

The Joy Of Worship

Introduction. As she went out of the church building she shook her head and said, "I just don't get anything out of worship anymore." Many Christians find no joy in worship. Some feel that they must "have their toes stepped on" in order to get anything out of worship. Others feel that they have sinned if they feel happy about worship. They say, "I didn't come to get entertained."

This has led to perversions in worship. Some have sought a wild emotional experience. Others have gone the opposite route, either going into cold formality or not worshipping at all. Psalm 84 shows us the proper attitude of God's children toward worship. Most of the time, when someone does not get anything out of worship or refuses to come to the worship services of the church, it is because of a demeanor within the heart (Isaiah 29:13).

I. ***His Love For God's House (vss. 1-3)***

A. God's tabernacle is lovely ("dear or beloved").

1. This was the place where God dwelled; a place of spiritual beauty (Exodus 25:8; 40:34-35).
2. In a similar manner, today Christ is among His people, the church (Matthew 18:20; Revelation 1:13, 20).

B. He longed to worship God.

1. The word meant "consumed with longing" (cf. Psalm 17:12; 1 Thessalonians 3:6). The desire was deep and insatiable.
2. Worship was most important event in the psalmist's life (Psalms 42:1-2). True subjects love the courts of their king.
3. Thirst for worship should be our attitude (Matthew 5:6; Hebrews 10:24-25).
 - a) When we miss we do not consider others or ourselves.
 - b) When we miss we cannot stimulate to love and good works.
 - c) When we miss we cannot exhort one another.
4. When we dislike worship, we fail to be led by the Spirit and seek the things above (Romans 8:12-13; Colossians 3:1-2).

C. The birds offered an example for the psalmist.

1. As the birds flitted from place to place, they eventually found a place to dwell. The psalmist had found a home like the sparrows in the tabernacle of God.
2. When we cannot occupy a seat in God's house, He should have a seat in our minds and a throne in our hearts.

II. ***His Enumeration Of Our Blessings (vss. 4-7)***

- A. The psalmist is blessed because he dwelt in God's house.
 - 1. He is happy because his desire is fulfilled. Because Christians are continual priests in God's house (1 Peter 2:5), we are blessed or happy (Romans 12:12; Philippians 4:4).
 - 2. The blessedness of worship belongs not to half-hearted, listless worshippers, but to those who throw all their energies into it. Prayer, preaching, or singing will not be pleasant or profitable to people who have left their hearts behind.
- B. The psalmist is blessed because his strength is in the Lord.
 - 1. By God's benevolent care over His pilgrims, the arid valley (of mulberry trees, 2 Samuel 5:24; 1 Chronicles 14:14-15), already transformed by the glad hearts of the expectant wayfarers, is turned into a valley of blessing.
 - a) So many of us judge our lives by times of weakness -- living in between illnesses, financial downturns and other disappointments like divorce and abuse.
 - b) When God is your shield through answered prayer, why should weakness occasion every new chapter in your life?
 - 2. Because water is so necessary for life, it is an appropriate symbol for divine favor and blessing (John 4:14). God showers continual blessings on us (Acts 3:25-26; John 20:29; Romans 4:7). God cares for His children today (2 Timothy 2:19).
 - 3. Far from being wearied they gather strength as they proceed. Like a gravitational force, the nearer the goal, the stronger its pull.

III. ***His Prayer Of Praise To God (vss. 8-11)***

- A. The psalmist called on God to hear his prayer.
 - 1. He referred to Him as the "Lord of hosts."
 - a) This identified God as the great, self-existent Leader of the "angel's armies."
 - b) He has all creatures under His command, and has all power in heaven and earth.
 - 2. But he also referred to Him as the "God of Jacob."
 - a) This identified God as a personal God, a God in covenant with His people.
 - b) He never said to the praying seed of Jacob, "Seek you me in vain" (Isaiah 45:19).
 - 3. So our God is powerful, yet personal enough to answer the prayers of the individual Christian (Ephesians 3:20; Philippians 4:6; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 1:5-8).
- B. The psalmist praises God for being able to come before the heavenly throne.

1. Serving in God's presence is greater than anything in the world. Under the most favorable circumstances of earth's pleasures, they are not comparable by so much as one in a thousand to the delights of serving God.
 - a) He would rather be a porter in God's house than a prince in the tents of the wicked (cf. Numbers 16:26). God's worst is better than the devil's best.
 - b) The lowest station in connection with the Lord's house is better than the highest position among the godless. Every man has his choice, and this is ours.
2. God is his protection.
 - a) He is a sun.
 - (1) He shines down blessings (James 1:17).
 - (2) He lights the way through troubles (Micah 7:9).
 - b) He is a shield.
 - (1) He shields His children from danger (Genesis 15:1).
 - (2) He renders His children inaccessible to their foes (Revelation 12:10).

IV. ***His Trust In God (vs. 12)***

- A. The psalm ends by encouraging everybody to seek the Lord by putting their trust in Him (Psalm 40:4; 144:15; 2 Timothy 1:12).
- B. Trust is the foundation of our joy in worship (Hebrews 11:6; 1 John 5:4), and those who submit to Him find His blessings. It is axiomatic that we cannot trust in God if we do not know God through real faith (Psalm 9:10).

Conclusion. The sons of Korah wrote several other psalms, but this one shows their love for God at its highest. Worship is a great joy for the true child of God. It is an opportunity to come before God and express our gratitude for the greatness of God and the salvation that He has given as a gift to us. But do you dread the worship services of the church as distasteful duties? If Jesus came on a Sunday or a Wednesday, what would He find you doing?