

MY PREFERRED PLACE

There is no place I would rather be than in the house of the Lord!

KEY POINTS

- ❖ The heading of Psalm 22 tells us that this psalm is a “Song of Ascents” written by David. It is one of a group of psalms people would sing as they began the climb from the Judean plain up to Mount Zion, where the Temple stood; hence the term “song of ascent.”
- ❖ This was actually a really big deal. People did not go to the Temple on a weekly basis as we attend church today. In fact, they only came three times a year for the feasts God commanded the men of Israel to attend:
 - Passover: “The Feast of Unleavened Bread,” celebrating Israel’s deliverance from Egypt
 - Shavuot: “The Feast of Weeks,” 7 weeks after Passover—a harvest festival (a.k.a. “Pentecost”)
 - Sukkot: “The Feast of Tabernacles,” commemorating Israel’s 40-year journey of judgment through the wilderness
- ❖ We need to give thanks to God that we have access to Him in His house as frequently as we do. To gather with the people of God, to feel His presence and to hear His word is an incredible honour and privilege we too often take for granted.
- ❖ Psalm 84 is a beautiful meditation regarding the house of the Lord that comes to us from a rather unlikely source: the sons of Korah. This is the same Korah from Numbers 16 who came forward with a number of his friends to challenge the authority and special anointing God had placed upon Moses and Aaron.
- ❖ God’s judgment against them was swift and severe, so it might seem logical that his descendants would dutifully toe the line and do their jobs without murmuring to avoid the fate of their forefather.
- ❖ However, the language the sons of Korah use in Psalm 84 is not the language of servitude or duty, of obligation or, worse, of bitterness. It is actually ‘heart’ and ‘love’ language that speaks of longing and desire.
- ❖ “My soul longs ... even faints” they say. “My heart and my flesh cry out” (v 2). These Korahites had a deep desire for God and a deep desire to be in His house: “I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than dwell in the tents of wickedness” (v 10).
- ❖ These sons of Korah had the same feeling and desire for the house of God that Obed-Edom had. He had had the Ark of the Covenant in his home for three months and was greatly blessed by God as a result (2 Samuel 6:9-11).
- ❖ And when the Ark was moved to Jerusalem, he followed it and became a doorkeeper for the Ark (1 Chronicles 15:24). No doubt he was thankful for the blessings the Lord had given him, but in his mind it was much more important to stay close to the blessing (i.e. the physical representation of God’s Spirit).

KEY SCRIPTURES:

Psalm 22, 84; Exodus 25:1-9; Deuteronomy 16:16-17; Revelation 1:4-6

- ❖ The psalms we have looked at detail four very important elements concerning our church services:
 - We go to the house of the Lord (Ps. 122:1)
 - We give thanks to the Lord (Ps. 122:4)
 - We praise God in the sanctuary (Ps. 84:4)
 - We pray to our God (Ps. 84:8)
- ❖ God desires to dwell among His people and for them to come close to Him. Whenever Israel would come to a new campsite, they would first set up the Tabernacle, then all the tribes would camp around it, three on each side (see Numbers 2). God’s house and God’s presence was in the very centre of everything they did!
- ❖ And we also need to remember Moses’ instruction to the people in Deuteronomy 16: that we should “not appear before the Lord empty handed” (vv 16-17).
- ❖ Yes, as we come to the house of God, we need to bring significant financial gifts to Him. This is a very important part of our thanksgiving to God—He is the sole supplier of every good and perfect gift we have received. Our giving is a clear acknowledgment that we recognize God as our source, provider and blessing.
- ❖ Revelation 4:4-6 reminds us that we no longer delegate our worship to priests and Levites. God has made all of us to be kings and priests in His kingdom. Therefore, every one of us is responsible to bring the very best of our praise, prayer, worship and offerings to our great God who dwells in our midst.
- ❖ The house of God needs to be the destination we favour most. Our preferred place.

DISCUSSION/REFLECTION TOOLS

1. Have there been times when you chose not to come to the house of the Lord? What was the basis of your decision? (E.g. an extra shift at work, tiredness, etc.) Conversely, have you ever decided to go to the house of the Lord “in spite of”? What drove you to make this decision? (Were you facing a particular circumstance?)
2. Psalm 84 tells us of the desire the sons of Korah had for God. What scriptures best reflect your desire? Explain.
3. “Better is one day in your courts than ____”? How would you fill in this blank?

Prayer Time

Lord, it is my desire to live for You and to dwell daily in Your presence. Truly the house of the Lord is my preferred place to be.

WEEK OF SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2019

NOTES

Meditate as you read through/listen to this week’s message. If it helps, use symbols for your notes.

✓ (Reminds me/Confirms) 💡 (New idea) 🧠 (Think about)

👉 (Do this) ❤️ (Speaks to my heart) ↔ (Must share)

PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS

*Go deeper with your Life Group family.
CONNECT-REFLECT-DISSECT THE WORD
Your Life Group ~ Your Lifeline*

Start-up: What is your preferred place to be when the weather is too hot/cold?