



GROWING UP IN GOD
A JOURNEY THROUGH THE PSALMS OF ASCENT

Session 16 March 2012

Psalm 84 NKJV

*The Blessedness of Dwelling in the House of God
To the Chief Musician. On an instrument of Gath. A Psalm of the sons of Korah.*

*How lovely is Your tabernacle,
O LORD of hosts!*

*² My soul longs, yes, even faints
For the courts of the LORD;*

My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

*³ 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.*

*⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in Your house;
They will still be praising You. Selah*

*⁵ Blessed is the man whose strength is in You,
Whose heart is set on pilgrimage.*

*⁶ As they pass through the Valley of Baca,
They make it a spring;
The 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 O God, behold our shield,
And look upon the face of Your anointed.*

*¹⁰For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand.
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
¹¹For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
The LORD will give grace and glory;
No good thing will He withhold
From those who walk uprightly.
¹²O LORD of hosts,
Blessed is the man who trusts in You!*

Here we are then, at the climax of our journey, blessing the Lord in His house, no longer looking upward to where we want to get to, we have arrived and we are in His Presence, we know we are seated with Christ in heavenly places, and we are living and worshipping from that place of abiding.

‘...blessed is the man...whose heart is set on pilgrimage’- has been the major theme of our studies - the highway in our heart, a heart which is **set** on pilgrimage...

We’ve learnt a little about ‘setting our hearts’ during our journey together...

We have learnt so much about God and about ourselves. We have learnt that mostly He doesn’t change the other fellow, He seeks to change us...probably our hardest lesson; and He seldom changes our circumstances, but uses our circumstances to change us...and that thanksgiving, praise and worship – continually - is the way into His presence.

God likes to be appreciated.

A little ‘Thank You’ here and there...

There’s so much to thank Him for continually...

Hebrews 13: 15 NASB

¹⁵Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.’

Louie Giglio in his little book ‘The air I breathe’ – says “continually” means a huge adjustment is in order...

A continual sacrifice of praise takes two forms – words and deeds.

We can bless God with our lips but our deeds can speak something else...

Blessing God in our deeds will encompass all, not part of our lives -

- *Our time*
- *Our agenda*

- *Our thoughts*
- *Our desires*
- *Our dark nights*
- *Our joys*
- *Our bank account*

We have nothing except it originates in Him.

Everything we are is *in* Him, everything we have is His...we were created for His pleasure and He wants worship to be a *continuous* way of life for us...

But isn't that why we made the journey in the first place?

So that we could become worshippers in spirit and in truth *continually*?

So that we could become what the Father is seeking?

John 4:23 NASB

²³ But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshippers.'

Before you accuse me of elitism – I didn't write it!

Wasn't that our original intention?

'One thing I ask of the Lord, that, will I seek...'

Psalms 27: 4 NASB

*'One thing I have desired of the LORD,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the LORD
All the days of my life,
To behold the beauty of the LORD,
And to inquire in His temple.'*

To become something 'other than'...?

To become worshippers, growing up, no longer children, tossed to and fro?

That's what our journey is all about.

Giving thanks and worshipping in all circumstances – it's called growing up in God.

Seeing beyond the natural, beyond the circumstances and loving Him in all of life's changing scenes...going from nepios to huios, 'grown ups' who know the Father's heart and His intention...

We are talking about a relationship with God which is earthed in **continuous** connection with Him, making Him the focus of our attention, putting the first commandment first...relationship before function...

Instead of the other way around...

Loving Him for Who He is, not for what we can get out of Him...

Becoming what **He** intends.

Christ-like.

Hearing from Him and doing what He says...

Recognising that we are a race of people never before seen on the earth – a people whose God **indwells** them...

His instruments to bring heaven to earth...

'Thy will be done, on earth, as it is in heaven.'

That **His will** might be done, on earth as it is in heaven...

That's new – doing what He wants, not what we want...

'God please bless...'

Maybe this is why we lost so many on the way up...counting the cost of obedience they found they just couldn't pay it...couldn't pay the Man...

Ever been there?

God asking something of you that you think is too high a price to pay?

Measured in the light of eternity is anything too great a price to pay?

Only if we are in ownership rather than stewardship...

"Mine, mine, mine"

If we see things as being 'ours', rather than seeing we are here to look after it...

Easy path to slip on to...

We slide off the 'agape' road, the road of love, which leads straight to His heart, and into the ditch – there are two you know – ditches that is - one either side of this 'love' road, one leads into striving and religious activity without relationship, the other, back into Egypt, into the world, the place from which we were delivered...

Narrow is the way...few there be...

But God is no man's debtor...

'He is no fool who gives that which he cannot keep for that which he cannot lose...'

Selah – pause and think calmly about that.

It is from this place we enter the deeper life in Christ – where He becomes all to us and everything else is secondary.

'For me to live is Christ, to die is gain...'

Becomes a reality.

So when you say *'for me to live is Christ...'* you're looking at a total package.

God knows how inclined we are to give Him everything in a moment of emotion or difficulty – *'God I'll do anything...'* that's why the true test of a worshipper isn't what he or she says, but how he or she lives...

24/7

Psalms 84 expresses in praise to God the wonderful effect worship has upon the soul. *"How blessed is the man whose strength is in You, in whose heart are the highways to Zion! Passing through the valley of Baca [weeping] they make it a spring; the early rain also covers it with blessings" (vv. 5-6).*

If you are "ever praising" God (Ps. 84:4), your worship of God will transform the negative assault of the enemy into "a spring" of sweet refreshing waters.

No matter what befalls a worshiper, their *'valley of weeping'* **always** becomes a spring covered *'with blessings.'* You cannot successfully engage in warfare, nor pass safely through the wilderness of this life, without first becoming a worshipper of God...

We were created for His pleasure; we were not created to live for ourselves but for Him. And while the Lord desires that we enjoy His gifts and His people, He would have us know we were created **first** for His pleasure. In these closing moments of the age, the Lord desires a people whose purpose for living is to please Him with their lives. In them, He finds His reward for creating man. They are His worshippers. They are on earth only to please God, and when He is pleased, they are pleased -

*He and I in that deep glory
One bright joy shall share -
Mine to be forever with Him
And His - that I am there!*

Romans 12: 1 – 2 The Message

¹⁻² *So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-*

adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.'

Do you remember how we started this journey together?

At the risk of repeating myself, it was like this –

"We have looked at that mountain and longed to scale it – but sometimes even before we have reached the first level we find that we have neither the resources nor the resolve to complete the climb. We have suffered losses; maybe we just did not count the cost before embarking on the climb..."

We all have a story to tell, we are all on a journey – life with God is not a destination, it is a journey, so we must train ourselves to pay attention to His presence in at all times and in everything.

*A question we need to ask ourselves at this point then is - do we really **want** to walk with God?*

*Do we **want** to follow His plan for our life as it unfolds on the stage of history?*

Are we willing to give Him our dreams and allow Him to show us what His dream for us is?

Do we want to make this climb?

Do we desire a heart which is set on pilgrimage?

Just stop right there for a moment before you continue and answer that question before you go any further. God will not love you any the less whatever you choose, but choose you must because there is a cost involved...

The path up the mountain will separate you from other people; it is a place where you and He walk alone together, it is a place where only His voice is heard; it is the path of unknowing...it is the path of misunderstanding – others will not understand where you are going – it is the path of the closed mouth and the open heart...apprenticed to our Master, Jesus, we learn our 'trade' as we go, in communion and community with Him, the Father and the Holy Spirit. We describe ourselves as disciples...but we are also pilgrims, people who spend our lives going somewhere, going with God to God, and whose pathway is the Way, Himself, Jesus Christ.

To follow Him, to walk with Him on the high places requires rigorous concentration and discipline. It requires passion, daily sacrifice and service. It requires that He be your focus, your lodestar, your intention, your goal, your all sufficiency...

...there are no short cuts; the climb is arduous at times, but our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ, through the indwelling Holy Spirit. (1 John 1:3)

And everything we do is for an audience of just One.

'Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage...'

The natural man's heart has many pathways, diverse and destructive, but the heart that has been touched deeply by God's grace has a single highway. It is a narrow one, and it is the King's Highway, it leads up to the presence of the King Himself.

The starting point for true pilgrimage is a deep, deep desire for God Himself; as we raise our level of God consciousness, as we 'lift our eyes to the hills from whence cometh our help' as we look up to Him, we begin to see we are designed, we are destined as a race, a nation, a people, for something so noble, so much more than the commonplace, we have destiny, we have purpose, we have identity and security and God issues an invitation to us to walk with Him.

Enoch walked with God and he was not...

Noah found favour with the Lord...

Abraham was His friend..."

Moses talked with Him as a man speaks with his friend..."

It is all about that most precious gift, friendship with God – where you live in His heart, hear His heartbeat, think what He thinks, say what He says...

What a beautiful thought...

Almighty God wants to befriend **you**?

He wants heaven to come to earth through you...you are His instrument for getting His will done...

He wants to share His secrets with you...as with a friend...*'shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing?'* Genesis 18:17

'You are My friends if...' John 15:14

There's a cost beloved...

No cheap grace...

All or nothing...

All and only...

He doesn't share the secrets of His heart with the casual enquirer...

He loves you unconditionally - 100% all the way, all the time; but that isn't the issue here, the issue here is your degree of response...30%, 60%, 100%.

If you are still with me, you have made some serious decisions during our time together and your heart is indeed *'set on pilgrimage'*...whatever the personal cost because you have weighed it all in the light of eternity...

You have recognised you only get one shot at this life...

And you want to make it count for something that will last...

A 100% response.

No pressure though, He isn't going to love you any the less, He loves all the way, all the time, it's just the way He is...

But He *is* looking for someone to volunteer to bring heaven to earth -

⁸ I heard the voice of the Lord, saying: "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us?"

Then I said, "Here am I! Send me."

Isaiah's response – Isaiah 6:8.

God is looking for someone who will walk with Him, drink His cup, love what He loves, hate what He hates – and incidentally He only has one person he hates and that is the enemy - no human being is His enemy or our enemy...not the paedophile, not the terrorist, not the rapist, not the murderer, not the one who hurt you...none of them...

He's paid the price in full – TELIOS - it is **done** the debt is paid.

In full.

Done.

So all that is left is for us to really become those Ambassadors for Christ that Paul talks about, to be so full of the mind of Christ and the Heart of the Father that we are doing something to bring heaven to earth...

'He is no fool who gives that which he cannot keep for that which he cannot lose...'

Just make sure you give generously, willingly of yourself to the Father, God loves a cheerful giver...

And 'faith' is never the issue.

Faith is about Who you know and have come to trust...

Love is the issue, because faith works through love...

When we know we are the beloved in the Beloved, we can have faith for anything.

Our part is easy: to believe God and abide in Him.

He does the rest.

God does not see circumstances in positives or negatives. Every situation is an opportunity for increase and advancement when we partner with the Holy Spirit. As our understanding of God grows, our identity unfolds and faith increases.

Everything can make you mighty and powerful—only believe and people will drink from the water left by your footprints, you will make your passing *'a place of springs'* as you go *'from strength to strength...'*

Let's pray shall we -

'O God. You Who created the world and all that is within it, quicken to life every power within me that I may lay hold on eternal things.

Open my eyes that I may see; give me acute spiritual perception. Enable me to taste and know that You are good...make heaven more real to me than any earthly thing has ever been; I offer myself to be Your instrument to bring Your will to earth... Nothing is more important to me than doing Your will and seeing Your Kingdom come on earth, as it is in heaven.

Lord, I surrender, absolutely and completely to You and Your purposes for my life.

Amen'

That'll do it.

No way back from there.

Enjoy...

Beryl M