

“Psalms: Week 9”

SUNDAY, MARCH 2, 2025 - MICHAEL BOWERS



Summary - “Psalms: Praise and Worship”

We have been working through our study of the Psalms since January and this week brings us to Psalm 84. This is a Psalm that delivers a beautiful picture of our need to journey on a pilgrimage, not to an actual temple or tabernacle, but a journey of heart, desiring to be in the presence of God. This Psalm is a call to worship. A leading to understand true blessings, not ones that lead us into danger and dead ends, but straight to the house of the Lord and our eternal home. This is a Psalm that calls us to declare, “God, I would rather sit as a beggar, waiting for a drop of your grace and glory, than all this world offers.” Yet, God did not provide a single drop, but instead poured out His grace upon us as He offered up Christ as a payment for our sins. In this He does not tell us to stay on the edge and worship, but through trusting in Christ, the fullness of God can dwell through the Holy Spirit which lives in us as believers. We have been rescued by His grace and this should lead us to worship the one who saved us. As 2 Timothy 1:9 in the NIV clearly states, “He has saved us and called us to a holy life—not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace. This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time...” This week, as we study this Psalm and other scriptures, remember whose strength is in us, whose courts we stand in, who has rescued us, as we surrender to and worship Him alone. The Creator of Life...our Savior...our Rescuer...our Deliverer is calling us to action, surrender, and worship. Let’s follow His calling!

Scripture - Psalm 84 “Longing to Worship in His Courts”

How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! 2 My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. 3 Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, at your altars, O LORD of hosts, my King and my God. 4 Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise! Selah. 5 Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion. 6 As they go through the Valley of Baca they make it a place of springs; the early rain also covers it with pools. 7 They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion. 8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer; give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah. 9 Behold our shield, O God; look on the face of your anointed! 10 For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. 11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the LORD bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly. 12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you!

Key Apps, Websites, and Online Tools for Further Study

- <https://www.blueletterbible.org/>
- <https://www.biblegateway.com/>
- <https://biblehub.com/>
- <https://www.youversion.com/>
- <https://www.bibleref.com/>
- <https://bible.org/>
- <https://netbible.org/>
- <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/>
- <https://www.desiringgod.org/>
- <https://www.gty.org/>
- <https://www.gotquestions.org/>
- <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/>
- <https://carm.org/>
- <https://dwellapp.io/>

Further Scripture Study

Psalm 84; Matthew 6:19-34; 10:29-31; John 14; 1 Corinthians 3:16; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 2 Timothy 1:9

As you study the scripture verses provided for this week, study for right context and right questions...

Right Context:

- The verse itself and key word(s) that stand out in the verse (meanings)
- The verses around the verse, the section of scripture, the chapter, the book, old/new testament, and relation to the rest of scripture
- Author and Date (Who wrote the book and when?)
- Audience (Who is the book written to? Main characters in the story and/or text?)
- Main points and overall purpose of the book
- Historical background, cultural significance, setting, people, rulers, etc.
- Scripture references; let scripture interpret scripture as much as possible

Right Questions:

- What does this passage say?
- What does this passage mean to its original audience?
- What is this passage teaching me about God?
- What does this passage tell us about man?
- What does this passage demand of me? (Is there a command to obey? Is there a promise to claim? Is there a sin to avoid? How is this applicable to me?)
- How does this passage change the way I relate to people? (What actions must I take in response to this passage?)
- What does this passage prompt me to pray? (For God, for others, for my community, for family, etc.)

Key Thoughts

Psalm 84 is written for or directed to the Sons of Korah. The people of Korah led a rebellion of 250 community leaders against Moses during the wilderness days of the Exodus (Numbers 16). God judged Korah and his leaders, and they all died except the sons of Korah (Numbers 26:9-11). The sons of Korah were also from the Levitical tribe. The Levites were responsible for the sacrifices and all services of the tabernacle/temple of God. They were musicians, guarded the physical location of the temple, and performed all the religious rites of the day. The Sons of Korah, who either wrote this Psalm or it was directed to, were from this lineage, which aligns them as people who would have had a very high understanding and desire to keep the sacrifices, be in the temple, and be passionate about their worship of God.

We cannot think of the temple or tabernacle like we do the modern day church. The temple was the place of worship for the Israelite people, God's chosen children. There was not one in every town, on every corner, and with multiple denominations. It was at the temple where the ark of the covenant was placed, where Moses spoke with and listened to God, and where God's presence resided. People would travel to the temple on a pilgrimage, if they were fortunate enough to do so, to bring their sacrifices to the Lord, as outlined in early Old Testament writings. Initially, this was a tabernacle, a tent that was moved into the wilderness during the era of Moses. Later, it was built as a permanent temple in Jerusalem.

We share this initial history lesson regarding the temple and the Sons of Korah because they knew the honor of their role in serving the Lord in the temple, they knew the beauty of sacrifice and the meticulous care for the temple. They would have been a part of a lineage that had done this for generations, yet they had not grown tired of it. (vs. 1-2)

As much as they understood the temple and its purpose, they were not there to worship the temple and its beauty. They were there to worship the Lord. As Charles Spurgeon once said, "There was no superstition in this love. He loved the house of God because he loved the God of the house. His heart and flesh cried out, not for the altar and the candlestick, but for his God."

The traditions, ordinances, or practices passed down through generations were meaningless if they did not lead them to worship the God who instructed those practices.

As we read through verse 2, the Psalmist makes it clear that there is a longing, a desire inside of us that's only ever going to be satisfied when we are in the presence of God, moving in the will and direction God is leading.

The wrong desires become a well that keeps going dry. We have to go deeper and deeper to find satisfaction because we are searching for fulfillment and peace from things, items, careers, and people that were never designed to fulfill our heart and flesh.

Key Thoughts

Many of our longings and desires are misplaced. When we attain some of those items, relationships, or goals, we recognize that they are almost moving targets, always getting further and further from where we are standing and often requiring us to make choices that cost us the things that matter the most as a sacrifice to get there.

- We may have longings for a specific dollar amount, a different house, a different spouse, a different place and begin to worship these things rather than God.
- Our desire might be for control, yet it is leading us to emptiness, anger, frustration and broken relationships.
- Our longing might be a relationship with a specific person, but it may be costing us friendships or family that we are leaving behind.
- Our desire might be a different seat on the organizational chart at work, but we surrender deep friendships, and perhaps even character, to get there.

The Psalmist even reminds us that God truly cares for us and all of His creation, and the presence of God is where the humble find a home, the surrendered find a savior. (Psalm 84:3)

The presence of God is where the restless find refuge. The sparrow is used throughout Scripture to describe a humble, lowly, common, seemingly worthless bird. Jesus pointed out how two of them are sold for a penny (Matt 10:29). Yet this simple bird finds majestic hope by having a house in the presence of God. This is us! It's a great description, in a sense, of the people of God—humble, lowly, broken, everyday people who find majestic meaning and hope in the presence of God.

We find rest and fulfillment in our trust, faith, surrender, and worship of a living God.

- One of the keys to rest is being content.
- One of the keys to rest is knowing you are safe.
- One of the components of rest is trusting that God is in control and you are not.

We learn in this Psalm (vs 4) that true blessing does not come from anything in this world, but only from a relationship with the Lord. Those who praise God and find their strength and trust in him are blessed. The Psalmist is resolved to remind us that the good life is not about having everything we wanted; it's about having God—even if it's in the midst of nothing we wanted. We are blessed by dwelling in God's presence.

We are also blessed because the Spirit of God resides in us. What's amazing is that we no longer have to journey or take a pilgrimage to worship the Lord in the temple (1 Corinthians 3:16 & 2 Corinthians 6:16). In fact, according to the New Testament, we, through Jesus Christ, are each a temple of God. God became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus!

Our desires and longings can create highways toward God or roadblocks that distract and pull us off course. (vs. 5)

Key Thoughts

The world constantly tells us to look within ourselves, study the compass of our hearts, and follow wherever our passion leads. "You do you," we hear. Psalm 84 has no patience for such nonsense. True joy, it insists, is not having an internal compass that says, "Follow me," but one that says, "Follow God."

Blessed is the heart that isn't stuck in a cul-de-sac of self-reliance or control—full of - I must discover myself, express myself, and be true to myself—but instead, blessed is the heart that contains highways leading out of that congestion, through the roadblocks and potholes in pursuit of God and service to others. We are not on a highway for this earth to be our eternal home. As followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, we should desire and long for worship and pursuit of God while we are living and breathing, but also remember that this is not our home.

Our relationship with the Lord, the blessing of having a relationship with God and the Holy Spirit in us, leads us through at times through challenging and broken moments, and He delivers life. That is what it means to be blessed through a relationship with God. This does not negate the arduous journey, but is a reminder of our relationship with the LORD and what a blessed life is all about. (vs. 5-8)

Better is one day to sit at the temple's threshold, not even to fully enter into the temple, than make our home and dwell in the places of wickedness and evil. The threshold was the place for beggars. It was not a place of high standing in the eyes of the religious. The Psalmist tells us he would rather spend one day sitting at the threshold of the house where the presence of God resides than he would 1,000 searching for fulfillment through the longings and desires of this world. (vs. 9-12)

- God is our sun and shield (our light and protection, he reveals and protects). We are in darkness, but Christ is our light. We are in danger, but he will ultimately protect us.
- God is the giver of all things. He pours out his grace and glory.
- God does not withhold from those who pursue him.

Reflect & Respond

If God could give you anything in the world, what would you ask for? If God could change one thing in your life, what would it be?

Where are your desires and longings of your heart leading you to search for fulfillment? To where, whom, and/or what are you most led to run...to worship? What has captured your heart according to the first set of questions above? Have you found rest in the pursuit of them? Have you found satisfaction?

Are your longings and desires creating highways that honor and deepen your walk with God or away from God? In which direction do the highways of your heart run?

How can you begin to pray, worship, and cry out to God when your heart is led astray to run after the things of this world rather than running to and finding your purpose and satisfaction in the Lord? Who do you have that can help hold you accountable to this when temptations come?