

Lent Devotional March 10, 2019

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.

DEVOTIONAL

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Here in the midst of Lent, this season of intense contemplation for Christians as we prepare for that joyful Eastertide celebrating the resurrection of Jesus, we glimpse the times of trial found in both Testaments but most particularly those of Jesus in the wilderness. Over this 40-day period, some of us may engage this opportunity for renewal by fasting from certain foods. Others might fast from “screen time” to encounter the Lord personally in those nearest to them. Still others may take on a new task, such as meditation, prayer, Bible reading, or volunteering. Our common bond in all such activities is that each participant is seeking the “lovely dwelling place” of the Lord.

Psalm 84, at the time of its writing, most likely reflected the sense of people on a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem to seek God's company. To us, however, this psalm can also have contemporary meaning in the light of God's loving gift of the Holy Spirit. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, we know each of us is a temple of the Lord's. As a consequence, in all that we do, others should see that Love within us—in the care we take of our physical world, the earth, which we see as God's dwelling place, and of all its inhabitants as well. And let us seek God's goodness and love for all those with whom we walk.

We need not travel far to seek the Lord of Hosts; the Lord is here.

PRAYER

Oh Lord God of Hosts, we joyfully give you thanks that we need not search far to find your Holy Shelter, for it surrounds us and is in us. In this season of Lent, we look to the birds merrily building their nests throughout creation in anticipation of the glorious spectacle of the Renewed Life to come. Let it be so. Amen.