

Thought for Today: December 14, 2007

Psalm 84 (NASB)

**How lovely are Your dwelling places, O LORD of hosts!
My soul longed and even yearned for the courts of the LORD;
My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God.
The bird also has found a house,
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.
How blessed are those who dwell in Your house!
They are ever praising You. (Selah.)**

**How blessed is the man whose strength is in You,
In whose heart are the highways to Zion!
Passing through the valley of Baca they make it a spring;
The early rain also covers it with blessings.
They go from strength to strength,
Every one of them appears before God in Zion.
O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;
Give ear, O God of Jacob! (Selah.)**

**Behold our shield, O God,
And look upon the face of Your anointed.
For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside.
I would rather stand at the threshold of the house of my God
Than dwell in the tents of wickedness.
For the LORD God is a sun and shield;
The LORD gives grace and glory;
No good thing does He withhold from those who walk uprightly.
O LORD of hosts,
How blessed is the man who trusts in You!**

It's refreshing to hear a psalm like this—written by someone with such a longing to be in the house of God. This psalmist knows that there is no better place to be. Even to stand at the doorway and look in to God's abode is better than reclining in the house of the wicked. The psalmist has experienced God's grace in such a profound way that he truly knows how much greater God is than everything else the world can offer. After all, God provides the righteous with every good thing. Even this psalmist's longing for God is a gift.

When we have questions without answers, when we reach out for God but can't quite grasp Him, when we want with all of our might to have a closer relationship with God, we should find some comfort in knowing that God is closer than we think. Our lives may not be as ordered as they should be, and we may not live as righteously as we ought. But if our hearts are tuned to God, and if we are seeking Him like this psalmist, then we can know with full assurance that God is here for us. He wants to be pursued, and He wants to be found. When we learn to enjoy the pursuit, then our lives can also resound with praise. Like those the psalmist mentions, we can praise God always, because we live within His grace.

Serving together,
Patrick Barber