of the covenant was that they were to travel to temple three times a year to offer sacrifices to God: Deuteronomy 16:16 "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the LORD your God at the place that he will choose: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread, at the Feast of Weeks, and at the Feast of Booths. They shall not appear before the LORD empty-handed.
  - B. This psalm was to be sung by pilgrims as they travel to the Zion, to the temple, most probably to celebrate the feast of tabernacles – praising God for his abundant provision of the harvest and commemorating their forefathers time in the wilderness.
  - C. However the psalmist is talking about people who may not be able to be on a literal journey to Zion but their hearts are taking on a figurative journey to Zion.
  - D. They get their strength for the journey by setting their hearts on the presence of God.
  - E. On this journey they go through the Valley of Baca. Baca is a Hebrew word, meaning "balsam tree." It was a type of tree that was found in dry, arid landscapes. And the tree was such that resin, like sap, would just ooze out of it, almost like tears, which is why this noun, "Baca," sounds very similar to the Hebrew verb for weeping and which is why people refer to the Valley of Baca as the Valley of Weeping.

- F. While they walk through the Valley of Baca—symbolizing dry and difficult days filled with hardship and hopelessness that causes one to weep—in the middle of that valley, what sustains them is the hope of God's presence. When they hold on to that hope, even this dry, desolate place becomes a valley of springs and pools from which they can drink and be satisfied. The psalmist is not only describing how hope in God brings strength amidst weakness, he's describing how hope in God brings joy amidst weeping. Joy amidst weeping brought about by hope in God. Tears of sadness become springs of joy when the pilgrim looks to the presence of God.
- V. Blessing 3 - It was a blessing to live with trust in God. (v12)
- A. Being in the presence of God, even in the lowliest of positions, is better than anything apart from God
- B. For the one who walks uprightly, who trusts in God, God will withhold no good thing and he will bestow his glory upon you.
- VI. But wait!..."For the one who walks uprightly" . Oh no!!!
- A. So what if I don't walk uprightly? In Ex 33: God threatens to not be present because of His wrath at their disobedience.
- B. The New Covenant –This is the new covenant where the Law of God would be written upon the hearts of men.

***Jeremiah 31:31-33 "Behold, the days are coming, declares the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah, not like the covenant that I made with their fathers on the day when I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt, my covenant that they broke, though I was their husband, declares the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people.***

1. It is fulfilled in Christ - Hebrews 9:15 "Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant."

***John 1:14 - And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

2. The word, "dwelt," is the same word used in the Old Testament to describe the tabernacle. It's literally saying, "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us." The whole picture is God coming, tabernacling among His people.
3. The Word became flesh. God has come to us. He has lived among us—a life of perfect obedience to God, with no sin. And then He died. And now death is the payment for sin. He had no sin. He died in our place on a cross. He took the payment that was to your sin and my sin, and when He died, He opened the way for sinners to be reconciled to God.

- VII. New Blessing 1: It is a blessing to be the temple
- A. Our body is a temple of the Holy Spirit

***1 Corinthians 3:16-17 - Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him. For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.)***

***1 Corinthians 6:19-20 - Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.***

1. When we turn from our sin and put our trust in Jesus and are reconciled to God, our body becomes a temple of the Holy Spirit, in whom His grace and glory dwells.
  2. We have constant, 24/7 access to God. We live with the presence of God in us. This changes the way we live, act and think.
- B. The church, all together is a temple of the Holy Spirit
1. When we gather together we are blessed to be the temple together and we can sing His praise, singing and shouting to the living God.

***Ephesians 2:19-22 - So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.***

VIII. New Blessing 2: It is a blessing to journey to heaven

- A. We are exiles and strangers, looking for a homeland, a better country. (1 Pet 2:11; Heb 11).

***Revelation 21:1-4 - Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."***

- B. The dwelling of God will be with man in this city, and finally all those who've trusted in Christ will be fully reconciled to God.
- C. In the meantime, we are on the pilgrimage to this ultimate home. But we are not alone as the church on the same pilgrimage and God is with us.
- D. We will often find ourselves walking in the Valley of Baca. Psalm 84 tells us to keep our hearts fixed on God. We have refuge in God, we have worth in God.
- E. In the midst of darkness He is our source of light and life and our great shield of protection and provision.
- F. "As soon as we see the face of Jesus we shall know as never before how much we are loved, how fully we have been forgiven, how great and endless is our security in his presence." (Motyer, p242)

IX. New Blessing 3: It is a blessing to live with trust in Christ

- A. To trust in Christ we need to know Him. The psalmist shows us that he knew God by proclaiming His names and attributes. The way for us to truly know Christ is to read and study His Word and to talk with Him in prayer.
- B. We also need to fellowship with the other members of the body and gather together with them to pray, study and praise.
- C. "Trust in the one who has walked through the dark night and has come out on the other side in victorious light. He has conquered sin and sorrow. He has defeated death and hell, and He is coming back. He's coming back to bring all who trust in Him on this earth to glory with Him in eternity, where He will wipe every single tear from your eyes. And He will heal every ache in your heart. " (Platt)

***Romans 8:28 - And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.***

Questions for further discussion:

- Many professing Christians say that they do not need the church. Is this a dangerous view? Why/why not?
- Suppose that a Christian admits that he finds more pleasure in recreational pursuits than in church. How should he fix this?
- If someone challenged you that verse 11b ("no good thing") is not true, how would you defend it?

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