

LENT DEVOTIONAL

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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

Samuel McCann '19

This beloved psalm evokes pilgrimage. Pilgrimage imagery is not merely a powerful metaphor for the Christian life, but is often a spiritually powerful experience for those who undertake a literal pilgrimage. Occasionally, language about pilgrimage (literal or metaphorical) yields an obsession with the journey rather than the destination. While being concerned with the journey is worthwhile, it is good to stop and reflect on where we are going. Often our destination will determine not only the route we take, but the attitude we adopt on the journey.

As I read Psalm 84, I find myself asking, "Where are we going?" One can confidently assert that, based on this psalm, we go to the presence of God. But who is this God? A God who provides a home for the sparrow, a nest for the swallow. What's so moving about this imagery is that birds are fragile creatures. In essence, this psalm describes those traveling to a refuge for the fragile. People are journeying to a God who is gentle with the vulnerable. As you journey to the holiest days in the Christian calendar, what steps do you take knowing that you are seeking a gentle God who cultivates a home for the fragile and vulnerable?

PRAYER

Gracious God, Creator of the universe, we humbly ask for your guidance in our journey to draw near to you. We pray that the paths we take are informed by your love and gentleness. Amen.

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-362-5610



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