

LESSON 8

OCTOBER 24, 2021

UNIT II. CALLED TO PRAISE GOD

“OUR HOUSE”

DEVOTIONAL READING: 2 Chronicles 29:25-30

BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Psalm 84

PRINT PASSAGE: Psalm 84:1-12

KEY VERSE

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. (Psalm 84:4, KJV)

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Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you. (Psalm 84:4, NIV)

LESSON AIMS

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Discover why the psalmist expresses joy in worship.
- Feel the joy of worship by proclaiming the living presence of God throughout creation.
- Create a visual or auditory expression of how you appreciate worshipping God.

KEY TERMS

Behold (verse 9)—Hebrew: *raah* (raw-aw’): to see; “look” (NIV).

Blessed (verse 4)—Hebrew: *esher* (eh’-sher): happiness; blessedness.

Longs (verse 2)—Hebrew: *kasaph* (kaw-saf’): to have desire; “longeth” (KJV); “yearns” (NIV).

Prayer (verse 8)—Hebrew: *tephillah* (tef-il-law’): communication or petition to God.

Strength (verse 5)—Hebrew: *oz* (oze): power; might.

Strength (verse 7)—Hebrew: *chayil* (khah’-yil): valor; courage; bravery.

PREPARING THE LESSON

- Refer to the *Townsend Press SS Commentary Teacher’s Edition* for an additional lesson plan—with word studies, insights on teaching adults, learner matrices, etc.
- Review last week’s student assignments (“Your Life” and Your World!”).
- Thoroughly review your student book for your adult or young adult class.

WHY THIS LESSON MATTERS

There are times when the pressures of life are a heavy burden to carry. Where can people go to find relief from the pressures of life and enjoy a period of celebration? The psalmist recounts a uniquely joyful experience when worshipping in the temple.

THE LESSON IN FOCUS

You can tell a lot about a person by knowing the things that they celebrate. Many people celebrate their favorite sports team or music performer with wild enthusiasm. Some go to great lengths to plan holiday or birthday celebrations with family and friends. Others get caught up with excitement in anticipation of a class or family reunion. This week’s lesson highlights the psalmist’s excitement about participating in a glorious worship celebration. What about you—what excites you? What kinds of celebrations do you enjoy most? It is a beautiful thing to find joy and excitement in the

things of God. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, most churches closed their doors for months and worshippers were forced to access their church's ministry via online platforms such as YouTube and Facebook. The experience of being physically separated from the sanctuary worship gave us a unique way of relating to the psalmist's yearning for the house of God.

THE LESSON IN CONTEXT

Psalm 84 is one of eleven psalms (42; 44–49; 84; 85; 87; 88) credited to the Korahites, a family of temple musicians descended from Levi, a son of Jacob's. These songs reflect a hunger to be closer to God and a passionate repentance for personal and corporate wrongdoings. In the wilderness, Korah, the ancestor of these musicians, rebelled against Moses along with 249 co-conspirators. God punished the rebels by consuming them with fire from heaven (see Numbers 16:1-40); yet, God spared the descendants of Korah (see 26:11). They remained faithful to God, serving Him as musicians in the Temple. The psalmist recognizes the Temple as the dwelling place of his God. He finds joy in being in the presence of the heavenly Father. The sense of safety and security felt by those who experience God's presence in the temple is underscored by the reference to God as "Lord of hosts," the one with great armies. Jews who lived outside Jerusalem traveled from wherever they were to the Temple for the three pilgrimage feasts: Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles. The psalmist recognized that the journey to Jerusalem brought joy to those making the pilgrimage. Psalms 120–134 express similar joy about going to the Temple and are called Songs of Ascent. They were sung by pilgrims heading to the Temple. The songs encourage a unified praise that not only acknowledge the "joy of worship" but also boldly proclaimed, "This is the house of our God!"

OPENING INQUIRY (Choose from the questions below.)

1. Share a time when you experienced a joyous celebration.
2. Do you find joy in celebrating alone?
3. In what ways do you prepare to celebrate with others?

INSIGHTS

Christians sense a familiar comfort in the presence of God. For the believer, true worship is more than ritual—it is an acknowledgment of personal and spiritual identity. Although they may have a preferred time and place for worship, those who enjoy a genuine relationship with God are usually willing to worship God anywhere—at home, in a natural outdoor setting, or in the beauty of the sanctuary. They understand that there are many ways to worship our God. They also understand that they may experience God's presence in or outside a physical church building, and with or without the company of other worshippers. Believers' physical location matters much less than their spiritual location. God seeks worshippers with open hearts, those surrendered to Him in truth.

EXPLORATION

While the Scriptures commend us not to forsake public worship (see Hebrews 10:25), the greatest priority of believers is not their making their way to the temple or sanctuary, as much as their worshipping freely from sincere hearts. Of every responsibility of human life, none compare with having a relationship with God. In prosperity or turmoil, and in every chapter and season of life, believers should give priority to entering into God's presence through worship.

ADDITIONAL EXPOSITORY INSIGHTS FOR THE TEACHER

COMMENTARY ON PSALM 84:1-4

KJV

HOW AMIABLE are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts!

2 My soul *longeth*, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

3 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.

4 *Blessed* are they that dwell in thy house: they will be still praising thee. Selah.

NIV

HOW LOVELY is your dwelling place, LORD Almighty!

2 My soul *yearns*, 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 have her young—a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God.

4 *Blessed* are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

Psalm 84 is the song of a pilgrim who has almost reached his goal. His words affirm that it is possible to find a sense of peace and communion that transcends the ritual and other outward forms of worship. While the poetic song reflects the statements of pilgrims of any age, it appears to originate during the days of the kings in Israel, when the majestic Solomon's Temple graced the city of Jerusalem (see 1 Kings 6). The writer speaks of the longing for the opportunity to be in the house of the Lord. He conveys an intense longing—one that is soon to be satisfied. The psalmist's whole being longs for fellowship with God. He longs for God so much that he envies the birds that live within the precinct of the Temple. He also acknowledges and recognizes the fortune of those servants who live within the Temple buildings. The writer displays a deep and personal passion for God's presence and the joy of worship in the Lord's house. He affirms that God dwells in the sanctuary and receives worship there. The Lord's sanctuary is very special to the writer—he esteems it as much more than a mere building. It is a place in which to connect with God and other saints. It is a place in which to glean strength and encouragement for life's journey. Furthermore, it is a place in which to receive a divine touch for the mind, body, and soul—an enduring touch that sustains the worshippers until they meet again.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

Adult Questions:

Where do you yearn to be? What are the places and spaces which hold enough meaning and special memories to move you deeply? What thoughts or feeling do you experience in the house of God?

Young Adult Questions:

Although God is in every place, do you agree with the psalmist that there is something blessed and unique about worshipping in the house of God? Explain. What blessings have you found in worship God in the presence of other worshippers?

COMMENTARY ON PSALM 84:5-8

KJV

- 5 Blessed is the man whose *strength* is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.
6 Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools.
7 They go from *strength* to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.
8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my *prayer*: give ear, O God of Jacob. Selah.

NIV

- 5 Blessed are those whose *strength* is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.
6 As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.
7 They go from *strength* to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.
8 Hear my *prayer*, LORD God Almighty; listen to me, God of Jacob.

This section of the psalm references an actual or spiritual pilgrimage to the Lord's house. The psalmist affirms the blessing of one's finding his or her strength in God. The passing through the valley of Baca likely refers to a season of difficulty or turmoil in the believer's life. *Baca* is related to the Hebrew word *bakah*, which means "weeping." The psalmist notes that those who trust God find strength and refreshing even in the place of weeping. The psalmist declared a blessing to all who travel to the house of the Lord, whether literally or figuratively. By faith, the devoted disciple seeks God intentionally, trusting God for strength, guidance, and protection. God bears their burdens. It is neither personal wisdom nor strength that carries and keeps them—it is God. He alone allows blessings to unfold. Therefore, believers may trust and be confident that God hears and listens when they pray.

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

Adult Question:

Share an experience whereby worshipping God gave you the needed strength to endure either new terrain or troubled terrain.

Young Adult Question:

Share a time when you experienced the super- natural strength of God when you expected to be drained and weak. Specifically, what does the strength of God look like?

COMMENTARY ON PSALM 84:9-12

KJV

- 9 Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed.
10 For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.
11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield: the Lord will give grace and glory: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.
12 O LORD of hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in thee.

NIV

9 Look on our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one.

10 Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked.

11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless.

12 LORD Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

These final verses speak of the joy of worship in God's house. After a short prayer for God's anointed king, the psalmist describes the joy of joining others in the service of worship. One day in worship, he declares, is better than one thousand days anywhere else. He would rather be the humblest servant in the Lord's Temple (or to proceed farther than the door) than to have a permanent residence where wickedness runs rampant. Then the psalmist begins to celebrate the goodness that God bestows upon the righteous. He writes of God's protection and provision by comparing God to a sun and shield. Like the chief heavenly body in the physical realm, God is the sole source of all our spiritual power, energy, and light. He is our protection, giving needed grace in this life and glory in the life to come. Those who trust in God find in Him a certain blessedness—that is, a happy and peaceful existence experienced through spiritual worship. Connecting with others only strengthens and heightens the worship experience. In verse 9, the psalmist intercedes on behalf of the nation's leader, the king. In every generation, it is right and appropriate to pray and seek God's favor on behalf of those who lead the nation. The psalmist concludes the song with the third "blessed" statement (verses 4, 5, 12)—"blessed is the one who trusts You."

DISCUSSION STARTERS

(Please review the appropriate student book's related biblical exposition section.)

Adult Question:

Share some ways that worshipping in the sanctuary has helped you to remain connected to God. Use your own testimony to invite others to join your Christian community.

Young Adult Question:

How can you tell when a person has a genuine love for God's house? Describe the actions of a professing believer (one claiming to be Christian) who has no love for God or regard for God's house.

LIFE APPLICATION

Refer to Adult Book

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—Analyze your worship routines. In addition to Sundays, what times do you spend at church, seeking to serve? When you serve, in which ways do you sense or experience God's presence?

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—Analyze your church's demographics. What is the makeup (age, gender, etc.)? Where do the people live? With a small group, analyze the data and seek to engage people in the gaps.

Refer to Young Adult Book

(See student lesson's "Your Life" section.)

—Do you love God because of who He is or because of what you expect Him to do for you? God has all power, but He is not obligated to fulfill every believer's wishes and desires like a genie in a bottle. Imagine the confusion that would occur in the world if God said yes to everything His

people ever asked Him to do. Find your joy in living in God's presence and doing His will. Blessings will find you as you learn to say yes to Him.

(See student lesson's "Your World!" section.)

—Many young adults been fooled into thinking that there is greater joy and pleasure in saying yes to sin than in living for God and obeying His commands. But there is no comparing the temporary pleasures of sin to the lasting joy and eternal blessings of living in God's will. Despite any earthly optics, sin always comes with a heavy price tag. Therefore, keep your eyes on doing God's will.

NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

The lesson topic for Sunday, October 31, 2021, is "I Just Want to Celebrate." The Devotional Reading text is Ephesians 5:15-20, the Background Scripture text is Psalms 147–150, and the Printed Text is Psalms 149:1-5; 150:1-6.

CLOSING PRAYER

Lord, remind us that the church we call ours truly belongs to You. With Jesus, our Savior, as the chief cornerstone, it is a house of prayer for all people, a place where Your name is hallowed and Your presence is felt. Thank You for every moment we are privileged to enter Your sanctuary. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

HOME DAILY BIBLE READINGS

PRAISE GOD WITH MUSIC

(October 25-31, 2021)

MONDAY, October 25: "A Song of Praise Is Fitting" (Psalm 147:1-7)

TUESDAY, October 26: "David's Music Soothes Saul" (1 Samuel 16:14-23)

WEDNESDAY, October 27: "Paul and Silas Sing in Prison" (Acts 16:23-26)

THURSDAY, October 28: "Praise the Name of the Lord" (Psalm 148)

FRIDAY, October 29: "Psalms, Hymns, and Spiritual Songs" (Colossians 3:12-17)

SATURDAY, October 30: "Making Melody to God" (Psalm 149)

SUNDAY, October 31: "Praise God with Musical Instruments" (Psalm 150)

