

Lent Devotional March 1, 2026

Scripture

Psalm 84

*1 How lovely is your dwelling place,
O Lord of hosts!*

*2 My soul longs, indeed it faints,
for the courts of the Lord;
my heart and my flesh sing for joy
to the living God.*

*3 Even the sparrow finds a home
and the swallow a nest for herself,
where she may lay her young,
at your altars, O Lord of hosts,
my King and my God.*

*4 Happy are those who live in your house,
ever singing your praise. Selah*

*5 Happy are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.*

*6 As they go through the valley of Baca,
they make it a place of springs;
the early rain also covers it with pools.*

*7 They go from strength to strength;
the God of gods will be seen in Zion.*

*8 O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer;
give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah*

*9 Behold our shield, O God;
look on the face of your anointed.*

*10 For a day in your courts is better
than a thousand elsewhere.*

*I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God
than live in the tents of wickedness.*

*11 For the Lord God is a sun and shield;
he bestows favor and honor.*

*No good thing does the Lord withhold
from those who walk uprightly.*

*12 O Lord of hosts,
happy is everyone who trusts in you.*

Devotion

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Dwelling in God's Presence

The other day, I went to put garbage in an outside trash can. When I opened the lid, I received a fright. Two little eyes were shining up at me as a raccoon had tried to find shelter from the cold. I lowered the lid and left the raccoon alone. Then I realized that even though the raccoon had climbed in, there was no way it would be able to climb out. So, gingerly, I laid the bin on its side, opened the lid, and watched the raccoon wobble away.

The little raccoon had found a dwelling. While in the immediate sense it seemed safe and secure, in fact, it would have caused it harm. We are sometimes like that raccoon. Spiritually we seek comfort, protection from storms, warmth, and shelter—but not always in spaces that will feed our souls. Sometimes we choose spaces that may drain—or even harm—our souls.

Our Psalmist for today is a displaced worship leader, longing for the joy they used to experience in God's house. They sing: *I would rather be a gatekeeper in the house of my God, than live the good life in the homes of the wicked* (v. 10). The displaced worship leader, living in exile in Babylon, is longing for the close presence of God.

Longing for the closeness of God's presence is a feeling we can understand. Jesus, in His incarnation, became the tangible presence of God, and throughout the gospels invites us into a space of dwelling. Yet, in our humanness, we try to create our own spaces, resisting this indwelling presence. We too want to live 'the good life.'

Lent invites confession—and repentance. As we read this Psalm, let us consider the times when we craft our own spiritual dwellings, rather than dwelling in the presence of God.

Prayer

Incarnate Lord, so often I am like the little raccoon, seeking comfort and strength in unhealthy spaces. In a posture of repentance, help me surrender my self-made structures and turn toward the spacious dwelling I may find in you. Amen.