

How Lovely is Your Dwelling Place

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[0 : 00] Before we hear the preaching of God's Word, take your Bibles again and turn to Psalm 84. Psalm 84. A wonderful psalm about the dwelling place of God.

Pastor Collins will be preaching from the ESV, so I believe it will be on the overhead as well, if you'd like to follow along. Psalm 84. The title says, To the Choir Master, or the Chief Musician, according to the Gittith, which is probably a stringed instrument, a psalm of the sons of Korah.

This is the Word of God. How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young at your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise. Selah. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

[1 : 15] As they go through the valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs. The early rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength.

Each one appears before God and Zion. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer. Give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah. Behold our shield, O God.

Look on the face of your anointed. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For the Lord God is a sun and a shield. The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

O Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you. Amen. Amen. We recently had a milestone in our family.

[2 : 15] And all of the ladies are thinking, did Casey have her baby and I missed it? No, that wasn't the milestone. We went camping. For the first time ever, some of us, those who are not pregnant, those who are not two years old, went camping.

We didn't go far though. We didn't go to Potato Creek. We didn't go somewhere to a woods. We went into our backyard. And we pitched a tent in the backyard. But we did it.

I've never pitched a tent in my life until last weekend. And I wouldn't have if Casey hadn't come to my help. She explained the very simple, basic instructions of how to pitch a tent.

And together we did it. We pitched our tent. And Piper, Judah, Bodie, and I successfully, though definitely for me fitfully, slept in that tent.

But again, we didn't travel far. We just went to our backyard. But we camped in that backyard. Well, this morning in our psalm, we meet some fellow campers.

[3 : 19] Some campers who did travel quite a ways for many of them to go and to pitch their tent, to go and to camp. There are many psalms that were written for traveling Israelites as they would make their way to Jerusalem, as they would go to Jerusalem.

Those psalms are called the Songs of Ascent. Now, you may be thinking, wait, this isn't one of those songs. Those songs are in the later part of the Psalter, Psalm 120 to 134.

And yet, this psalm has the same ring as those psalms called the Songs of Ascent. Now, why were they called the Songs of Ascent? Because as those Israelites were making their travels, journeying to Jerusalem, they were going up to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was on a large hill, often called a mountain in Scripture, Mount Zion. Now, don't think mountains as you might think of those in America, like the Rockies, 15,000 plus peaks.

Mount Zion was a lot smaller than that. But still, the people went up to Mount Zion from the surrounding valleys, going towards the city. And they would sing these kinds of songs as they went, joyfully singing to the Lord, ascending Mount Zion to go to God's city, to go to God's temple, where

God's presence was found at that temple.

[4 : 49] So here is an Israelite in Psalm 84, eager to be in Jerusalem. He's eager to get to Jerusalem, to ascend that hill, and to draw near to God.

Now, this eager Israelite wouldn't just travel to Jerusalem whenever he wanted to. It wasn't as though if you just on a whim wanted to go, you would make a trip to Jerusalem, like a college student who decides, I'm going to take that two-hour trip to go home and surprise my parents for the weekend.

That's not how you would travel to Jerusalem. For many Israelites, they traveled days, perhaps up to a week on foot, in dry, barren wilderness at times, to get to Jerusalem.

Jerusalem, you didn't just pick up and go whenever you felt like it. There were specific times that people would go, specific times that God commanded them to go.

Three festivals in particular that God says in his word, Deuteronomy 16, you go to these festivals. All male Israelites required to go.

[5 : 56] And so this song would have been one that would be sung as Jewish pilgrims made their way to Jerusalem to celebrate these God-instituted festivals, like the Feast of Booths, or you might know it as the Feast of Tabernacles.

You can read all about it in Leviticus 23. God instituted that festival as a reminder to the Israelites of their time in which they wandered in the wilderness.

And yet God faithfully provided for them. God faithfully cared for them. Their clothes didn't wear out. Their shoes didn't wear out. He gave them food.

He gave them water. And so they lived in the wilderness, all the while God provided for them. And how did they live in that wilderness? They pitched tents.

You could say, the Israelites went camping. And so for this festival, in obedience to the Lord's instructions to come to Jerusalem, the Israelite families would go and they would actually construct tents of palm fronds, of other branches.

[7 : 05] And for that whole week of celebrating the Feast of Booths, the Israelites would live in those tents. According to the Lord's instruction, they were recreating the experience of their ancestors.

Down to the very homes that their ancestors had lived in. People traveling from all over Israel to return to Jerusalem, to return to Zion for this joyful celebration called the Feast of Booths.

And it's kind of interesting. That feast was celebrated in early fall. So right around this time of year, the Israelites would be traveling to Jerusalem to celebrate that festival, singing psalms just like the one that we have in front of us this morning.

Psalm 84. They're eager to set up their tents. Their makeshift dwelling places. While they worshiped God in His fixed earthly dwelling place, the temple.

There they are living in their tents and yet looking towards the temple and remembering God in a special way meets with us there. So they were eager on their journey to get to Jerusalem.

[8 : 23] For all of us who are in Christ, we are on a journey as well, aren't we? We are travelers making our way to our eternal home.

The heavenly Jerusalem, as Hebrews 12 tells us. We're on a journey to our eternal home with God. So the question for us this morning is, how then should we live on that journey?

And we're given three heart attitudes in our psalm in answer to that question. Three heart attitudes for how we ought to journey to our eternal home.

Here's the first. We journey with joyful desperation. We journey with joyful desperation. We see this heart attitude in the first four verses.

Let's read those again together. Verse 1. How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts. My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord.

[9 : 26] My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God. Even the sparrow finds a home. And the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young at your altars, O Lord of hosts.

My God and my King. My King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise. Selah. Selah. So we see here, there's a real urgency to the psalmist.

He doesn't just want to be close to God. He needs to be close to God. The psalmist is desperate here. He says, my soul longs.

And then it's almost as though he says, wait, no. Scratch that. Longs, or maybe your translation says yearns. That doesn't quite cut it. That doesn't describe how my soul feels.

My soul faints for the courts of the living God. This isn't a psalm that David wrote, but it sure sounds like some psalms that he did write.

[10 : 26] The title of our psalm this morning tells us it's a psalm of the sons of Korah. But David wrote Psalm 63. Listen to what David says in Psalm 63.

My flesh faints for you as in a dry and weary land where there is no water. And then our psalm this morning, one of those psalms of the sons of Korah, descendants of the Levite Korah.

They were temple singers and songwriters. And one of the songs they wrote sounds much like this one this morning, Psalm 42. As a deer pants for flowing streams, so pants my soul for you, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. So have you reached that point before? Where you really do feel that you are going to faint from hunger or from thirst.

Your legs are weak. Your mind perhaps is a bit murky. You're having maybe a headache. Maybe you're even feeling shaky from low blood sugar. Your mouth is dry because you're parched.

[11 : 35] Suddenly everything else in life matters a whole lot less. All of my energy is going towards getting satisfied. I need something to eat. I need something to drink.

That's the experience of the psalmist as he thinks about his need for the Lord. I need God. All of my focus, all of my energy, all of my desire is for Him.

Do you hunger and thirst for the Lord like the psalmist? I need Him. I'm desperate for Him. My legs are weak.

My mouth is dry. I am shaking from this spiritual hunger for Him. That was the experience of Asaph in Psalm 73.

Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. Nothing that Asaph desired besides the Lord.

[12 : 41] How do we get to that point of desperation? Like Asaph, where we're saying there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. Is it not when we see that only God can satisfy our souls?

As David says in Psalm 16:11, You make known to me the path of life. In your presence there is fullness of joy. Not a sprinkling of joy.

Fullness of joy. At your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Not pleasures for a day or so.

Pleasures forevermore. And so the more that we understand that about our God, the more that we will share the desperation of the pilgrim in Psalm 84.

The more that we see that only in God are we satisfied, the more that we will deeply and earnestly seek after Him. And that truly does make our seeking after Him a joyful desperation.

We began by saying the psalmist doesn't just want God, he needs God. We could flip that around though, couldn't we? The psalmist doesn't just need God, he wants God.

[13 : 53] I'm desperate for Him. I long for Him. My soul is fainting for Him. I know how wonderfully satisfying He is.

I need to be with God. And I want to be with God. There is no one else my heart desires. There is nothing else my heart desires compared to Him. So that's the experience of the pilgrim in Psalm 84. He's desperate and he's joyful in his desperation. And so he says in verse 1, How lovely is your dwelling place.

So he's speaking of the temple. The temple is beautiful. The temple is majestic. It is captivating his heart. The temple structure was a sight to behold.

It was wonderfully ornate. It was set upon the hill. It had imposing large walls and gates. It was wonderfully crafted. Solomon himself spared no expense in building the temple.

[14 : 55] But when the psalmist says, How lovely is your dwelling place. It is only lovely because the Lord dwells there. And the psalmist sees just how lovely the Lord is.

The temple is often thought of as a glorious structure. But it is only glorious insofar as the Lord in all of His glory dwells there.

So the temple is not the ultimate object of the psalmist's affection here. He's not saying, I sure do love a well-made building. Perhaps we have some architects who are like, I do love a well-made building.

That's fine enough. But He loves that building because it's there that God meets in a special way with His people. And so we see Him say, My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.

My heart and flesh. That's His whole being. It's like saying heaven and earth. That encompasses all of creation. My heart and flesh encompasses all of the psalmist being.

[16:00] And what is He doing? He's singing for joy to the living God. He's enraptured with the Lord. He's enraptured with the living God.

Key word there being living. Dead idols made of wood and stone. Dead idols of the heart that we may be tempted to still pursue.

They do not possess life. And therefore they cannot give life. They cannot satisfy. But the psalmist knows the living God can.

The living God can satisfy in a way that nothing and no one else can. And so that pilgrim is joyfully desperate to get to the temple of the living God.

That lovely dwelling place. Now there are others who are already there. The pilgrim is on his way, but there are others who already make their home in the temple.

[17:02] And it's birds. Kind of interesting. He thinks about the birds. Those birds making their nests perhaps in the rafters or in the upper eaves.

Small and rather insignificant birds. He mentions the sparrow. The sparrow is one of the cheapest birds to buy and to sell. Of little value. And yet he's saying, they get to live so near to God's presence.

Those lucky birds. Somewhat envious. That bird gets to lay her eggs there. At the very altar of God. And so perhaps the psalmist is thinking, if the most insignificant of birds can live so near to the Lord and be welcomed to draw near to him, how much more can I?

Like when Jesus said, are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered.

Fear not, you are of more value than many sparrows. And so here those sparrows are making their home in God's temple before God's very presence. And so what joy the psalmist had to think, how much more God welcomes me into his presence.

[18:21] One who is of greater value to him than the sparrow or the swallow. One made in his image. The crown of his creation. One who belongs to him as part of his covenant people.

And so the pilgrim is sure, if those little birds are welcomed, so am I. If those birds can draw near, so can I.

And I can come into his presence with my praises and know I am blessed. Blessed are those who draw near. And so as we journey towards our eternal home, we go with a joyful desperation.

We need God. We want God. We are only satisfied in him. And so with eagerness, we too ought to long to be with him. That's the first heart attitude that we carry with us on our pilgrimage.

Joyful desperation. Let's consider now the second heart attitude from this psalm. We journey with obedient resolve. We journey with obedient resolve.

[19:28] And we see that beginning in verse 5. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, and whose hearts are the highways to heaven, to Zion.

As they go through the valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs. The early rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength. Each one appears before God in Zion.

So we need to remember, the journey that these pilgrims were making was one that was commanded of them. God said in Deuteronomy 16.16 that they were to go back to Jerusalem for these several different feasts, like the Feast of Booths.

So it wasn't optional. It was their duty to obey the Lord's instruction. And so we see here the resolve of the pilgrim to obey. He's joining with all of the other Israelites and saying, we are going to Jerusalem.

We are going to appear before God there in Zion. That's very technical language for we're going to make our proper sacrifices. We're going to present ourselves as God has told us to.

[20:38] We've come to appear before the King who has commanded us to come. So He's filled with resolve. He's filled with strength.

And it's a strength in God. It's a strength that finds its source in Him. The very thought of going to be with God, that joyful desperation, the very thought of going to be with God fills the psalmist with strength.

It sustains Him on His journey. We know something of this when we go to visit loved ones. They may be many hours away, even perhaps days away by car, but it's the excitement of seeing them that sustains us on that journey.

Isn't it often true, unless maybe we're not so excited to go see some people, isn't it usually true that we are more energized on the way to visit family than coming home?

It's harder to get ourselves home. Well, so too for the pilgrim, and to an exponentially greater degree, because he's not just going to visit a loved one who will probably get on his nerves at some point on that vacation.

[21 : 55] He's going to be near to the Lord. It's the Lord that he's going to see. And so God strengthens the pilgrim for that journey with the very thought of Him.

And it's not an easy journey. We see that here. We're given an example of difficulty that the Israelite pilgrims faced. They had to travel through the Valley of Baca.

Now, the Valley of Baca, that word there, Baca, simply means weeping. So the Valley of Weeping or Sorrow. There's some uncertainty about this valley.

Perhaps it was an actual place that some Israelites would have to travel through as they were going to Jerusalem. Perhaps it was this arid, barren land.

Or, and I think perhaps more likely, the psalmist is speaking figuratively. He's speaking of the challenges, the difficulties, the sorrows that we face in life.

[22 : 52] And he's saying, the Lord gives strength to face those valleys of weeping. The Lord gives strength to endure. And it's a strength that marvelously transforms our perspective.

We see life differently. That's what verse 6 is saying. The strength that God gives these pilgrims makes even the barren places to become like springs.

Springs that are well watered by the rains. Springs that are pooling up with water on the land.

These pilgrims are so happy to be on their way to God that they're saying, we can endure the struggles that we're going to face on the journey.

The end is worth it. Now that's not to minimize trials. It's not to minimize the sorrows of life. But our heavenly hope of one day being with God absolutely changes how we endure those trials and that suffering in life.

We see everything through a different lens. The dry, barren places become like a place of springs. And not because the circumstances themselves have changed.

[24 : 08] Perhaps those circumstances never did change. But because our God brings us refreshment in Him. Even through those trying circumstances.

So it's His strength that holds us up through the wilderness valleys of life. So that we can step by step and day by day continue in that journey.

And some of those steps, some of those days are so very hard that the burdens of life can feel crushing to us. And yet how God faithfully sustains. How God faithfully upholds us.

The hope of being with Him is our strength. And that strength builds on itself. That's what we see in verse 7 there.

They go from strength to strength. It's a strength that's ever increasing. It's a strength that is ever growing. God doesn't just give a measure of strength to His people and then say, that's it?

[25 : 08] No more strength? I hope that will sustain you. But if it doesn't, good luck on your own. Of course He doesn't do that. He continues to supply.

It's an endless, limitless supply of strength that He has to provide. What do we sing in the song, Great is Thy Faithfulness? Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow.

Strength for today, bright hope for tomorrow. He continues to give strength for our journey, just as He did for those pilgrims as they traveled to Jerusalem.

And so with that strength that God gives, there's that obedient resolve to get to God's temple, to appear before God in Zion.

But it's an obedient resolve that involves the heart. Did you catch that in verse 5? Blessed are those whose strength is in you, in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

[26 : 08] Or perhaps your translation reads, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage. So the heart is put forward here. That place that is the seat of our emotions.

The place from which our affections flow. It's the heart of God's people that is set on pilgrimage. It's the heart that is set on the highways to Zion.

So it's not this aimless wandering. It's not that we're on the path and off and this way and that to find our way eventually to Zion. There is a purposeful journey on the highway.

And it involves the heart. Verse 5 could literally read highways in their heart. There's nothing of cold obedience here.

My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God, verse 2 says. And now my heart is set on pilgrimage. Verse 5 says. A pilgrimage that, remember, God has commanded.

[27 : 13] There's this obedient resolve. And so we see here, there is duty and there is delight. These are not mutually exclusive realities here.

It's not as though the Christian is either obeying or the Christian is rejoicing. It's not as though we are doing our duty or we are being delighted.

He's helping us see there's a delight in our duty. That's not natural to man. Duty and obedience, those are things to be avoided as much as possible.

Give me my freedom. Let me do what I want to do. I want to be able to enjoy what I want to enjoy and my duty is hindering that. So I want to get that done so that now I can have some fun.

I want to not have to listen to anyone else, be told what to do. I want to be my own man. And here we're seeing, no, the Christian answers to God.

[28 : 17] He lives in obedience to God just as the Israelite pilgrim did in making his journey to Jerusalem. For that pilgrim, God had commanded him and he obeyed.

God had said go and he went. Perhaps there were some other pressing matters at home that he would have liked to have addressed. Maybe he had other plans and he forgot, oh, the pilgrimage is coming and he was really hoping to get those plans done.

Maybe if it was up to him, he wouldn't have made the journey at that time. But God commanded it and so he went. Not with a half-hearted obedience, the pilgrim wasn't shuffling his feet as he went on his journey, just wishing he could do something else or be somewhere else, but I mean, this is my duty, so I got to do it.

He was filled with joy in his obedience. His heart was set on pilgrimage. Not just his feet making their way, his heart set on pilgrimage.

Do you delight in God's commands like the psalmist did? Is your heart warmed at the thought of obeying God, doing what he's commanded of you in his word?

[29 : 33] Do you delight in your duty, saying whatever God commands, that's what I want to do. My heart is in it. There's joy in our obedience.

So hearts set on Zion. Hearts that are set on seeking God. We are often told to follow our hearts. And it's not just Disney princesses that say that. There are all kinds of people, influential people, people of high-ranking positions in our world, that will at one time or another say, oh, well, just follow your heart.

Do what your heart says to do. That statement is never qualified. What does your heart settle? Where is your heart going? Where's the compass of your heart pointing?

Hearts that are transformed by the power of the gospel. Those hearts will be set by God towards God. So don't follow your heart wherever it leads you to.

[30 : 39] One commentator said, happy is the heart that isn't a cul-de-sac, of self-regard. I must discover myself, express myself, be true to myself.

But rather, that heart contains highways leading out of that congested city in pursuit of God. So is the compass of your heart set on the heavenly Jerusalem?

The only compass worth following is one set by God that leads to God. There's nowhere else we should be going. There's no one else we should be going to are the highways to Zion in your heart. There is joy to be found in our obedience, just as there was for those traveling to Jerusalem. Kids, if your parents or your grandparents said that it was your duty to eat candy, or if your parents or your grandparents told you, kids, you have to eat ice cream after dinner.

It's required of you. How would you feel about that? You'd be like, I'm happy to do that. I love obeying mom and dad. This is exactly what I've wanted and now I get to do it.

[31 : 56] Whatever you say, mom and dad. And so it should be with God. We should be like kids commanded to eat ice cream. Glad to obey what God has commanded of us.

And the more deeply that we know God, isn't it true that we see more clearly how good His commands are? The more that we know God, the less that we're tempted to question His commands.

The more we trust Him and depend upon Him and believe that His commands are good, then the more readily that we do obey with that delight. I know my Father.

I know He has good in store. We're going to see that good in store very soon. And so I delight to do what He has commanded. So the psalmist is glad to obey God.

Nothing was going to stop him and his fellow travelers. They were resolved. They were obedient in their resolve. And the same should be true of us. Can the same be said of us?

[33 : 02] Those Christians, they are eager to be with God. Someone on the outside saying, I don't understand them, but I see they are eager to be with God.

They are eager to obey Him. They enjoy doing what He tells them to do. Their hearts are set on pilgrimage. Their hearts are highways to Zion.

It's the second heart attitude we should carry with us on our way to heaven. Obedient resolve. And now let's see the third and the final. We journey with confident trust.

We journey with confident trust. Beginning in verse 8, let's continue to read. O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer. Give ear, O God of Jacob.

Selah. Behold our shield, O God. Look on the face of your anointed. For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

[34 : 06] For the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

O Lord of hosts, blessed is the one who trusts in you. Over and over again, the Israelite pilgrim models for us confident trust in the Lord, even as He's nearing Jerusalem.

And now He actually has the King of Israel, the earthly King of Israel upon His mind. That's who He's talking about in verse 9. Our shield. When He says that, He's talking about the human King on David's throne.

And when He says, the face of your anointed, that's the face of the King that God has anointed. So the pilgrim is thinking about the King. Maybe He was hoping to see the King in Jerusalem.

Maybe He was hoping to get a glimpse of the King in the festival. But His trust is not ultimately in the King. It's not in any human as powerful as they may be.

[35 : 16] The pilgrim traveler knows the King has been set on His throne by God. That King will only have success as God looks on His face and blesses Him.

So the psalmist isn't just daydreaming about seeing the King. He's praying for the King. He's asking God, who is King, to look on the face of the earthly King.

He's asking God, who is His shield, to look on the face of the earthly shield. Lord, the one that You have put in place to protect us, we need You to protect Him.

You are our ultimate defender. That King that You've set on the throne in Jerusalem, He can do nothing without Your protection. So He's confidently trusting in God to be His protection.

He's remembering, verse 11, that the Lord is a shield. And so God is our protection as well. On our journey in this life, we face many dangers.

[36 : 19] External to us. Satan, His forces of evil, the world that is held captive by Him. External forces that are dangers to us. Internal forces that are still dangers to us.

Remaining sin in our hearts. And so we're tempted to run after all that this world has to offer. To run after those tents of wickedness.

To dwell in them. We're tempted to get sidetracked. And to forget where we're going on our journey. To forget the heavenly city that awaits us. And to get bogged down in the pleasures of this life.

Are you tempted by distractions that come your way? Misplaced priorities that take your attention off of your pilgrimage to heaven? Temptations to despair.

Believing the lies of our enemies. That God is not for us. That God has forgotten us. That perhaps God won't even be there when we reach the end of our journey. We could go on and on.

[37 : 22] Giving reason upon reason that we need protection. We need a shield. We need a great shield to defend us. And to keep us secure on our pilgrimage to heaven.

And so we can confidently trust in God. That He is our shield. And then verse 11 says, God is a son.

And so if a shield represents God's protection, what does a son represent? It's a confident trust in God's goodness. In His provision.

In His care for His traveling pilgrim. Just as the son gives light. The son gives warmth. It's physically life-giving to us.

So too is God a good giver of life to us. He bestows favor and honor, verse 11 says. And then it says, No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.

[38 : 22] So He protects His people and He does good to His people. He is a son and He is a shield. And the psalmist can say all of that even as He's traveling through the valley of Baca.

Even as He's enduring the sorrows, the weeping of life, He continues to cling to that truth. No good thing does the Lord withhold from the upright.

Those who walk uprightly. And they do so because they belong to God. The upright are those who are His people. Those who have been strengthened by God for that journey.

In His grace. Growing in that grace. No good thing does the Lord withhold from us who are in Christ. That's a blanket statement right there.

Not one good thing withheld. God is not holding back some good from you if you belong to Him. As though, it's not as though most of what you're receiving is good, but every once in a while, He's sprinkling some not-so-good into your life.

[39 : 36] Or He's accidentally letting some not-so-good slip through His fingers. No good thing does He withhold from His people. Or you could say it more positively, all good things are given.

What does Romans 8, 28 tell us? And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good for those who are called according to His purpose.

So are you in Christ this morning? That's key. Are you in Christ this morning? Because if you are, you can be sure that all you receive is good from God.

You can be sure that God is not holding back any good whatsoever from you. If you've been with us on Wednesday nights recently, perhaps that verse, Psalm 84, 11, rings true.

Something in it you remember. Well, we've been studying the prayer lives of different people in Scripture and also in church history. And Psalm 84, 11 was a precious verse to one of those people.

[40 : 42] George Mueller. He firmly believed the words of that verse. Now this man who cared for thousands and thousands of orphans in his lifetime, he also cared for his wife as she was dying.

And he read that verse to her as she lay dying of fever. He read it to her to comfort her. Not some kind of empty comfort, as though he just kind of hoped this will make her feel a little bit better.

I don't actually believe what it says. I just hope she'll feel good if I read it to her. No, he too believed what God said in Psalm 84, 11. No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.

And so Mueller would write this. I am in myself a poor, worthless sinner, but I have been saved by the blood of Christ. And I do not live in sin.

I walk uprightly before God. Therefore, if it is really good for me, my darling wife will be raised up again, sick as she is. God will restore her again.

[41 : 43] But if she is not restored again, then it would not be a good thing for me. And so my heart was at rest. I was satisfied with God.

When she was near to death, Mueller's reading those words to her. He's believing those words as he reads them that whatever God brings to pass with his most precious, beloved wife, whatever God brings to pass, he trusts it's good.

Because God says, no good thing does he withhold from the righteous. So God is a son. God is a shield.

He is our great giver of good. And he is our great protector. And so we can confidently trust him on this journey. We can say with George Mueller, my heart was at rest.

I was satisfied with God. And the satisfaction we have now on this journey to that heavenly Jerusalem, that satisfaction now is only a foretaste.

[42 : 48] It's just a glimpse of what's to come. One day that heavenly Jerusalem will come down out of heaven and God will make all things new. There will be a new heavens, there will be a new earth, and we will arrive in that new Jerusalem.

We will come to the end of our earthly travels. But we won't set up camp for a weekend in the backyard. We won't set up camp even for a week in Jerusalem.

And after that week, pack up camp and head home. We're going to be there forever. Verse 10. The psalmist presents us with two comparisons.

They're very similar. There's a pattern to them. Both comparisons pit a little versus a lot. Kids, if you had the option, would you want a little of something or would you want a lot of something?

Well, it depends, doesn't it? It depends on what you're getting. Maybe I don't want a lot of something if it's something that's not so good for me. It depends what it is, what's being compared.

[43 : 53] So here's the first comparison presented to us. One day in God's courts versus a thousand days elsewhere. A little of God's courts or a lot of days elsewhere.

Easy call, the psalmist says. Kids, he wants a little. I would take one day in God's courts. Even just 24 hours there beats days upon days upon days upon days somewhere else.

And then the second comparison. Likewise. A doorkeeper in the house of the Lord versus a dweller in the tents of wickedness. Just a glimpse at God's door of God's house.

We're not talking full entry. We're talking standing at the threshold, perhaps getting a peek in. I'd take that over unlimited access in the tents of the wicked.

Easy call. Make me a doorkeeper. Humbling as that may be, inconsequential as that may seem. I want that over getting all that the tents of the wicked have to offer.

[45 : 00] Just standing at the door. Maybe even just getting a peek inside. Far greater than any pleasures this world has to offer. So if one day in God's courts is better than a thousand elsewhere, can you imagine how great it will be spending an eternity in God's courts?

And if being a doorkeeper in the house of God is better than dwelling in the tents of the wicked, can you imagine how great it would be in God's very throne room?

Not peeking in through the door watching as others are worshiping Him, but standing before His presence at His very throne and giving your worship, and He in turn receiving your worship from you and rejoicing over you.

That is the future that awaits us who are in Christ. We'll spend every day there in God's presence, worshiping Him for all of eternity. Not just one day before Him, not just on the edges standing at the door looking in.

We'll enjoy Him, we'll be with Him, we'll be near to Him for all of eternity. Amen. And we have that sure hope because of Jesus Christ.

[46 : 20] We were once rebel sinners, we were enemies of God, no desire for God, not a thought of wanting Him or needing Him, seeking satisfaction in anything and everything else, living for ourselves.

But God in His mercy and in His great love came to us. He came to us, the perfect God-man, Jesus Christ, laid down His life.

He bore God's wrath upon the cross so that by grace through faith we would be made right with God. It's through the death of His Son.

We've been saved from condemnation. We've been saved from an eternity in hell. We've been made right with God. And so may we never forget we enter into those courts because of Christ.

We have that great privilege of one day spending an eternity with God only because of Him. And it's a privilege that we have now.

[47 : 22] We've heard it said already this morning that we enter God's courts in spirit every time that we speak to Him in prayer. It's why the writer to the Hebrews could say, but you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gatherings.

We already get to be there in God's presence along with the heavenly host arrayed in their festal garments. They themselves dressed in celebration.

We're already there in spirit worshiping God and one day we will be there and we will be there face to face with Him. Our traveling days will be done and we will exclaim with the psalmist how lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts.

That's what awaits all of us who are in Christ. But if you are outside of Christ this morning, what will you say when you stand before God one day? When you are in the presence of the Lord?

What will be your answer? Anything other than my only hope is Jesus simply won't satisfy. Any answer that doesn't begin and end with what Christ has done for you simply won't do.

[48 : 47] So run to Him this morning. Turn from your sin. Trust in Him as your only hope of salvation that your sins might be forgiven. Jesus loves to welcome sinners and to save sinners in His grace so that you too can join with all the rest of us one day standing in the courts of heaven saying, how lovely is this place because you, O Lord, are so very lovely to us.

Our souls are satisfied in no one else, only in you. And until that day let's press on in our journey with joyful desperation, with obedient resolve, with confident trust until we stand before the throne and enjoy the Lord for all of eternity satisfied in Him.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, what joy we come in this moment to you recognizing that we are entering into your courts privileged to be welcomed into your presence because of the shed blood of your Son.

It's because of His merits that you look on us and you count us as righteous. Father, we pray as we come that we would be a people rejoicing in the salvation that we have, that we would come seeing that only in you are we satisfied.

So help us on this journey in life as we travel to be with you one day for all of eternity. Help us that we might live lives that are worthy of the gospel even now, rejoicing in you, pointing others to you and telling them of the joy that we have in journeying to you.

[50 : 27] Father, we pray that you would do a good work in the lives of all of those who are here, especially those who do not know you. We pray that they would see the joy that is only found in Jesus and turn to Him in faith.

And then equip us, give us strength as we go from here that we might live for you. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.