

## **The Highway to Zion**

We began a study of Psalm 84 last month. David wrote this Psalm when he was under attack. He was receiving much criticism and he knew that he was opening himself up to depression. The place he went to naturally to receive strength was the tabernacle of the Lord where the Word of God was taught. He longed to be in God's presence.

Psalm 84 verse one says, *"How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!"* Who is the Lord of hosts? Jesus is the Lord of hosts. In the Hebrew "the Lord of hosts" is "Jehovah of armies." Jesus is the captain of the armies of heaven. David had a military at that time that was very strong, but he knew where the real military might was. It was with Jehovah of armies. David knew his strength and the strength of the nation came from the Lord of hosts.

Verse two begins, *"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord:"* Longeth means to intensely desire, and fainteth means to groan on the inside. He says my soul groans and longs for You. David's source of strength in prosperity or adversity was always in the presence of the Lord. There are pitfalls in adversity and there are also pitfalls in prosperity and peace. When there are hard times, it is easy to lean on the Lord. It's when things are peaceful and there is not a lot of hectic activity going on that it is a real test to see if you'll depend on the Lord then, too. David sinned, but not to the extent his son did, and Solomon had a reign of peace! For forty years there was peace and Solomon got bored. One of the greatest oppositions you'll face in life is what to do with boredom. Boredom should drive you TO the Word, TO the presence of the Lord, not AWAY from Him.

David continues in verse two, "my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." The word "crieth out" means to rejoice and to praise. He says, my heart and my flesh rejoice and praise the living God. When he couldn't be in the courts of the Lord, he brought the courts of the Lord to him.

When you can't be at church, take church with you where you are. Who says you have to wait to get to church to rejoice? Rejoice in your house. I thank God for that

corporate anointing when believers are together, but grab a little piece of that anointing and take it home with you and have it right there in the bathroom in the morning, and in your kitchen, and right there on your job. I want you to notice that David says his *flesh* rejoices. Praising God isn't all within your spirit. It isn't saying, "I'm praising God". Shouting and dancing is praising God. Whenever David praised the Lord, he praised with all his might.

Verse three says, "*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.*" Sparrows and swallows have common behavior patterns. They wander a lot, but after their wanderings they come back to a nest and a home. And David is applying this to our Christian life. Our Christian life is not just staying at home, and our Christian life is not just going out. It's both. After a time of being in God's Word it is important that you go and give out God's Word. And after you give out God's Word, it's important that you come back to the place where you can receive God's Word.

David knew after fighting the enemy he had to come back to draw his strength from the altar of the Lord.

What is the altar? The altar is the place of sacrifice. It represented the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was the place where the blood was shed. When Jesus went to the cross, this was the time when God was satisfied as the sins of the world were poured out on the Lord Jesus Christ. If there was one place David's soul longed to be, it was with the work of the Lord Jesus.

It also says in verse three that that is where the birds have their young. People are born into the Kingdom of God at the cross. They begin at the same place to which we return. It's the blood that got us born again, and it's the blood that keeps us clean. I John 1:7 says, "... *and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son, cleanseth us from all sin.*" It's important that after you go out into a busy world and do the different things that you do, that you return to the place of God's satisfaction with you - the place of peace inside you.

Recently I was preparing for several sermon series to teach in my church, and I had to decide which series to teach. I had some turmoil in the inside of me. I had to stop and get before the Lord to find out what was going on. And the Lord pinpointed on the inside of me what he wanted me to teach next. It was something he had already shown me, but I thought I could put it off until some other time because I really wanted to teach something else. I had begun to try to make what I wanted God's will. Have you ever done that? So that morning I said, "Well Lord, that's it - I'll do it." And immediately peace came over me. You have to come back to that place where the inward witness lines up with God. You need to follow peace.

Verse four begins, "Blessed are they who dwell in thy house:" Dwell doesn't mean that you are there all the time. Having a home doesn't mean you are there twenty four hours a day. A home is a place from which you go and a place to which you return. Verse four continues, "... they will be still praising thee." This verse really says they will be *ever* praising thee. Even when you are not at home you can praise Him. Home is also the place where you go to bed at night. It's the place where you get refreshed to face another day. It's the place that in this world of uncertainties that you can go to where things are solid. It's a place of retreat. Well God has given us a retreat in a world that's full of chaos. He's given us the courts, and the altar of His Word.

At the end of verse four is a Selah. The word Selah simply means a rest. At a Selah the singers stop, but the music keeps on going. In this particular case the choir has stopped and the harp keeps on playing so that the people can reflect on what they just heard. Selah also indicates a change in direction.

Verse five begins, "*Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee;*" You've gotten your strength from the Lord and from the courts of the teaching of God's Word. You have the areas of rest on the inside of you, and are at peace with God at His altar. You've set up your home in God's house. Now that you've drawn your strength from the Lord it is important that you go out in the strength of the Word that you've taken.

For many years there was a drought of God's Word in this nation. But when God's Word suddenly came around and people started hearing it, there was a tendency for many people to sit down and just listen, and not to go out and do

anything with it. The Word of God is come for us to take in and then take out there to the world to give to them.

David continues verse five, "... in whose heart are the ways of them," which in the Hebrew says, "in whose heart are the highways to Zion." Zion was the place of rejoicing and praise unto the Lord. It would have been great to live in Zion all the time. It would be great to go to church and stay there all the time. What some people want to do is to have communes where all the Christians live together and feed off each other. But the Word of God tells us He hasn't called us to do that. He's called us to be IN the world but not OF the world. The world shouldn't influence us but we should influence the world. I know it would be great to work around Christian people all the time, but if we all did that the world would die and go to hell and all the Christians would be eating and drinking and having a good time with each other. He's called us to go out into the world and as we go, it is His desire that we take Zion with us. Within our hearts we have the highways to Zion so that no matter where we are we have a road map on the inside of us that leads us directly to the throne room of God. We can always go to that place of rejoicing, because we carry it around with us.

The world can be rough. You go to your job, and rub elbows with worldly people all day. You listen to their language. You see the things they do and detest them, but you know God has placed you there to be the salt of the earth. In other words, God has called you there to change that situation. You change that situation with the strength you have inside you from being in the courts of the Lord. Inside of you are the highways to Zion enabling you to make every situation an opportunity to rejoice before the Lord.

Now look at verse six. "*Who ...*" who? You who have the highways to Zion on the inside of you. You who have been rejoicing in the courts of the Lord. You who have rejoiced before the altars of the Lord, and have made the house of the Lord your home. It says, "*Who passing through the valley of Baca ...*" The valley of Baca is a desert and represents a valley of tears and depression. God has not said that He'll lead you around every valley. He never said that every time you come to a problem He'll lift you up and carry you over it so that your tender little feet will never touch the

problems of this world. Nor has God ever declared that when you get born again and spirit filled and start to walk by faith that you will never have another problem in life. Stepping out by faith marks you. Not only does God see your faith, but the devil sees your faith and he comes around to attack.

David goes on to say, *"Who passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well"*. "Make it a well" is better translated, "Make it a fountain." In a place of drought you can turn every circumstance around. Who ever heard of one man who had the power to turn a desert into a fountain? But you do, because in every situation you face, even if it is a situation which brings tears to your eyes; out of your inward man you can turn that thing around.

It says at the end of verse six, *"... the rain also filleth the pools."* The Hebrew says, "The early rain covers it with the blessings of God." Rain in the Word of God is a type of the grace of God. In Matthew chapter five it states *"for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."* God sends His grace to everyone. He doesn't send rain only to the Christians' farms and not to the sinners' farms. Have you ever noticed that sinners don't have a shadow over them while the Christians get to walk in the sunshine? God's grace is equal to all. Every person has the same opportunity to get born again. The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared unto *all* men.

In review, this verse is saying when you tap into the highways of Zion that are on the inside of you, when you draw from the fountain on the inside of you and turn that valley you're in into a fountain, that God sends his waters of Grace and covers the pools, or covers the whole situation with His blessings.

How many times have YOU gotten into trouble and begged God to get you out of it? You had enough Word to knock the devil flat on his back, but you just pleaded and pleaded for the grace of God. But, the Bible talks about two types of grace. One is the grace of God that brings salvation and the other is in James chapter four. It says, "But he giveth more grace". He won't give you "more grace" until you use the grace that He's already given you. Once you've used the fountains that He has given you, He will send the early rain.

The early rain was to water the seeds and cause them to grow. When you are in the middle of a hard situation, you can use your faith at that particular moment and cause the fountains to come forth. But do you know what God does in His grace? He sends the early rain to cause blessings to come up later. Many of the blessings you're walking in today began some time ago. It's all an out-pouring of the grace of God.

Has God ever sent a blessing along your way that you weren't even expecting? You just thought, "Where in the world did this come from? " Many of your crops were planted back there in the valley of tears. When you used your faith and drew out the highways to Zion that were on the inside of you, you caused the fountains to come forth. And because you did your part, God poured out more grace and He sent the early rain blessing on top of that to water seeds to come up later. Aren't you glad God does that? Hallelujah!

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