

Note: In the Old Testament folks viewed going to the temple as a special blessing. It gave them a sense of being in God's presence. We also can have that same sense of awe when we attend church.

I. There is a yearning to be with God's people praising God (1-4)

1. Excited believers can't wait to be in God's house. How amiable are thy tabernacles, O LORD of hosts! My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God. 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. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house: They will be still praising thee. *Selah.* These folks want to know God, having a fire within which caused them to desire to be in an atmosphere of praise. The comparison is the joy a swallow has when it has created a home. Many people say I don't feel right if I miss church. It just feels like something is missing. When our family goes to Americas Keswick Bill Welte greets us and says welcome home. **Acts 2:42; 46-47** And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.....And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, Praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. The early church gives us a great example of hearts longing for God. We see they are hungry to learn about God, to be together in fellowship, to pray and to praise God. The key is the soul needs to be longing for God. **Acts 4:18-20; 29-31** And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.....And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus. And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. Peter and John are standing before the Sanhedrin; they are told by them not to proclaim the name of Jesus. They tell them we can't help but tell the truth about Jesus. In the margin of my Bible I wrote the church needs a case of the can't help its. When Peter and John were let go they went to a prayer meeting where they asked God for boldness and to use whatever He needed to bring people to Jesus. At that time it was signs and wonders. Today it is miracles of changed lives.

II. The strength of believers is God. (4-8) Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; In whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; The rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength, Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer: Give ear, O God of Jacob. *Selah.* **Opening up Psalms, Opening Up Commentary** *We would expect to read that with each passing day the pilgrims grew more and more weary until finally their strength was depleted. 'Not so,' says the psalmist. In fact, just the opposite was the case. The closer the pilgrims got to the city of Jerusalem, the stronger they became. Their love for worship was so great that the mere anticipation of it had an energizing effect upon them.*¹ Baca was a desert valley and we could look at it as a source of great trials. In that case the anticipation of reconnecting with God became a source of strength. This is a testimony of faith we can use to witness to folks who do not know Jesus. Some folks say how do

¹ Roger Ellsworth, *Opening up Psalms, Opening Up Commentary* (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 60–61.

you get through the trials of the ministry? The answer is Jesus. Some folks believe that this is referring to getting spiritual strength on Sunday and receiving new strength the next Sunday. **Hebrews 10:23-25** *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;) And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.* This says one of the keys to holding fast to our faith is attending church. We need each other for love and encouragement.

III. God will bless those who worship him. (9-12)

1. One day with God provides more life than a thousand days without Him. *Behold, O God our shield, And look upon the face of thine anointed. 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.* The anointed are those who have been chosen by God. Today it is saved people who have accepted Jesus. *Do we understand what the psalmist is saying? The slightest contact with God through real, heartfelt worship is more satisfying than the deepest involvement in sin. The sinful life is always promising satisfaction, and the deeper one goes into it, the less satisfaction he finds. But the deeper one goes into public worship, the more satisfaction he finds.* **Psalm 1:1-3** *Blessed is the man That walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, Nor standeth in the way of sinners, Nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the LORD; And in his law doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, That bringeth forth his fruit in his season; His leaf also shall not wither; And whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.* Notice the progression walk in counsel means you vote for it; stand in way means you join in; sitting in the seat of the scornful means you lead in the road to sin. Jesus says it this way in **Matthew 7:13-14** *Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat: Because strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.* Notice the broad way to destruction; narrow way to life. Psalm 1 promises fruit, blessing and that his way will prosper.

2. True worship brings us into contact with the God who loves us, who died for us and provides for us. *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. O LORD of hosts, Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee. What makes worship so satisfying to us? It brings us into contact with the eternal God who delights in being a sun and a shield to those who love him and serve him (v. 11). As we worship him, he gives us grace and glory and every 'good thing' (v. 11). Nothing can be more satisfying than having the light of God shining on our pathway and having the shield of God to protect us from evil. Nothing is more satisfying than receiving grace for living and glory for the future. Nothing is more satisfying than knowing God will not withhold from those who truly worship him anything they need.*² To worship God is to commune, praise, adore and walk with Him. This is really a condition of the heart. In our hearts we have a desire to know Jesus. After salvation we do that through the power of the Holy Spirit. The ability to understand who Jesus is comes from the power of the Holy Spirit. The truth is found in God's word. **Proverbs 3:5-6** *Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; And lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, And he shall direct thy paths.* It is such a blessing to know that God is guiding us, protecting us giving us grace as we worship him.

² Roger Ellsworth, *Opening up Psalms*, Opening Up Commentary (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2006), 62–63.