

# “HOW I LOVE TO BE IN CHURCH!”

## PSALM 84

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### INTRODUCTION

Can you think of anything better than to be in fellowship with God and to worship together in His house? This psalmist could not. For him, God’s place of worship was beloved and lovely, and his soul, heart, and flesh literally longed and yearned for it. He was willing, like all those who know and love God’s house, to go through whatever it took in order to get there. One day with God in His presence was better than a thousand somewhere else, and the least privileged position at God’s house was better than the best the world had to offer. The Lord is all that the believer needs, and He does not withhold any good thing from the one whose heart is complete in integrity. It is truly “blessed” to trust wholly upon God—to rest one’s entire being upon Him.

This psalmist was evidently hindered from being at God’s house. The psalm is parallel with Psalm 42 and may have been written by the same author—one of the sons of Korah, who were singers and also gatekeepers at the tabernacle/temple. The historical situation may have been in the time of Absalom’s rebellion against David when he had to flee the city with many of his loyal followers and traveled far away across the Jordan River (II Sam. 15-16). This author may well have gone with David, and longed to go back to worship with God’s people at His “house.”

In our lives this psalm translates into our love for God and His place of worship, and our willingness to “seek first His kingdom and righteousness”—whatever the cost or sacrifice to us personally. Our desire to fellowship with Him must be our top priority.

Notice the attention on the names and titles of God in this psalm:

- 1) Yahweh—vv. 2 & 11 alone, and with “of Hosts” in vv. 1, 3, 8, and 12.
- 2) “Yahweh of Hosts”
- 3) Elohim/God in vv. 7, 9, and 11 (with Yahweh) and with Yahweh of Hosts in v. 8 and God of Jacob in v. 8.
- 4) El—only in v. 2
- 5) Eloah—vv. 3 and 10.

### WALK IN INTEGRITY AND SEEK GOD FIRST IN ORDER TO WORSHIP HIM.

- I. THERE IS NOTHING BETTER THAN TO FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD (1-4)
  - A. God’s “dwelling places” are beloved/lovely; powerful emphasis on Yahweh of hosts due to military need.
  - B. My whole being yearns for God’s house and his person (2).
    1. Note that his entire person is involved: soul, heart, flesh.
    2. The emotions are powerful: grow pale with longing, be consumed with yearning, and shout out loud—likely with joy.
    3. The direction is “the courts of the Lord,” and “to the **Living God**. He is alive and gives us life.
  - C. I am somewhat “envious” of the little creatures that have such free access to God’s presence (3).
    1. No need to make the “birds” figurative of the psalmist; such ruins the beauty and point of the passage.
    2. Nothing is more natural than the birds making little homes for them and their young in the “nooks and crannies” of the tabernacle complex—or even any trees that may grow there.
    3. They have “a house,” a “nest,” and a place—“your altars,” representing the entire “tabernacle complex.” Not that the literal altars are the place of their nests.
    4. He is “the Lord of Hosts,” “My King,” and “my God.”
  - D. Those who “dwell in His house” are truly “blessed/happy.” Such persons are “ever/yet praising” God (4).
    1. Note how the Psalms begin with “Blessed” (1:1; cf. 2:12).
    2. **What greater “blessedness” for God’s house than that there people are “praising” God? “What Christian man can climb higher than this—to find in the praise of God the greatest joy of his life?”**
    3. They will still/ever/yet praise God—no matter what the current problems.

- II. NO STRUGGLES, DISTANCE, HINDRANCES MUST BE PERMITTED TO KEEP US FROM GOD (5-7).
- A. The man who has his strength in God is truly **blessed** (5).
  - B. In his heart are “the highways” *OF ZION*—implied in the context (5b).
  - C. Passing through the Valley of Baca—Balsam tree/weeping—dry arid and foreboding places. (6)
    1. With God such a place is made into a “place of springs.” This speaks of the activity of faith.
    2. The early rain—soft and tender fall rains—cover it with blessings or fills it with pools. This depicts the outpouring of divine blessing and provision.
  - D. They go “from strength to strength” (7).
    - Kidner remarks that the closer the pilgrims get to the goal, the stronger they feel the “pull” of the holy sanctuary to be. Therefore, they do not grow weary but “press on more eagerly” (305)—in fact, “they go from strength to strength.”
    - Compare this growth with the closer walk of a believer with the growth of his faith and love, and compare the NT picture of growing “from glory to glory” in II Cor. 3:18 as one concentrates on seeing and knowing God Himself. We may also compare Rom. 1:17—“from faith to faith”—from first to last of faith, and nothing but faith. See Is. 40:31—those who wait upon the Lord renew their strength.
  - E. Their ultimate destiny is to “appear before God in Zion.” [The annual feast days required this.] Now, it is appropriate for believers of all ages to glean from the literal and correct view of this passage a picture of the Christian life and journey as “a pilgrimage in a vale of tears,” the ultimate goal of which is to appear before God in “the heavenly Jerusalem.” In this wilderness of the world, he does find “fountains of refreshment.” God’s grace does “visit him like the sweet refreshing shower from heaven,” and he advances “from strength to strength, from grace to grace from glory to glory, till he reaches his journey’s end.”
- III. BUT LORD, I STILL NEED YOUR HELP (8-12)
- A. Hear me and look upon our king (8-9)
    1. Hear/give ear to my prayer—LORD God of hosts, God of Jacob (8)
    2. Behold our shield, look upon the face of your anointed (9) (two references to the king—likely David).
  - B. One day with You in your courts is better than a thousand [*anywhere else*]! (10).
  - C. “I had rather be [literally “I have chosen to stand”] at the threshold of the house of my God (10b).
    1. Was he a gatekeeper? Does he mean even the most inglorious position? The least privilege is still much better than to dwell inside the tents of wickedness!
    2. The emphasis upon “tents” favors the view that the tabernacle was still in use—rather than temple.
  - D. God is Everything to me (11)
    1. What God **is**—“a Sun and a shield”
    2. What God **does**—gives grace and glory
    3. What God does not hold back—“no good thing”; thus He gives the believer **every good thing**.
    4. But, such a promise is to those who “**walk in perfectness/completion/integrity**”
      - One single focus—on God and His ways and will.
  - E. The One who **trusts** the Lord of Hosts is **blessed/happy** (12).
    - To trust is to “fall down on one’s face before Him.
    - The idea is complete submission and confidence in Him.

## CONCLUSION

Do you enjoy church? Do you love being in His presence? Is there any place you would rather be?  
 Is there anything better than worshipping Him? Is there anyone better than Him? Is He all that you Need?  
**How blessed are you if you trust in Him!**

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