

# Longing to Dwell in God's House

Psalm 84—How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King, and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah. Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. For the Lord God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

The word amiable, according to the *Webster's Dictionary*, means “worthy of love or affection.” This is how the psalmist describes the house of God. The tabernacle is the place where God dwelt among his people. He meditates on all of the blessings that he sees and experiences when he is near, or even better, in the house of the Lord. His love for the house of God is so great, that he says his soul longs and faints for the courts of the Lord. His heart cries out desperately yearning just to be near his God. This joy that floods his heart and soul as he stands in God's dwelling place is far better than any glimmering shadow of carnal happiness he may find in this world.

The psalmist then begins listing the various blessings that he experiences when he is nigh to God's house. First, he mentions how even the birds find shelter here. Two birds in particular are mentioned. These are the sparrow and the swallow. One striking feature that is necessary to notice about these two birds is that they are relatively small, almost seemingly insignificant. Yet, sheltered in the arms of Almighty God and provided for in his providence, they find rest here as do we.

The psalmist tells us that he is so blessed to be dwelling in God's house, his heart is filled with praise. He says he would rather have the lowly position of doorkeeper in the house of God, than to claim the highest position in the tents of wickedness apart from God. One day, mind you, as a doorkeeper in God's house is a far greater blessing than a thousand days in this world of sin.

Those who think that Sunday is just another work day or golf outing (amongst many other forms of entertainment) don't understand this psalm. They are those who enjoy

the tents of wickedness so much that they are blinded to the truth, and stumble at this passage. If one can't live in obedience to the fourth commandment and keep the Sabbath day holy because he is so driven by a love for money and material pleasure, Christ's command to him is:

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: for in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it" (Exodus 20:11).

(Of course, we know that the first day is the present Sabbath day because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ who is the Lord of the Sabbath.) For those who violate this commandment, the calling is for repentance. Confess your sins to God, and truly find rest for your body and soul in his house! Be fed by the word of life (Christ) who by the power of the Holy Spirit uses the preaching of the gospel to breathe life into us, and to whisper words of sweet forgiveness and hope!

Where is this zeal today? Do we really feel this blessedness and joy for the amazing privilege we have to frequent the house of God, and to hear Christ speak to us? Or do we have a hard time getting out of bed on Sunday morning, not really all that excited to go to church? Perhaps, we struggle to pay attention because we don't think about the fact that our savior and bridegroom is speaking to us through the mouth of the minister. Do we complain and gripe about the minister as the one who stands equipped with the power of the Holy Spirit to boldly proclaim the gospel with authority, always trying to find some fault in what he says when he presents the truth of the gospel and speaks Christ's words to his bride, the church? Do we look forward to communing with the saints, edifying one another with that gospel of peace? Maybe in the consciousness of our own sin, the thought of coming into the presence of a holy and just God who hates sin makes us tremble!

May this passage of Holy Scripture truly humble us to the dust in sorrow for this blessed privilege that we take for granted! May we truly delight to dwell in God's house and there find the assurance that surely goodness and mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives, and we will dwell in God's house forever when he takes us to our eternal dwelling place in heaven!