

A Home For All

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[0 : 00] I'll be thank you. Let's turn back to the chapter looked at a book of Psalms and Psalm before.

We just a few thoughts for this evening. Ideally, just as we discuss these things, think for yourself and the rest of this week and the rest of this night. Think for these verses. There's a few thoughts this evening.

A few pointers perhaps for us and a few ways that we can keep digging ourselves after leave this place. Think God willing next week and perhaps even week after.

The Psalm comes in handily in three pre-package sections for us. So it's easier to look at the seal that's given us that break up in the Psalm. So tonight we can look at verses one down to verse four. Just taking the verses as they come. For sure, Psalm 84 of course is a well-known, well-loved Psalm for yourselves here. Speaking personally, if I've said already, I'm sorry, it's a major part of my own testimony.

[1 : 05] Psalm 84 was with Sam that finally, I guess, made things click in my mind as a young Christian, as young teenager. Gospel clicked through doing Psalm 84. That's a story from our day.

It's a Samavit journey. The Samas we see from the start of the Psalm, it's a Psalm written by one of the sons of Korah, the temple workers, those who worked in the temple, who did all the jobs that had to be done in the temple, those who spent their time living, working, almost all of them sleeping also in the temple area.

These were men who dedicated their lives to serving God. And for some reason or other, there's various arguments and various thinking why, but either way, this man seems to be away from the temple, he seems to be at some distance, and can't stop himself thinking about it. And this whole Sam is just him, either making his way back to the temple or just thinking about it as he's away from it. Wishing and wishing and wishing he was back where he could worship God, back where he could be with God's people, back where he could serve God and be close to the presence of God. Of course, for him it was in the ark, that's where God was, where God met with man. For us, of course, today we know that God is with us through indwelling the Spirit wherever we are, but as we read this man's pleas and his this man's genuine cries and his joyful thinking about God, it should, and I'm sure it does resonate with us here this evening, as we are all on a journey, as we know ourselves, a journey not to any temple somewhere in the desert for us, but we are on a journey to getting closer and closer to God and ultimately on that journey of our lives, where ultimately we know we will end up close in his presence forever.

It makes a Sam such a beautiful Sam. It's a Sam written by this one man, has one situation, as many of us Sam's, of course, are, but yet it applies to us even here today in Carly and such a beautiful, wonderful way.

[3 : 21] The first four verses, the introduction verses we could say, there's the verses where he plans out and sets out what he's going to be talking about, where he just takes time to worship and to praise his God.

Is that these verses, like we said, we can look at? It's often called a pilgrim Sam, which one commentator had a laugh, he called it the Sam of a janitor. This is a man who was the everyday worker of the temple many ways, with respect to him and to his people. And this is the Sam of a janitor, the Sam of the normal man.

And for us today it's the Sam of us Christians, normal Christians, seeking to grow closer to God. In verse one we see a short verse, we see a God who's worthy of worship.

We said already it was the duty of the men of Korah to be daily present in the temple. Like we said here we see a man who is away from that duty, a man who knows where he should be and who

longs to be back.

We don't see any sense that he's done any wrong, there's nothing wrong here, there's no sense he's sinned or anything, he's just for some reason he's away where he wants to be and he's longing for more of God, he's longing for more of God's presence, longing to serve God again.

[4 : 43] This is a man whose whole life is marked by, his whole life is known by his service to God. When he's not doing that he knows there's something wrong.

When he's not serving God, when he's not fulfilling his job and life in worshiping God and serving God, he knows fine well that he's missing out on that, he should be doing it.

And again and again he longs and longs and longs throughout the Sam to be back at the place he should be black doing what he should be doing. He's a servant who serves his master, a servant who calls where God is lovely.

How lovely is your dwelling place. Like we said for this man in effect the dwelling place of God was the temple, it's where God met with his people.

The question for us now is where is God's dwelling place for us this evening? Like we said it's in us, the spirit that he lives in us as his people, the spirit he works in us.

[5 : 50] We know that as we come together as we worship God together that God is here amongst us. We have a greater position than this man ever could imagine.

This man was happy with his lot worshiping God in that one place where we can worship God wherever we are in our daily lives. But a special understanding as we come together as sons and daughters and brothers and sisters, there's a special sense even this evening where we are worshiping God in a wonderful way.

I think it was Virgin who was in the first man to say that, but he certainly said it often, but in public worship but in coming together at any meeting of Christians we get in a small way a foretaste of eternity.

He's not wrong. As we come here just now together we are here as a foretaste of eternity.

Thankfully for all of us, one of me in front of you in eternity will have our Savior.

As we come together to read God's Word and to think about God and to worship God, this is a chance for us to have some idea what it is for eternity. What lies ahead of us?

[6 : 59] A life where we worship together and pray together. So this man his whole life was taken up by serving God, his whole life taken up by admiring God in his dwelling place.

A life living for God, a life serving God. Serving God it's his duty, it's his pleasure. There's no sense here that he's hard pressed to do his work.

And these men they had hard work to do. They had long days and long nights sometimes to serve God. We see that through a testament. We see their duties, there's plenty of them, pages and pages of them.

Intercate special duties that they couldn't go wrong in. But yet he seems to take joy in this. The service may be hard but it's still lovely.

It's all just lovely for him. Quite literally the word here is beloved. How beloved to me is your dwelling place. And look what he calls God.

[8 : 00] The Lord of hosts. He's addressing his praise not just to some or any God he wants to. It's to the Lord of hosts.

Quite literally Yahweh of the armies. God's personal name and the descriptor then of who God is. The personal name of God Yahweh of the armies.

The God who is in full control. The God who as it were reigns and rules over the armies of heaven. Who reigns and rules over and who has all power to use as he wishes.

The God who is so above any other of the God's worship in the land about this man. And it's safe to assume as he's journeying, he's journeying through places where other gods are worshiped perhaps.

One suggestion is this is someone who's travelling miles back to the temple to worship God. That's one suggestion and that is true. Then this person is perhaps travelling through areas and countries and miles where God is not worshiped.

[9 : 06] Where other gods are worshiped. He knows he is going to worship the Lord of hosts.

Yahweh the personal God. My personal God and your personal God.

The God who is close to us. The God who knows us. Not a distant uncaring God but Yahweh. That close name of God as God revealed himself to his people.

And the Lord of the armies. A personal close God but a God who has all the power. There's no mistaking it here. This wonderful journey together of these two names that happens again and again through the scripture and also happens again.

In the Sama, in the last version, verse 12. The idea of this God as covenant keeping as we sign just now. As covenant keeping merciful, loving, eternally loving God.

But yet the God who with all these things is also the God of all power. And that's why he can take such joy in worshipping Him.

[10:08] He's not worshipping a God who's useless. He's not worshipping some small God. He is worshipping God. The only God who is alive. The only God worthy of worship.

That's why he can take such delight. As we see in the whole Sam, such delight in all that he has to do. And even in his distance, he still can take delight because he knows that God is the God of all. Even as first verse, we have a reminder. A reminder that we should be joyful servants. We should be joyful wherever we are as Christians.

Wherever we are in this world, God is with us. Again, we know that's not just some nice thing we're saying to get us through the week. That's a reality. That God's dwelling place, where is it now with man?

The Holy Spirit lives in us and works through us. And he is doing that work continually. Despite however we may feel. We get our situations and we all know that we go through and will go through and perhaps are going through situations that even others here don't know about.

[11:19] Beyond understanding that are so hard for us to deal with. Situations that only you know about. Even there, never forget that the Spirit is in you.

Your God, he is the Lord of the armies. He is a God who has all power. He is a God who is capable and worthy of all our worship.

So he starts off by telling us why it's worshipping. He reminds us, he praises who's worshipping. So he's looking after and wanting to be back in the dwelling place of God.

He's wanting to be closer to God's presence. He's praising who? He's praising the Lord of hosts. In verse 2 we see just a glimpse as to how he's praising.

The method of his praise, what that praise looks like. We see these wonderful phrases. We see a longing soul first of all. My soul longs, yes, it even faints for the courts of the Lord.

[12:24] I'm so desperate to be close to God. I'm so desperate to have a greater sense of God. I'm so desperate to be closer to the presence of my God. There's nothing else I can do. I'm almost fainting.

I'm so desperate to be there. This image of exasperation. This man can't put in any stronger terms. We have here the word faints and again in Hebrew it's much the same word.

There's nothing else he can say. This is the strongest thing he can say. There's nothing else I would rather be doing just now than longing after my God. Than thinking about my God, than worshipping my God.

He's longing where to be in the courts of the Lord. He's longing again to be close to God. Longing to be back with and in the presence of God.

Back serving God. Again, I feel like there's no suggestion as far as the commentary anyway of anything negative in the Psalm really.

[13:26] It's not as if he's somehow been cast out and he's longing for distant God. He just seems to be away for whatever reason, a legitimate reason. And he's just on his way back almost and he's just longing.

In the Christian here this evening, if we have wondered away again, supposing I knew you all for the last 10, 20 years, it makes no difference.

Only you know where you stand before God this evening. I go through myself too. We can all look good and play the part of the happy Christian, but in reality only you know where you stand before God.

I don't mean that in terms of your salvation, but I mean that in terms of how close your walk is to God just now. I have a way of this Samus for you. If you're the Christian and your walk is going well, but this Samus for you, because we all know there's so much more space in our lives and it can be filled with God, so much more affection, so much more time.

It can be filled with worship and praise and service to our God. If you hear this evening and you've wondered away from God or if you're feeling far from God for whatever reason that may be, this

Samus for you.

[14:37] Pray the same prayer. Pray that you would have this longing again, but you know fine you once had. Pray that as we see here, that your heart and your flesh would again sing for joy.

A longing soul, then we have the idea here of the singing heart. The soul's longing and his heart's singing. This idea, even his flesh singing, it was where you have head and heart and hand.

All that he is, all that he is as a person, as a man, as this created creature is worshiping God. His soul is longing and his body's longing and his head is heart, his emotions, it's all together.

He's just longing to know God better. He's longing to be close again to God, longing to be closer to God. Again, why are a qualifier here?

It's cause he's trusting in the living God. His soul is longing and his heart is singing for joy. Again, not just for some random God, not for some God of his own making, because the God he worships is a living God.

[15:52] And because our God is living, because our God is active, we can be the same as this man. Cause we trust and place our continual trust in our risen, living Saviour, then this evening we should be the exact same as this man.

There should be our prayer too, that God would make us alive more and more. He would give us more care to help us to long more and more, help us to take more joy in worshiping Him.

Here we have the two essential elements of worship. We have here the idea of doxology, that we must praise God.

Where do we Christians have to praise God? There's no such thing as a Christian who doesn't praise God. If we're saying that then, the reality is, very unlikely that we were ever saved in the first place.

We all praise God perhaps, different styles and different ways, then that's fine, that's fine. Our friends across the world, our brothers and sisters across the world, praise God outwardly in many different ways, then that's fine.

[17:06] But every Christian must be a Christian who praises God. Our doxology, our worshiping of God must be there.

But also we see that there's theology here. He's not just worshiping, the sake of worshiping, He's worshiping the living God, that heart and head mixture.

We have to be a worshiping people, but also a people we must know that God we're worshiping.

Never just for the sake of knowledge, never just to accrue up more understanding.

Because just as worship without theology is pointless, theology without worship again, it's just pointless. Growing and growing in our knowledge, but never praising God out of it is a waste of time.

We might sound smarter, we might look smarter, but who cares in the end, does nothing to worship God. But when these two things are combined, when we dig into more about who God is, when we look and read more scripture, when we pray more, when we come together more and discuss God more, when we grow in our love and understanding of God, when our praise often should also grow.

[18:25] As we learn more about who He is, our triune God, as we delve into these things which are so beyond us, as we delve, as we saw last week, just for seconds last week, into the depths of election in Romans 8, and of how God has chosen His people specifically.

If that just stays as dry knowledge, then it means nothing in the end that should always lead us to worship, always lead us to praise in God for who He is.

And in this verse we have this here, the longing soul, the crying heart, doxology, praise, mixed perfectly with theology, with the understanding of God.

A wonderful, wonderful way this man is praising his God. So he's made clear who he's praising, he's praising God, he's then made clear how he's praising, he's praising the whole being, his head and his heart.

And he praises in verse 3, how God works with that God, or the way God is towards His people.

[19:41] He's not a distant uncaring God like we said, even the sparrow finds a home and the swallow a nest for herself where she may lay her young.

I draw altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Perhaps two birds, strange birds that pick out the air we think, but when you look into it and think about it properly, it's amazing the two birds he chooses.

Sparrow's the New Testament. Where does our mind go when we think of sparrow as the New Testament? Well, I guess it goes to, if I count, well, what I count in Matthew 10, where we see Jesus, and what does he say?

That two sparrows are sold for a penny, for a sardion, the smallest coin they had at the time. Two sparrows in their money are sold for a penny. Worthless to people, absolutely worthless birds. You get them by the dozen, the kids used to collect them and sell them in the street corners for some pocket money to those who are worshipping who couldn't afford anything else for themselves. [20 : 54] These worthless birds, two for a penny, absolutely useless. I want to see in Matthew that even one of them falls to the ground, as Jesus tells it, without the father, knowing.

There's no coincidence that bird is used there, no coincidence that it's used even here. The other birds, you have chosen, even the sparrow finds a home. That first word is important to see that. You could have just said, the sparrow finds a home, and that still makes sense, but even the sparrow finds a home. That's not just there for the sake of poetry, that's there for emphasis. Even this useless bird, which is sold for pennies, and it's just hundreds of them, who cares about sparrow?

Even that small creature, which seems so insignificant, it has a home in the temple of God. Even that sparrow, which means nothing to those watching it, it has safety in the temple of God. There's no junk for us to understand why he's saying that. He's not giving us a natural lesson here, we know. He's showing us an image, a wonderful picture, even the smallest, and humanly speaking, most useless, pathetic worshiper, the person even here this evening, who just feels the lowest, and who just feels the most useless, and who just feels just the most pointless worshiper of God, that even you, in all your low estimation of yourself, that in God's eyes you have a home in this temple.

[22 : 36] This is not just something to, again, to perk us up. It's the value I have here in front of us. We see ourselves very often as we are, and very often our view of ourselves can be right, can be tainted out of our way, but it can be often quite right.

Perhaps this week you have been, for all intents and purposes, a useless servant. You've sinned so much, you've done this wrong, you've done that wrong, that I should even be here tonight. I shouldn't go to church on Sunday. I shouldn't be with these other Christians who seem to have their lives put together. Well, these words of verse 3 have a message for you this evening, that even you, even this sparrow, finds a home in the altar in the temple of God, but in the house of God, but in the presence of God, that you are important.

But as a son or daughter of Him, you have purpose and meaning. You have real, eternal worth. You're not just worth a few pennies.

You're worth so much that you can find a place of shelter to live in the house of God.

[24 : 02] Sparrow, small, pointless, uncared for animal. I think this swallow, it's a strange one. It's an argument over what this bird actually is sometimes.

This word here, used for swallows, only ever used again. It was in Proverbs, it's in Proverbs chapter 9, I didn't look at the reference, but it's in Proverbs anyway. And again, the word there is used for swallow in the sense of a swallow flitting around and not really knowing what it's doing.

That seems to be an image here, that the sparrow finds a home and this swallow who just feels homeless, a swallow who can't settle down, but this restless bird, that what can they do if they have a nest?

So this worthless bird, first of all, this worthless, humanly worthless sparrow has a home and this restless bird, the swallow, it can stop and it can build a nest.

In the house of God and in the presence of God, brothers and sisters, that we have a place. If you are here this evening as someone who's restless, if your mind is restless for whatever reason, if your body is in pain and restless, if your soul is restless again for whatever reason, there is a place for you, like the swallow here, there's a place for you in the house of God.

[25 : 34] There's more of it, the swallow, where she may lay her young. Again, there's no time, this is not time for it this evening, this is not the Sam for it, this is just a passing reference, but it's one of many references in the Psalms particularly, where we see the importance of the young to the temple of God.

The importance of young people, of those who are young, to the love and care of God. Again, this is not the main emphasis of the Sam, so we won't spend much time talking about it as you write this

evening to lay an emphasis that's on it here, but it's one example of many examples in the Psalms alone, where we see God making clear that for his people, there is a special care for their children, special care for those who are young, special care for those who are born to those who are in the house of God.

I guess in Acts chapter 2, we see that fulfillment again, one of many places in the New Testament we see, we see God still saying and reminding his people that he has a place for the children of believers.

Acts 2 verse 29 being one example, Acts 2, 39, sorry, this promise belongs to you and your children and to all who are far off and so on.

God cares for his people in his house. God also cares for the children of his people, that dwell in his house. Our God is a covenant God.

[27 : 14] We sang a while ago in the song later on, our God is a covenant keeping God. His love for us is eternal. And the God who promised to be with his people and their children, again, is reminded, even briefly here, that God is still a covenant keeping God.

The God who worships this evening is a covenant keeping God. A God who is reminded again and again, even New Testament, the people, the children of his people are not forgotten.

The covenant has not shrunk, it's expanded, even to the Gentiles now, as we found out here in Carly this evening. There's place for all of us in the house of God.

For those of us here who are like this battle, who just feel so worthless, there's a home for you.

Don't ever think there's not. If you are a child of God, if you love your Savior, there's a home for you. No matter how small or useless you feel. If you're for whatever reason unsettled in mind or body or soul, like the swallow here, you can take time to stop and bother and ask for yourself in the house of God.

[28 : 30] And again, at the end of verse 3, he references again who is worshiping. He just can't help himself. He's talking about this and verse 3 is going well, he's talking about these birds and then at the end of verse 3, oh Lord of hosts, my king, oh my God, he just can't keep it in.

He just can't stop saying it. He can't keep the words in his mouth any longer. He has to proclaim it again, Lord, God of hosts, my king, and my God.

A reminder again, just the power of the God. The God who keeps these small creatures safe is the Lord of hosts. The Lord who cares for this small sparrow.

The God who cares for this unrest thing, swallow. The Lord of all the armies, the sovereign unchanging God of all things.

He finishes the section in verse 4, by reminding those who are listening and those who would later sing of his Sam and read his Sam.

[29 : 35] This wonderful closing prayer to God, blessed are those who dwell in your house, ever singing your praise.

I should say this in verse 1, the word here used for dwelling, dwelling place, and word in verse 4, who dwell in your house, it's again, it's literally tabernacle.

It's not just some kind of passing sense. They're living here and they're staying there. Their place is there. It's not just some passing moment they have, passing through to go somewhere else.

They might go and come out, but their home forever is in the house of God. How did you describe all those then and all those here tonight, to be in the house of God?

We are blessed. We are blessed because we know we are kept safe. We're blessed because we know that in God's house, he is in charge.

[30 : 39] But in the house of God, that he knows all the inhabitants, that he alone promises never to lose a single one of us. But for those of us who are singing his praises, those of us who are tired and weary, but yet who still know and love our Saviour, we are blessed.

If nothing else this evening, take away this, that we are blessed to have a Saviour. We are blessed to know a Saviour. We are blessed to be kept by a Saviour.

As we heard this evening in these verses, who knows his people, who takes care of his people, who is close to his people, who cares even for the smallest creature, even for the smallest one of us here this evening, that we are cared for by this God of the armies, the God who holds and maintains all of time and space right now, he knows and maintains you and me.

And actually as I said, this section ends here, and so it should, that's say, that tells us to take a breath and to stop right there. And we'll follow Sam's instructions and stop there and kind of bow

our heads quickly in a word of prayer.

Lord God, we come before you, we thank you that even as we read through Scripture, we're so aware of how many wonderful things we see. Lord, we give you praise and we thank you that even in a short time we can dare to delve into these things and see such wonderful truths revealed to us, for you are God.

[32 : 21] You care for all who are yours, and we do pray for your people here this evening, that you'd make that care known to them. For any here who need to be reminded of it, Lord, that you'd remind them again of who you are and of your love for them.

For any here tonight who are yours, Lord, and who are doing well in their walks, that you'd encourage them and keep them. What would say, are suffering with illness, physical and mental. Lord, be with them, strengthen them, give them courage and give them hope and to rest and rely on you. Even as you deal with mental pain and physical pain, that you'd throw alongside them and they'd remember that you are God.

You're the God who knew them and has known them from eternity past, and you're the God even as we heard this evening, who lives in them now and who promises to never leave them.

Lord, humble us, we do ask you to forgive me for anything I said that was incorrect this evening. We give you praise as always. The power is in your living word and whatever poor servant attempts to shade it.

[33 : 28] We thank you for that wonderful truth, Lord. As we come to your word, we are coming to read and to listen to your living word, words that are living because you are living. Because we worship you, our living Savior, we have hope that you are our living Lord.

Help us even as we conclude this evening to sing your praise as our hearts and minds full of praise.

As we carry on this week, help us, we heard this evening. Lord, help us to apply it to our lives.

Help us all just not to be just hearers of the word, but to be doers or to put into our daily lives what we hear. Help us in our theology, Lord, to maintain doxology.

In all our thinking about you, all our studying of you, help us never to forget our praising of you. Do you remember, especially just now this evening, our dear brother, Callum, and his brothers and his mother, or as they mourn the loss of a husband and a father?

Pray for all those in HTC as they mourn a loss of a dear colleague. Would you pray for the congregations in that area as they mourn the loss of one who was so faithful every time he had anything to do, Lord, you gave him the strength to do it.

[34 : 38] One who was well loved across the church and across the community he served and lived, and Lord, would you pray you'd bless that family? Bless them all they do, bless them in the days and weeks to come.

As they have to make practical arrangements and deal with all that has to be done, Lord, you'd give them guidance and give them comfort and let them know that their brothers and sisters are praying for them across the island, even across this nation.

Or we ask all these things, understanding that we are sinners before you, understanding that in our own strength we have no standing before you, in our own strength we are nothing before you. We thank you that we are clothed in the righteousness of your Son, Lord, that you have called us your people, Lord, you have saved us, and because of that we know we stand before you in the power of our Savior.

We stand before you with Him uplifting us, with Him surrounding us, with Him representing us before you. With that knowledge help us to go out this week. Let's go all these things in and through and for His precious name.