



Sing unto
the Lord a
new song

A STUDY OF SOME OF THE PSALMS

WEEK SEVEN – PSALM 84

The focus of this Psalm is **THE DELIGHT OF WORSHIP**. It reflects the longing of worshippers to be at the temple in Jerusalem. Most commentators agree that the key verse is the eleventh: *“For the Lord God is our sun and our shield. He gives us grace and glory. The Lord will withhold no good thing from those who do what is right.”*

When John led the study on Psalm 46, he talked about how when the worshippers went up to Jerusalem, they would go in groups and sing about God’s goodness and his mighty deeds. It was an integral part of the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover.

Looking at what it means to **worship**, we see that whilst it includes bowing down and singing in praise, worship can also take a different form i.e. service. **Worship is the reverential response of creation to the all-encompassing magnificence of God.** *Read: Exodus 15:11 and Psalm 148: 1-14* (Jean led the study on that Psalm, using Walter Crane’s beautiful stained-glass window in the Minster).

- What is our concept of worship?
- Do we embrace all styles, or just one in particular?
- Do we find it easy to worship by ourselves, or is it easier within a group of some sort?
- Do we delight in worship?

Read verses 1-4

The Psalm is entitled: **To the Chief Musician. On an instrument of Gath. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.** The Hebrew root *gat* refers to a winepress, indicating that this is a joyful psalm, as are Psalms 8 and 8.

The Psalmist expresses his deep longing for the presence of God and the joy of dwelling in his house.

“When David wrote about dwelling in the house of the Lord, he meant that he wanted to abide in the presence of God. Believers today can take David's wisdom to heart. We, too, should seek the presence of the Lord each day. We can trust in God's help, strength, and shelter.”

- Do we feel a strong desire to be in God's house?

Most of us are involved in numerous roles within the work of the Minster. These generally take up a good deal of time. BUT it is all too easy to be 'doing' things in God's house and neglect BEING in his house and enjoying his presence. I always remember reading about Mother Theresa asking a young man if he knew God. He quickly told her all the things he did for God. However, she came back again and again to the question: *“But do you really know him?”*

- I think it is a question we should ask ourselves on a regular basis. Do I enjoy working for God more than I enjoy being in his presence?
- Do we have that fervency of verse 2: *“I long, yes, I faint with longing to enter the courts of the Lord. With my whole being, body and soul, I will shout joyfully to the living God.”*

The NKJV verses 3 and 4 says: ***“Even the sparrow has found a home, And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young - Even Your altars, O Lord of hosts, My King, and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; They will still be praising You.”***

As ever, David's poetic language paints a vivid picture.

- In the coming days, it would be good if individually, we could pray for that same desire to be blessed by dwelling in God's presence and giving him our praise.

Read verses 5-7

Verse 5 says that those whose strength is in God and whose heart is set on pilgrimage (up to Jerusalem), are blessed. It is a picture of determination to be in the place where they could come together in the temple of God. However, verse 6 talks about passing through the Valley of Baca.

This is the only mention of this location. The website *Explore The Bible* gives an interesting interpretation:

“The location of the Valley of Baca is unknown and mentioned only here in Scripture. The word *baca* means “balsam” but is also the Hebrew verb for “weep.” (The balsam tree “weeps” its resin.) So we can translate “the Valley of Baca” as “the valley of weeping.” It's possible this wasn't an actual geographical location

but figurative. Warren Wiersbe describes the Valley of Baca as “any difficult and painful place in life, where everything seems hopeless and you feel helpless, like ‘the pit of despair.’”

Those who trust and worship God may expect to pass through the valley of weeping. The operative words in that statement are “pass through.” The valley of weeping is a place through which we pass; it is not where God’s people permanently dwell.”

We know of course that David had experienced the feeling of being in the pit of despair, and some of us may have done so.

- Does the promise of these verses encourage you?
- We have often talked about how everyone goes through difficult times **BUT** if we put our trust in God, he will bring us through the darkness and back into the light.

Psalm 30:5 says: “Weeping may endure for a night, but joy comes in the morning.” And Psalm 23:4 “Even when I go through the darkest valley, I fear no danger, for you are with me.” What wonderful promises.

Read verses 8-12

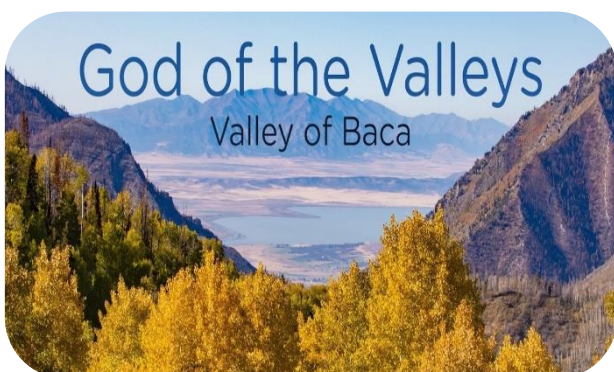
David’s confidence in God’s should encourage us. It doesn’t matter what he had done (and the same goes for us), he believed God would show him favour because he was God’s anointed.

- When we read verses 9 and 10, do we feel as David did, that the humblest role we may have is so much better than anything else in life – that is, if we are able to worship God in his house.
- What is your understanding of verse 11?

David concludes this Psalm with those encouraging words:

O Lord of hosts, Blessed is the man who trusts in You!

In the future, we may come back to this wonderful book for further study. I wonder, however, what you feel you have learned from the Psalms we have looked at? Have they made any difference in your life?



Prayer

Father God, thank you for the wonderful promises you have given to us in your Word. Help us to trust you each day, believing that you will bring us through the difficult times.

Amen