

## Longing for Home.

Psalm 84.

Sunday morning, January 9, 2011.

This Psalm is written by one of the sons of Korah. Korah was a Levite, and he was a first cousin of Moses and Aaron. He was equal in rank to Aaron within the tribe of Levi. He seems to have been jealous of Aaron's privileged position as High Priest, and inspired a rebellion against Moses and Aaron along with Dathan and Abiram. Numbers 16:1-49. The Lord's intervention was dramatic as the earth opened up and swallowed them up. Some of the descendants of Korah however survived, and in the time of David they were put in charge of the singing of the temple David was preparing. 1 Chronicles 6:31-37. As Levites, the sons of Korah would have lived in a Levitical city, or perhaps with the passing of time in several such cities. Some of these were located at some distance from Jerusalem. The author of this Psalm seems to have lived at some distance from Jerusalem, and like the priests and other Levites did, he would have done "tours of duty" in singing in the temple choirs.

### I. The voice of the exile. Vs. 1-4.

- A. The author is most likely at home in one of the Levitical cities, some distance from Jerusalem. Yet his heart is clearly not at home. His tour of service had ended in Jerusalem and he had returned to his own city to await his next tour of duty, but his heart had not left Jerusalem.
- B. This man was eager and homesick to return to his temple service. There he found his calling; there he was at home; there he had the sense that he was where he belonged, and doing what he was called and created to do.
- C. It was an intense longing to the point of fainting. Not physically, but a giving up on everything else in life so that he might have the one thing that had become his chief treasure. "My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord."
- D. Yet ultimately it was not so much the longing for a place as it was the longing for a Person, for he says: "My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." The presence and service of the Lord God were in Old Testament times especially associated with the temple in Jerusalem where God had made His home.
- E. Even the sparrow and the swallow find space to build their nest and lay their young in the various structures comprising the temple complex. And if He provides space for them, how much more for the author's longing soul!
- F. Fullness of happiness belongs to those who dwell there in the Lord's presence, and who are thus occupied in His service. "They will still be praising You."

#### Application:

Do you know this kind of longing? There is no longer a temple in Jerusalem; but there is still a temple; a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. In NT times our brothers and sisters individually and collectively as a church constitute God's temple. 1 Cor. 3:16 and 6:19. And the work we put forth individually or collectively, whether it be as a scientist or a schoolteacher or on the factory floor, it is not in vain when it is done in humble service to the Lord. Have you found your calling; the place where you are "at home;" the good works which God has before ordained that you may walk in them; a reason for your life upon the earth? This Psalmist did, and it animated the whole of his being.

## II. Pilgrimage. Vs. 5-7.

### A. "Blessed is the man whose strength is in You."

That is the man who is animated and motivated by the service of God, in whatever capacity God has called him to labor. His vitality and strength come from God. His youth is renewed and he mounts up like the eagle; he runs without growing weary; he walks, but does not faint. Isaiah 40:31.

### B. His heart is set on pilgrimage. That is, his heart is set on going back to Jerusalem; going back to God and His service, and nothing is going to stop him.

### C. They pass through the valley of Baca (literally weeping) and they make it a spring. That is, they dig blessings out of hardships. 2 Corinthians 12:10.

"The rain also covers it with pools." That is, God also adds His blessing to them from above in this valley of humiliation and weeping.

### D. They go from strength to strength; that is they are revitalized and energized in the service of God. The more they walk with Him, the easier the yoke becomes, and the lighter the burdens grow. This is not true of our old natures which are made to die more and more under these burdens, but the new man is raised with Christ and goes from strength to strength.

They also go from faith to faith, that is faith is enlivened and springs up in the process. And they go from grace to glory; that is the buds of grace begin to open up in full bloom, for grace is glory in bud form, and glory is grace in full bloom.

#### Application:

Is your heart set on pilgrimage? What does your heart long for? Is it your heart's desire to turn to, or to return to the place of the Lord's presence; a life lived in humble service to Him? If it isn't pray that the Lord would give it! And if it is, have you gotten stuck in the valley of Baca? Look for ways to dig blessings out of your hardships; pray that the Lord would add His blessing to those hardships from above, sanctifying them to you.

## III. The blessedness of the Lord's presence. Vs. 10-12.

### A. Briefly the author interrupts his train of thought as he asks the Lord to hear his prayer-song, and to remember the king (an office ultimately pointing to Christ.)

### B. A day in Your courts is better than a thousand (elsewhere).

Better to merely sit or stand on the threshold of the Lord's house than to dwell in tents of wickedness. Note: "One who sits or stands on the threshold," not "doorkeeper" which was an important position 1 Chronicles. 26:12. Also note the contrast: house – tent; permanent – temporal; righteousness – sin.

### C. Here follows the explanation of the above insight:

Only the Lord is a sun and shield; only with Him are provision and protection.

The Lord gives grace and glory; the beginning and end; the bud and full bloom.

. No good thing, does He withhold from those who seek Him sincerely.

#### Application:

It is the exiled soul that longs for home; the stay-at-homes often find fault with it; so it is with the hungry and the orphan. The author sees himself as an exile and a pilgrim; how do you see yourself? Compare also Ps. 42, another song of the sons of Korah. These are songs from the heart; how do you sing?