

PSALMS

Please turn in your Bibles this evening to Psalm 81 as we continue our study through the Word of God. This is a song of praise unto the Lord and a call for Israel to return to the Lord and obey His commandments. This too is a Psalm of Asaph and was recited during the Feast of Trumpets, the feast that took place in the fall, celebrating the beginning of the Jewish New Year. Regarding the Feast of Trumpets, Unger tells us,

[The Feast of Trumpets] was observed as a feast day, in the strict sense, by resting from all work, and as a memorial of blowing of horns, by a holy convocation. In later times, while the drink offering of the sacrifice was being poured out, the priests and Levites chanted Psalm 81, while at the evening sacrifice they sang Psalm 29. Throughout the day trumpets were blown at Jerusalem from morning to evening. . . . The rabbins [rabbis] believed that on this day God judges all men, and that they pass before him as a flock of sheep pass before a shepherd.

- Merrill F. Unger, Unger's Bible Dictionary, p. 350

So with that as our background, let's begin reading in Psalm 81, starting in verse 1 and let's see what the Lord has for us as we study through His Word.

PSALM 81**VERSES 1-5**

1. As you read this you can clearly see they are speaking of a celebration. We might say, “Strike up the band!” But the idea here is a call to praise God with our whole hearts.

Think about it, what can you give to God that He needs? Nothing, for He owns everything. Thus, give Him praise that comes from our hearts. It is as Revelation 4:11 says, **“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.”**

2. We also see here God reminding them how He delivered them from their afflictions down in Egypt. He heard their cry and brought them deliverance by the hand of Moses.

3. Now the last part of verse 5 says, **“When I heard a language that I did not understand”** and there seems to be a few ideas of what that means. Some feel that it is speaking of the Psalmist or Israel in that when they were in Egypt they did not understand the language of the Egyptians. That is possible but I believe it is referring to God because of the personal pronoun **“I”** that is used here because in the rest of the Psalm it speaks of God. So it just makes sense that this too is referring to God. Then what is the point of this verse? I think one writer put it correctly when he wrote, “He did not acknowledge the Egyptians as His sheep.”

VERSES 6-7

1. God brought His people out of bondage and put before them tests. Only a couple of days in the wilderness, no water to drink, and they began to murmur and complain about the condition they were in.

In Exodus 17:6-7 we read of this time, **“Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock in Horeb; and you shall strike the rock, and water will come out of it, that the people may drink.’ And Moses did so in the sight of the elders of Israel. So he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the contention of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, ‘Is the LORD among us or not?’”**

Now some Christians have developed a mentality of God being some kind of spiritual genie that you rub the magic lamp or say the magic words, “In the name of Jesus” and He is duty bound to respond to whatever you want. Not true, God is sovereign. And God does test us, causing our faith to grow. That is what He was trying to do with the children of Israel for He knew what they were going to encounter in the Promise Land, giants. He wanted them to depend on Him, which they did not do, and that generation ended up dying in the wilderness and not entering the Promise Land.

VERSES 8-10

1. God is calling for them to put away their foreign gods and cling to Him. The relationship between God and Israel was likened to a marriage relationship, and Israel was committing spiritual fornication by joining themselves to these other gods when they were to be married to the Lord. And the amazing thing is God had done all this for them and yet they rejected Him! And when they refused to turn back, it eventually led to their captivity in Babylon with the destruction of Jerusalem and the burning of the Temple!

2. God does the same with us. He tells us that the pathway to blessings is found in our faithfulness to Him, that He is our God! And God has every intention of filling our empty souls, but what must we do? Be hungry, be open. He will fill you but He won't force feed you! If you come to God He will give you the desires of your heart because if you are walking with Him they will be His desires! Gaebelein put it like this,

Who is able to grasp the full meaning of the sentence! He is the omnipotent Lord; there is nothing too hard for the Lord. Open thy mouth, He says, as wide as you can, and I will fill it. Ask anything in My Name, He says in the New Testament, and I will do it. All He asks is obedience to Him, the yielding of the heart and will.

- A. C. Gaebelein, The Book of Psalms, p. 316

VERSES 11-12

1. As you read this you feel the pain in the heart of God and we will see this more as we conclude this Psalm. God did so much for the children of Israel and yet they refused to come to Him. Thus, God gave them over to their own lustful desires. But make no mistake about it, God's ways are best! But when we continue to reject them, He will allow us to do it our way, which is not best as we have found out many times.
2. Look at our nation and all the blessings that God has bestowed upon it and yet, look at how we have turned from Him. Paul tells us in Romans chapter 1 regarding our turning from God, that if we do turn from God He will give us over to many things, like uncleanness, in the lusts of our hearts, to dishonor our bodies among ourselves. He will give us over to vile passions. He will give us over to a debased mind to do things that are not fitting! And that is exactly what we see in our nation today. We are a nation that can't say no to the flesh nature and we do all kinds of things that do not build us up but hurt us. And God is there trying to draw us back to Him because He loves us that much!

VERSES 13-16

1. God was calling them to follow Him for He wanted to bless them and deliver them, but they refused. The honey from the rock, from what I understand, was supposedly the best tasting honey; these bees who lived in the rocks and had their beehives in the rocks knew how to make honey!

You see, God wanted the best for them both physically and spiritually and the same is true for each of us! He wants to bless us, but we, like Israel, turn from Him and we find ourselves in bondage. God does not want to leave us there, but He won't force us out. It is our choice; do we want to turn to Him or away from Him? Israel refused to turn to Him, and they went into captivity! As a people, as individuals, we need to turn to God or we too will find ourselves in captivity!

PSALM 82

This Psalm of Asaph is directed at the wicked judges who were not representing God correctly. You see, all judges or those who are in authority are ultimately accountable to God! The Lord is the Judge of the whole earth and those whom He has put into power are accountable to Him. Let's see what the Lord has to say regarding the unjust judges.

VERSES 1-4

1. God is the ultimate Judge but He has placed others in authority and they are accountable to Him. Now this word, "**gods**" is ELOHIM in the Hebrew and it can speak of God, angels, false gods, and here in Psalm 82 it is speaking of the judges in Israel. You see, the judges sat in the place of God, they were His representatives here on earth, and they held a man's life in their hands as they mediated out the various judgments for the crimes that were committed. And here the Lord is saying that He is the final judge, He will judge His judges for their actions. (Exodus 21:6, 22:8-9).

2. Now we don't have to guess what God is upset about regarding these judges. God's indictment against His judges is that they showed favoritism in their judgments. If you had money you could buy your way out of a situation. As representatives of God, sitting in judgment, they were to judge in the fear of God. It was a big responsibility and they seemed to take it very lightly. God is rebuking them and telling them that all should be judged fairly, the poor and the rich, they should not be able to buy their way out of their crimes.

VERSE 5

1. This may seem obvious to you but when you take God out of a nation, you are in serious trouble and that is what we are seeing in our nation. And what we see in the legal system, when judges do not rule in the fear of God, when they don't know God, then their judgments are unrighteous. Their actions reflect what they know, and if they are walking in darkness that is what will flow from their mouths in the judgments they hand out. And when a society has wicked judges, the whole social structure begins to decay. In Psalm 58:1-2 we see another rebuke against wicked judges. We read, "**Do you indeed speak righteousness, you silent ones? Do you judge uprightly, you sons of men? No, in heart you work wickedness; You weigh out the violence of your hands in the earth.**"

2. I realize that many may feel that I am simple in my way of thinking. They may laugh at me or call me foolish, but the only solid foundation that we have to stand upon is the Word of God. When people move away from that which is firm, solid, absolute, then you are placing yourself upon the shifting sands.

You see, this nation was not founded upon a democracy, but upon a republic. In a democracy we see that the majority rules. That means if our society is evil, then that is what will be seen in the way they vote and pass laws, and-so-on. Basically it is what we see today, people calling good evil and evil good.

And our Founding Fathers saw the evil that could come from a democracy, and so they established a republic which is based upon certain absolute truths. Thus, it doesn't matter how many people want drugs legalized, or abortion on demand, homosexuality as an alternative lifestyle, those absolutes will never change and they won't allow these things to come to pass.

Today our foundations are built upon the shifting sands, and what was looked down upon 30 years ago is embraced today. We don't know what is right and what is wrong any longer for we have nothing to base it upon, if it feels good do it, is the mentality.

Let me share with you what has happened over the years and some reasons why. We are told,

Our country has been conditioned over a period of several decades to become indifferent to immorality. We have evolved from a nation that wanted no public talk about sex to a nation that is drowning in a sea of sex. We now have entertainers who make no secret of their homosexuality. We even know of their lovers. Many who are heterosexuals have lovers without the “encumbrance” of marriage. It is not unusual to hear of stars being interviewed about the birth of their children and know that they are unmarried. Nudity, homosexuality, and profanity has recently surfaced on the major networks. Can we expect that it will stop with that? Abortion, once a taboo among an overwhelming majority of citizens, has become accepted as another birth control method.

Why has all of this taken place in our society? Books could be written on the causes but let me just mention a couple.

1. The theory of evolution bears a major responsibility for the breakdown in our nation’s morals. This is especially true when it comes to those in leadership positions in the entertainment industry, media, and government. When one looks at himself as simply a link on the evolutionary chain, morality, at least Judeo-Christian morals, simply do not make sense. If we are just “intelligent apes” then what is the harm in homosexuality, sexual infidelity and uncleanness, alcohol and drug abuse, etc., as long as it doesn’t harm someone else. Evolution is clearly a denial of God as our creator and that we have any responsibility toward Him. Evolution has permeated our society and caused many not to consider the consequences of their actions. Thus, “they profess to know God, but in works they deny Him, being abominable, disobedient, and disqualified for every good work” (Titus 1:16).

2. Humanism, evolution's twin sister, has also taken its' toll on our morals. Humanism states that man is the center of the universe. We are not answerable to anyone but ourselves. This is the philosophy that you hear so often. "What business is it of yours who I sleep with?" Every man is his own judge on matters of right and wrong. We are like the children of Israel of old. "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6) this led to disaster for Israel, and will lead to disaster for our nation as well.

3. Finally, Atheism has to be cited as one of the root causes of our national problems. There has been a concerted effort to remove God from our public life, all in the name of separation of church and state. There is a school in Alabama where the federal court has sent hall monitor (snitches) to make sure that no student prays anywhere in the schools. Our founding fathers enshrined the freedom of religion in our constitution, not the freedom from religion. The constitutional convention started each day with prayer. Is it any surprise that since the baby boomers and after have been raised up without God that restraints have been removed from conduct? Paul tells us, "because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools" (Romans 1:21-22). Is it any wonder that many think that morality doesn't matter?

- Grady Scott, Some Thoughts On Morality,
http://www.christianlibrary.org/authors/Grady_Scott/thoughtsonmorality.htm

We need to return to God and His Word for it is living and powerful and it shows us how we are to live out our lives that will not only bring glory to God but it will be a healthy lifestyle, it will be good for us! But apart from God and His Word, well, you have what we see today - ***IMMORALITY RUNNING WILD!***

VERSES 6-7

1. I am sure you remember that saying, "Power corrupts and absolute power absolutely corrupts" and it is so true! These judges thought they were gods and could do whatever they wanted, making their own laws, interpreting the law to their own satisfaction, making judgments based on their own feelings and not upon the solid foundation that God had set. Sounds like our judges today.

But God is telling them that they are not going to get away with anything. And as much as they may think they are gods, they are only men, who will be judged by the Almighty God to whom they must give an account to, and they will die like men!

2. Jesus quoted this verse in John 10:34 and many are confused by it. In fact, the Mormons pick up on this and go to Psalm 82 and use it as a proof text that they can be god's and one day have their own planet to populate and rule over. That is not at all what these verses are saying.

Listen to what Jesus said here in John 10:32-36, **“Jesus answered them, ‘Many good works I have shown you from My Father. For which of those works do you stone Me?’ The Jews answered Him, saying, ‘For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy, and because You, being a Man, make Yourself God.’ Jesus answered them, ‘Is it not written in your law, “I said, “You are gods””? If He called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture cannot be broken), do you say of Him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, “You are blaspheming,” because I said, “I am the Son of God”?””**

First of all we must go to the “Law” because that is what Jesus tells us here, not the Psalms; the law is where He is speaking from. In Exodus 21:22 we read, **“If men fight, and hurt a woman with child, so that she gives birth prematurely, yet no harm follows, he shall surely be punished accordingly as the woman’s husband imposes on him; and he shall pay as the judges [Elohim] determine.”** The word **“judges”** in the Hebrew is Elohim, gods.

Also, in Exodus 22:8 we read, **“If the thief is not found, then the master of the house shall be brought to the judges [Elohim] to see whether he has put his hand into his neighbor’s goods.”**

So what does this all mean? First of all the judges in Israel represented God before the people, they had the power over life and death depending upon the sentence. They were handing out, you might say, God’s punishment to the people for their actions, and thus they were called god’s, Elohim. Not literally God, but acting in His place, representing Him before the people. They were human judges.

What Jesus is doing here is arguing from the lesser, the earthly judges, to the greater, the Judge over all the earth, Himself. Thus, if they called these earthly men gods, how much more it is to call Jesus God! You see, look at the testimony that He has left for them; there is no denying He is God! I hope that clears things up for you that Jesus is God, and we are not!

And the thing that nails it for me is what Asaph tells us here in Psalm 82, **“But you shall die like men, and fall like one of the princes.”** You who come to the faulty conclusion and truly think you are god, in the end you will find out you are just men and you will die like a man dies! In other words, “You might be judges, but you’re going to die like every other man.” God does not die, He is immortal and thus, you are not God! Again, I hope that clears it up for you!

VERSE 8

1. No matter how much we try, man will never be able to judge righteously as he moves away from God and His Word. And so Asaph is calling for God, the Righteous Judge, to come and set up His Kingdom here on earth. It is only then that righteousness will fill this land. We long for that day!

PSALM 83

We are not exactly sure what period of time Asaph was writing about, although we never see all these nations rise up at one time against Israel, but it may be speaking of separate attacks. And the Psalmist is looking at what God did during the time of the Judges and asking God to deal with their enemies as He did back then. The focus is for God to destroy the enemies of Israel. When you study the history of these people, the Jews, you can't help but see the hand of God upon them. Even today, the nation of Israel is about the size of New Jersey, and they are surrounded by 80 million of their enemies.

Now ultimately the nations of the world will rise up against Israel and try to destroy her and her people and God will deal with them. But listen to what William MacDonald had to say regarding this Psalm and how some see a picture of the Six-Day War. He wrote,

On May 28, 1967, Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of the United Arab Republic, said, “We plan to open a general assault on Israel. This will be total war. Our basic aim is the destruction of Israel.” When war broke out on June 5, the United Arab Republic was joined by Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Algeria, Sudan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco. The attempt of this confederacy to drive Israel into the sea was unsuccessful. In six days the war was over. Israel was the undisputed victor.

For many Bible lovers, Psalm 83 took on new meaning after the Six-Day War. And perhaps it will have further fulfillments before Israel’s claim to the land is irrevocably settled by the coming of the Lord Jesus to reign as King.

- William MacDonald, Believer’s Bible Commentary, p. 675

So let’s begin reading in Psalm 83, beginning in verse 1 and see what the Lord has for us as we look at the plea for God to destroy Israel’s enemies!

VERSES 1-8

1. As the enemies rise up, the call is for God to act and destroy those who are exalting themselves against God. I find it interesting that when nations, when people come against God’s people they are coming against God. That is how closely linked God is to us and we need to be with Him. And the comfort here is that we are His “**sheltered ones.**” We take refuge under the shadow of His wings, and for the enemy to get at us; they have to go through God.

2. What I find interesting is that this hatred by those nations that surround Israel thousands of years ago is still around today. Today the enemies of Israel want them destroyed. Within days of the signing of the peace accord on the White House Lawn, Yasser Arafat stated more than 10 times - principally to Arab audiences that "The Palestinian flag will fly over Jerusalem, the capitol of a Palestinian state." He said to worshipers at a Mosque in Johannesburg, South Africa on May 10, 1994, "You have to come and fight a Jihad [holy war] to liberate Jerusalem, your precious shrine." So much for peace. And yes he is gone but make no mistake about it, they still want to destroy the Jewish people, wipe them off the face of the earth! They want the Jews destroyed; they do not want to live side-by-side with them.

As you look at these nations you will see that they have one heart, and that is to destroy Israel. It is bad enough when the enemy comes against you, but it is even worse when it is family. The people of Edom were the descendants of Esau. He was the brother of Jacob. The Ishmaelite's were the descendants of Ishmael, who was Abraham's son by his hand maiden, Hagar. He was also the step brother of Isaac. Moab and Ammon were the descendants of Lot and his two daughters.

You remember the story. Lot was taken out of Sodom before God poured out His judgment upon those cities. His wife, in looking back, turned into a pillar of salt. And only Lot and his two daughters escaped. When his two daughters saw these cities destroyed with fire and brimstone, they thought they were the only people left on the earth. So each of them got their father drunk and had sexual relations with him. The older daughter bore a son named Moab, who was the father of the Moabites. And the younger daughter bore a son called Ben-Ammi, who was the father of the people of Ammon. And Lot himself was Abraham's nephew.

And what is unifying these nations today against the Jews is they are Muslims and they have this hatred for the Jews. Keep watching what is going on in the Middle East, there is a war coming and you can read about it in Ezekiel chapters 38 and 39!

3. Let me make this other point here. There are those in the church and those in the world that want us to make peace at any cost. They want us to compromise our faith to join together for peace. Please understand me on this one. We, as part of the body of Christ must be in unity with each other, with other **CHRISTIANS**, for a body divided is weak. But we must never have unity that is not based in truth. In the days we are living in, that seems to be harder and harder to do, and yet we must never forget to contend for the faith that was given to us. Francis Schaffer said, ***“Truth carries with it confrontation. Truth demands confrontation: loving confrontation, but confrontation nevertheless.”*** May we not forget that because the church and the world are looking for us to compromise what we believe and we must never compromise what we believe!

VERSES 9-12

1. Make no mistake about it; God will fight for His people. God's people will be victorious! What we see here is that Asaph is speaking of the time of the Judges when Midian was one of the chief enemies of Israel, and God raised up Gideon who defeated them. (Judges 6-7).

Also, remember the story from Judges 4 & 5, when Jabin was the King of Canaan and the commander of his army was Sisera. And Israel had sunk so low at this period of time that they had no man who was spiritual enough to lead the nation. So God raised up Deborah, a woman Judge. And she calls for Barak to go against this army, but he is such a wimp, that he refuses to go unless she goes with him. And Deborah agrees but also told Barak that he will not receive the glory of this victory, but it will be given to a woman.

And you remember the story, Sisera fled for his life, and ended up in the tent of Jael, whom he thought was on his side, but she wasn't. And as Sisera drank the warm milk and laid down his head to rest, she took a tent spike and drove it through his skull, nailing him to the floor. And Asaph is asking God to deal with their enemies as He dealt with the Midianites and with Jabin and Sisera, nail them!

He also speaks of Oreb and Zeeb who were Midianite princes that were beheaded by the armies of Gideon. (Judges 7:25). Zebah and Zalmunna were Kings of Midian who were also killed by Gideon. (Judges 8:5-6, 12, 18).

Like back then, the enemies of God saw Israel as nothing, but God gave them the victory back then and He will give them the victory now. In fact, look over the history of Israel since they have become a nation in 1948 and you will see that they should have been destroyed several times by invading armies and yet God gave them the victory!

VERSES 13-18

1. Asaph is asking God to blow their enemies away. There is nothing wrong with that prayer. If they refuse to come to know the living God, don't let them be victorious over us. And as I have said, as you look at the history of Israel, you see God's hand upon them. And this prayer for destruction of their enemies we can pray for in that we pray that they would become a brother or sister in the Lord. If they will not, and God knows, then there is no point for them to stick around and bring death and destruction to people's lives. But again, that is up to God to deal with them, we should be praying for their salvation, that their eyes would be opened and that they would tremble before the living God!

PSALM 84

This is a Psalm written by the sons of Korah. Now back in Numbers chapter 16 we read of Korah rebelling against Moses and Aaron. They challenged his authority, his leadership, they wanted more and they were willing to challenge Moses to get it. And God chose Moses who said if this is not of God, then you will die as men die. But if this is of God, the earth will open up and swallow you and all who have rebelled with you, which took place.

Now his descendants learned an important lesson here, and we find them spoken of in I Chronicles chapter 26 as gatekeepers in the Temple. To most, a meaningless job, and yet they were responsible to keep anything impure from entering the Temple which would defile it and stop the worship of God.

That is my responsibility as a pastor, keeping those things that are not of God out of this church so that the true worship of God can go on. And this Psalm may have been written as one of his descendants stood at the gate of the Temple and began to meditate upon God.

And as you will see, there is great encouragement in this Psalm. The Psalmist focuses on the Lord being in Jerusalem and in His presence there are great blessings. There is nothing greater than dwelling with God and yet so many miss out on that today because they think things will meet their needs instead of the living God! And the big picture, of course, is our pilgrimage to Heaven when we will be with the Lord for eternity! Let's read through this Psalm and see what lessons the Lord has for us!

VERSES 1-2

1. As he looked around the Temple as the gatekeeper the Psalmist longed for the day when the Messiah would come and reign from this place. You see, all the furnishings in the Temple pointed to Christ and His ministry; it was a shadow of what was to come. And He has come as the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world and He is coming again as the Lion from the tribe of Judah to end the rebellion against Him and set up His Kingdom on this earth!

2. Now what about you? Do you have that longing to be with the Lord, to spend time with Him, to fellowship with Him and one day enter into His presence? Paul did and that is why he said in Philippians chapter 1 starting in verse 19, **“For I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayer and the supply of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ will be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain. But if I live on in the flesh, this will mean fruit from my labor; yet what I shall choose I cannot tell. For I am hard-pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Nevertheless to remain in the flesh is more needful for you. And being confident of this, I know that I shall remain and continue with you all for your progress and joy of faith, that your rejoicing for me may be more abundant in Jesus Christ by my coming to you again.”** Philippians 1:19-26.

Listen carefully to this struggle that Paul had. Paul knew that to be absent from the body he would be present with the Lord, (II Corinthians 5:8). The one he loved, the one he gave his life for he would be with and thus the dilemma. To remain on this earth and minister to the brethren, minister to the lost or be with the Lord.

Paul desired to be with Jesus but also realized the work that was still needed and so while martyrdom is a possibility here, he also tells the Philippians that he expects to be spared and minister to them, which did occur.

Paul was released for a time and then imprisoned again and martyred for his faith by Nero at God's appointed time, not Nero's! It was time for Paul to go home and he finished the race and was received up into glory in around 66 A. D.

What about you, what can you say? "For to me, to live is money?" Or, "For to me to live is a new car?" Or, "For to me, to live is that promotion?" May we be able to say as Paul said, "**For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain.**" Philippians 1:21.

You see, death for the Christian is really just moving day as our spirit and our soul separate from our body, this temporary dwelling place or tent, and we receive our new body, a mansion made in the heavens, made by the Lord. It is as Jim Elliot said who was martyred for his faith at a young age. He said, "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose." May we not forget that!

VERSES 3-4

1. Keep in mind that the Psalmist is the gatekeeper of the Temple and as he looks around he sees birds who have nested around the Temple, and he longs to spend night and day in the presence of God, just as these birds are doing.

2. As we look at this as a picture of heaven we see that those who have gone to be with the Lord have not missed out on anything! They are blessed and they are singing the praises of God. They are better off than we are but like Paul, as much as we desire to go and be with the Lord, God has plans for our lives down here. Thus, we need to obey what He has called us to do and when it is time for us to go home, to go and be with Him, He will call!

VERSES 5-7

1. Keep in mind that at least 3 times a year every male was to make a pilgrimage to the Temple, (Deuteronomy 16:16). The Psalmist is saying that true happiness is found in the person who sets his life on a pilgrimage, one that is set on the Lord. You see, we are called pilgrims because this is not our home, our home is in heaven and we are just passing through this world. Thus, we are not to get caught up in the things of this world because it is not our home. Paul points that out to us in Philippians 3:20-21 as he wrote, **“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.”** We wait for that day but until then, we continue doing the work that God has called us to do!

2. Now as we move into verse 6 the Psalmist speaks of those that are making this pilgrimage passing through this Valley of Baca. It is the Valley of Weeping. That is what Baca means. That may seem kind of strange when you think about these pilgrims making their journey to Jerusalem, to the Temple to worship the true and living God. Why in the world were they weeping, they should be rejoicing!

Think of it like this, as we go through this world, it is like going through the Valley of Weeping. It is dry, it is desolate. But if we allow God to work in us, He can take those dry times and make them times of refreshing, turn them into blessings. Those tears we shed in this life are not for nothing!

You see, that Hebrew word for “**pools**” speaks of “blessings.” Thus, as we go through these times of weeping, we can leave behind blessings for those who come through after us. We can share with others what God has done for us and encourage them. Paul spoke of this in II Corinthians 1:3-5, “**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ.**”

Paul experienced the mercy and comfort of God in his own life and thus, he was able to speak from personal experience to people going through similar situations. You see, like it or not, you are not going to be able to give to others what you have not received yourself from the Lord. We all have experiences in our lives that God has comforted us and seen us through. For me, just a few, I know what it is like to lose a dear friend, to lose a father, to have rebellious sons, to have a serious health issue, and thus, I can bring comfort to others who are going through similar situations.

You see, I can encourage them to keep praying for that wayward child because I have seen what God can do to restore that child, to bring them back and it is awesome. I have shed many tears over the years as I am on my pilgrimage to the house of God and I have seen the faithfulness and the comfort of God in my life and because of that I can bring that same comfort to others, to show them that God is faithful!

Now let me also say this. The things you are going through are not just for others, but God is teaching you lessons, trying to show you something. Thus, learn the lesson so you can move on. As you go through these things may you do so seeing the hand of God in them instead of becoming overwhelmed by the situation! God is not going to tempt you beyond what you are able to stand and the key of course is not to trust in yourself, but in God.

A. W. Tozer said, “Before God can use a person greatly, he must allow that person to be hurt deeply.” We don’t like that; we just want to be used, but in order to help you have to learn to receive the comfort of God into your own life. Paul knew tribulation, he was hurt deeply and he was used mightily.

Now we need to be careful as we go through these times because we can also allow them to make us bitter and angry, and we will not leave behind blessings for anyone! God allows us to go through these times to help us to grow and to minister to others as we experience the fellowship of His sufferings, (Philippians 3:10). The Lord will see us through these situations. That is not the issue. The issue is how we will walk as we go through them? Will we learn from them or will they make us bitter and cold towards God and others? The choice is yours!

3. And I like how the Psalmist closes out verse 7 because it should give us tremendous hope. As we go from one trial to the next, one day *ALL* who have put their trust, their faith in Christ, will appear before Him. As Jesus said in John 18:9, “... ‘Of those whom You gave Me I have lost none.’”

VERSES 8-9

1. Listen again to what the Psalmists has said here, **“O God, behold our shield, And look upon the face of Your anointed [Messiah].”** Here is the amazing thing to me. Almighty God, the creator of Heaven and Earth is high above all and yet He is very near to you and to me. We just need to call out to Him and He hears our hearts cry! And our acceptance is found only in Christ because there is salvation in no other name. In the Incarnation we have seen the face of God on the earth and as Jesus said, **“... ‘I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”** John 14:6. May we never lose sight of that!

VERSE 10

1. May we as Christians have the same heart as this Psalmist had! He is saying that he would rather be a doorkeeper for God than to have all the riches in the world and be separated from Him. Any one of us can be a doorkeeper in the house of God by opening the door to others through intercession. But too often we are looking for the riches instead of the One who owns everything! You see, the doorkeeper in the house of God speaks of a permanent dwelling. On the other end of the spectrum are those who seek the riches of this world and that is temporary! It seems obvious what we should seek after but many go for the temporary instead of the eternal!

Now let's think about this for a minute. Does God supply our needs? Absolutely, I don't think any of us would disagree on that one. If that is true, and it is, why are we not satisfied with what God has given to us? Why are we complaining? Why do we want this and want that? Why are we not satisfied? Because we are looking for satisfaction in things and that will never satisfy. Our satisfaction needs to be in the Lord and what He has given to us.

Some Christians are not satisfied in the ministry that God has given to them and they are seeking what God has called others to do. They want the ministry that others can see instead of being that doorkeeper in the house of God and being satisfied in that position. And I do love how God operates. As you rest in Him, as you are satisfied in Him, He will lift you up farther than you could ever imagine.

VERSE 11

1. God is protecting us in this journey, watching over us. He is a sun to us to warm us and a shield to protect us. Grace speaks of this journey we are on, for without it, we would be in trouble. But one day, as we finish this journey, we will enter into glory, and spend eternity with our Lord and Savior. The Hebrew word for "**glory**" is chabod and it means "substance" or "weightiness." God's grace that He extends to us in Christ is a gift and one day, being taken up to glory, that is "heavy" for those of you who remember the 70's and 80's!

Think about this. At the end of our journey He will welcome us home into glory. And, in this pilgrimage of life that we go through, we have an assurance that we will not lack anything, He will not withhold anything good from us and that is the key! We seek for things that are not necessarily good for us and when God holds them from us we get mad. Don't be made, be thankful!

There is a car commercial that drives this point home for me. It shows this guy coming out of a bridal shop and there is this woman who is also coming out. And as they see each other they recognize that they dated years ago. And she goes off and says something to the effect, "They are listening to us, our government. The governments of the world are listening to us." And she goes on with all kinds of bizarre talk and then walks away. As he goes to his car his girlfriend gets in also and she asks who that was and he tells her. Then he said, "Dodged a bullet on that one!" In other words, "Thank God I didn't marry that one!" Let us not be angry with that which God withholds because He will give to us what we need, not necessarily what we want!

VERSE 12

1. For those who trust in God, they are blessed, they are happy. As opposed to those who walk after their own wisdom, which they will only find emptiness, sadness. Can we say, "Lord, thank you for loving me! I am eternally grateful to be a Christian!?" You see, blessed is the man or woman who trusts in the Lord. What a wonderful Psalm and maybe one that is speaking to us if we have our priorities wrong. We need to make the Lord the most important person in our life and He will take care of the rest. You will not miss out on anything!