

# Psalm 84

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[ 0 : 00 ] C.S. Lewis said, if I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world.

! O God, you made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in you.

I think those two quotes by C.S. Lewis and Augustine capture the affectional pulse beat of the Christian life. Longing for another world, longing for God.

And different parts of the Bible bring out this in a vivid and intense way. The pulse beat for heaven, the pulse beat for God is always there in the Bible.

But in some parts it's more pronounced than in others. It's a bit like our own pulse beat. It's always there. But in some moments in our lives it's more pronounced.

[ 1 : 26 ] Like after you've exerted yourself you can feel the blood pumping through your veins. Well, certain parts of the Bible are like that.

They bring out the human longing for another world, for God, in a vivid and intense way. Just think of the Genesis account of the patriarchs.

They all lived in tents. Abraham is called to leave his home and go to a country not his own. God's promised land in Canaan. And when he gets there, what do we find him doing?

Living in a tent. And he never changes his abode. Till the day he died, Abraham lived in a tent. Same with Isaac and Jacob.

They both lived in tents. Here was this land of Edenic-like paradise. And none of the patriarchs ever put a spade into the ground. None of them ever built foundations.

[ 2 : 26 ] They only ever pitched a tent. The book of Hebrews chapter 11 captures it well. By faith Abraham went to live in the land of promise.

As in a foreign land. Living in tents. With Isaac and Jacob. Heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations.

Whose designer and builder is God. Do you see how the writer shows the patriarchs faith in action? They lived in tents. Why?

Because they saw themselves as strangers. As pilgrims on the earth. And why did they view themselves like this? Because they were looking for another city. Whose maker and builder was God.

They lived loosely to this world. And to this life. Just think of when Sarah dies. And Abraham has to purchase a bit of land from the Hittites.

[ 3 : 25 ] For her grave. What does he say? I am a sojourner. And a stranger among you. So can I please buy a bit of land.

To bury my wife. How long had he been living in the land? 62 years. I am a sojourner. Among you. Residents in Canaan didn't buy burial plots. Because the land was theirs. Only strangers or pilgrims. Only strangers or pilgrims bought burial grounds. 62 years.

I am a sojourner. Among you. Jacob speaks the same way when he arrives in Egypt. Pharaoh asks him his age. And he replies.

The days of the years of my sojourning. Are a hundred and thirty. Few and evil have been the days. Of the years of my life.

[ 4 : 22 ] And they have not attained. To the days of the years of the life of my fathers. In the days of their sojourning. For Jacob. His life. And that of his fathers.

Isaac and Abraham. Was one long sojourn. One long pilgrimage. They were pilgrims. In this world. They could have sung with Jim Reeves.

This world is not my home. I'm just a passing through. They were homesick for heaven. They were homesick for God. They had desires in them.

That nothing in this world could satisfy. They were restless. For God. The period of the patriarchs. Living in tents. Is one of those parts.

Of the Bible. Where the affectional. Pulse beat for heaven. Is pounding away. Is pumping strong. In an intense.

[ 5 : 21 ] Vivid way. In the New Testament. That pulse beat for heaven. Is seen in our Lord's life. He was called. The son of man.

Born of Mary. But he was. He never forgot. He was a son of heaven. During his earthly life. He had no home. He didn't even have a tent.

Foxes have holes. Birds of the air have nests. But the son of man. Has nowhere. To lay his head. Why? Because he was a son of heaven.

And this world. Was not his home. He was just a passing through. But for the joy. Set before him. He endured the cross. And what was the joy.

To sit. At his father's right hand. To be home. In heaven. With his father. The life of our Lord. Is one of those parts.

[ 6 : 20 ] In the Bible. Where the affectional. Pulse beat for heaven. For God. Is pounding away. Pumping away. In this strong.

Vivid. Intense way. The lives of the patriarchs. The lives. Of our Lord. They give us this. Affectional. Pulse beat for heaven.

For God. They show us. That this world. Is not our home. That we're just passing through. But there's a third. Picture. In the Bible. That captures.

This vivid. Intense. Desire. For another world. For God himself. And that is. The annual pilgrimages. To Jerusalem. After Israel.

Settled in the land. And built homes. Which God said. Was fine for them to do. They still had. Regular reminders. That Canaan. Was not really. Their true home.

[ 7 : 15 ] That there was. Somewhere. Beyond. Canaan. Something better. Than Canaan. Every year. There were various. Festivals. That were held. In Jerusalem.

The feast. Of Passover. The feast. Of Pentecost. Both around Easter. And the feast. Of Tabernacles. In the autumn. Harvest time. And in each case.

The Israelites. Would leave. Their homes. And they would travel. Up to Jerusalem. Up to the temple. To make sacrifices. To pay their tithes. And to meet.

With God. And the journey. Was known. As a pilgrimage. A pilgrimage. To God. In his temple. Temple. And Psalm 84. Is set.

In that context. It's the. Context. Of a pilgrimage. And as such. It is another moment. In the Bible. Where the. Affectional. Pulse beat. For heaven.

[ 8 : 08 ] For God. Is pounding. Away. Because this. Psalm. Strips back. All the pomp. And ceremony. Of the feasts.

At the temple. All the fuss. And fancy. Of the festivals. At the temple. And it reveals. To us. A heart. Longing. For heaven.

Longing. For God. If this. Psalm. Does anything. This evening. It shows us. That this world. Is not our home. We're just.

A passing through. This. Psalm. Orientates us. Beyond this world. Shows us. Where our desires. Ought. To be directed.

It. Now before we come. To the psalm. Let me. Put in. One. Qualification. And it's an important one. By this world. When I say.

[ 9 : 01 ] This world. Is not our home. I don't mean. Earth. Below. Is not our home. But heaven above. That would be. Platonism. Dividing the physical.

And the spiritual. As if. The spiritual. Up there. Is more important. Than the physical. Down here. No. Jesus rose. From the dead. Physically.

On this earth. The meek. Shall inherit. The earth. Now when I. Speak of this world. What I mean is. This age. Of this heaven.

And this earth. Is not our home. Our home. Is the new age. Of the new heavens. And the new earth. So that's an important. Qualification.

But with that. Qualification. In mind. Let me show you. Three ways. In which this. Psalmist. Reveals to us. A heart. That is pulsing. For heaven.

[ 9 : 55 ] For God. First. A longing. For God. Is what we see. In verses one. To four. A longing. For God. As I read. These verses.

Keep in mind. That God's temple. In Jerusalem. Was a picture. Of heaven. Where God lives. And you'll see. How this psalm. Reveals a longing. For heaven. And for God. How lovely. Is your dwelling place. O Lord of hosts. My soul longs. Yes. Faints. For the courts. Of the Lord. My heart. And flesh. Sing for joy. To the living God.

The word lovely. In verse one. Does not mean. That God's dwelling place. Is lovely looking. I'm sure it was. But if that's what the psalmist. Meant. It's a bit strange. That he doesn't go on.

To describe. What God's temple. Looks like. There are no descriptions. Of it. In this psalm. Rather the word lovely. Means something like. Lovable. How lovable.

[ 10 : 53 ] Is your dwelling place. How I love. Your dwelling place. Is really what the psalmist means. And his life for God's dwelling place. Is seen in his intense longing.

For it. In verse two. My soul longs. Yes. Faints. For the courts of the Lord. My heart and flesh. Sing for joy. To the living God.

Two opposite. Descriptions. Of his intense. Longing. There is his. Fainting. The blood. Rushes. From his body.

And a kind of. Craving. For the place. Like when you're so. Ravenous. For food. You can't. Think of anything else. But food. That's the first way. He describes this longing.

But then he gives it. An opposite expression. His heart. And his flesh. His whole person. Sing. For joy. Now the blood. Rushes back.

[ 11 : 51 ] If you like. Because you can't sing. If you're feeling faint. Right. So he's. Fainting. For this place. And he's. Singing. For it. And those two.

Opposite. Physical. Experiences. Of craving. And singing. Capture the intensity. Of his longing. For God's. Dwelling place.

How much does he love it? He faints. For it. He sings. For it. God and his temple. Are his one. Consuming.

Passion. So much so. That he expresses. Envy. At those. Who get to live there. Permanently. Verse 3 and 4. He's envious of the sparrow.

Who gets to find a home. In the arches of the roof. He's envious of the swallow. Who makes a nest. In the eaves of the temple. She gets to have her young.

[ 12 : 45 ] Just by his altars. The birds have free access. To God's home. It's like when you visit a farm. And you see the sparrow. Those and the swallows. Just flying in and out of the barns.

Freely. Without restriction. Whenever they want. They come and go as they please. They make their home there. But this psalmist can't. He can't make his home in the temple.

He makes a pilgrimage to God's temple. And then he has to leave. For months on end. Which brings him to the other group of people.

That he's. Or the other group that he's envious of. He's envious of the sparrows. And the swallows. But he's envious of those who live in the temple. The priests. The Levites.

The gatekeepers. He's envious of them. Because they get to live in God's house. And sing his praises continually. Verse 4. Blessed are those. Who dwell in your house.

[ 13 : 43 ] Ever singing your praise. It's a good envy. Not a bad envy. Because he calls them blessed. The blessed life. Is the life lived. In the courts of God.

Ever singing his praises. I've been reflecting on this recently. For obvious reasons. Our daughter Leila died. Seven months ago.

When our loved ones in Christ. Depart from us. We so often wish. That they would come back to us. Even just for a day. But think about what we'd be asking of them.

We'd be asking of them. To leave the courts. Of the Lord of hosts. To leave their home in heaven. Where they get to praise God continually.

Why would we ever want them. To have to leave that. This psalmist doesn't want the sparrows. Or swallows confiscated. He doesn't want them to come and live with him.

[ 14 : 45 ] In his home. In the countryside. He wants to go and live. Where they live. The psalmist doesn't want the priests. And the Levites. And the gatekeepers.

To have to leave the temple. And go and visit him. In the countryside. No. He wants to go and live. Where they live. He longs for God's dwelling place.

For heaven. Because blessed are those. Who dwell in your house. Ever singing your praise.  
Samuel Rutherford.

Rutherford. Once wrote to a mother. Who lost her child. And said. Today the Lord has cut off. One of your branches. So that you might grow higher.

And closer. Towards heaven. Life is not about those. Who have gone before us. Coming back to us. It's about us.

[ 15 : 43 ] Going to them. Because blessed are those. Who dwell in God's house. Ever singing his praises. Cancer.

Or old age. Or some terrible news. Or death. Is a great recalibration. For our desires. These things. Come into our lives. And they make us.

Long. For heaven. That's what this psalm. Does for us. It recalibrates. Our longing for heaven. But not just for heaven.

Did you notice that? My soul longs. Yes. Faints. For the courts of the Lord. My heart and flesh. Sing for joy.

To the living God. C.S. Lewis once said. Heaven is Oxford. Lifted up and placed. In the middle of County Down. Northern Ireland.

[ 16 : 43 ] C.S. Lewis was a genius. He got the right county. But like all geniuses. He had a blind spot. He got the wrong university. But notice what he was saying.

Heaven is not just a beautiful place. Like County Down. Northern Ireland. For Lewis. Heaven is a beautiful place. Because it is an inhabited place.

When he spoke about Oxford. Being lifted up and placed. In County Down. He was speaking of Oxford. The university city. With its students.

And professors. And town folk. And libraries. And culture. Lewis was saying that heaven. Is about the people. As well as the place. And that's what this psalmist.

Shows us. Heaven is only heaven. Because of who lives there. Heaven is about the person. Not just the place. That's why this psalmist.

[ 17 : 41 ] Finds heaven so lovable. Why? Because of who lives there. The Lord of hosts. The living God. His King.

And his God. The God of Jacob. Did you notice how dominant. The references to God are. In this psalm. Fourteen or fifteen times.

He refers to God. With different titles. That's more than one reference. Per verse. Only six references. To God's dwelling place.

This psalmist. Is not longing for heaven. So much. As he is longing. For the God of heaven. He's longing for a person. Not a place.

Because it's God. Who makes heaven. Heaven. Heaven is only heaven. Because God lives there. Martin Lloyd-Jones.

[ 18 : 36 ] When he was dying of cancer. Was asked. Doctor. Shall we pray for you. To be healed. And he replied. Don't hold me back. From the glory.

What was glorious. For Martin Lloyd-Jones. Seeing God. Seeing God. Why would you hold someone back. From seeing God.

That's the first thing that this psalm shows us. A longing for God. Second. A journeying to God. A journeying to God.

Verses five to eight. Blessed are those. Blessed are those. Whose strength is in you. In whose heart are the highways. To Zion. As they go through the valley of Baca.

They make it a place of springs. The early rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength. Each one appears before God.

[ 19 : 38 ] In Zion. The last stanza. Verses one to four. Ended with a statement. Of who is blessed. Those who are. Who live permanently.

In God's house. Ever singing his praises. And this stanza. Begins. With a statement. Of who is blessed. Verse five. Those whose strength.

Is in God. Those who have. Pilgrimage. In their heart. That's what highways. Refer to here. I think it's the NIV. The 1984 NIV.

That has that beautiful. Saying. A beautiful line. In whose heart. Are the pilgrimages. To Zion. So blessing here. Is not just restricted.

To those. Who live permanently. In God's temple. Those who don't yet live. There. Can still be blessed. If they find their strength.

[ 20 : 35 ] In God. And have pilgrimages. Fixed. In their heart. In other words. Blessed are those. Who are in heaven already. And blessed are those.

Who have the journey. To heaven. Fixed. In their hearts. Now. Blessed are those. Who live. Like the patriarchs. Blessed are those.

Who live. Like our Lord. Jesus Christ. Who live loosely. To this world. And longingly. For another world. Blessed are those.

Who say. This world. Is not my home. I'm just a passing through. Because if we do live like that. Then when we. Then we can experience.

Joy. Even in the midst. Of difficulties. And tears. Verse six. As they go through. The valley of Baca. They make it. A place of springs. The early rain.

[ 21 : 28 ] And also covers it. With pools. We're not exactly sure. Where this. Valley of Baca. Was. But scholars. Think Baca. It refers to. Balsam trees.

Which. Were in the valley. Of Rephaim. Southwest. Of Jerusalem. It was the one. Pilgrim route. For those. In the south. That involved. Walking through.

A valley. It was perhaps. The most difficult route. To Jerusalem. Because this valley. Would have been dry. In the autumn time. In the feast. Of tabernacles. And there was no.

And there was danger. As well. Because it was. The closest route. To the Philistines. Israel's greatest enemy. But more than that. The word. Baca. Actually sounds like.

The Hebrew word. For weeping. This is a valley. Of weeping. Some scholars. Suggest. Maybe the balsam trees. Wept their gum. And so there's a play.

[ 22 : 22 ] Here. As they go. Through the valley. Of Baca. Of weeping. They make it a place. Of springs. That's why Isaac Watts. And John Light's. Versions of.

Psalms 84. Speak of the veil. V-A-L-E. The veil of tears. Yet the psalmist says. That those who go. Into this veil of tears.

With their strength. Rooted in God. And pilgrimage. In their hearts. Can turn a dry place. Into a place. Of springs. In other words.

They become a blessing. To those who journey. With them. I don't know if you've heard the saying. I'm sure you have. So. That those who are so heavenly minded.

Are of no earthly use. You heard that saying. But I think it's a load of nonsense. I think those who are so heavenly minded. Are of great. Earthly use.

[ 23 : 17 ] Because they bring comfort to us. They point us. To heaven. In the midst of difficulties. Have you ever met someone like that?

Whose life is so crippled. With different afflictions. In this life. That they point you. To heaven. They remind you. That this world. Is not our home.

I have a friend. A young man. Who's. Had leukemia. He's now in. Remission. But his body. Is crippled.

With the effects. Of the graft. Versus host. Disease. He takes a hundred. Tablets a day. His skin. Is broken. At this point. Never to be repaired.

He's like a walking joke. When I meet with him. Or his parents. I always come away. Feeling refreshed. Because they have lifted.

[ 24 : 15 ] My eyes to heaven. At this point. In his life. There is no hope. For him to ever recover fully. His only hope. Is God. He has no strength in himself.

But his strength in his God. And he. Longs. For heaven. He longs. For his resurrected body. His life. Has become a spring.

To others. As they journey. Towards God. And that is where our lives. Are heading. Verse seven. They go. From strength. To strength. Each one appears. Before God.

In Zion. You see that. Life. Is about journeying. Towards. God. That's what Jackie. And I have learned. With Layla's death. She got to go to God.

Quickly. That's where we're all heading. It's interesting. In this second stanza. All mention of God's dwelling place. Is absent. You notice.

[ 25 : 15 ] All the talk of the temple. Now disappears. Now we're just focused. On God. On getting. To God. God. This is the destiny.

Of our earthly pilgrimages. Not to a place. But to a person. To God. Which is what the psalmist. Prays for. In verse eight.

O Lord of hosts. Hear my prayer. Give ear. O God of Jacob. What's his prayer? To get. To God. God. That he would appear.

Before God. In Zion. That's the second thing. This psalmist shows us. A journeying. To God. He's shown us.

A longing for God. A journeying to God. And third. A prayer. To reach God. A prayer. To reach God. Verses nine to twelve.

[ 26 : 14 ] Behold our shield. O God. Look on the face. Of your anointed. 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 dwell. In the tents. Of wickedness. For the Lord God. Is a sun. And shield. The Lord. Bestows. Favour. And honour. No good thing.

Does he withhold. From those. Who walk. Uprightly. O Lord of hosts. Blessed is the one. Who trusts. In you. Now at first sight.

Verse nine. Feels rather out of place. Doesn't it? Here we are. Talking about a. A longing for heaven. A longing for God. And all of a sudden. We're talking about a shield. And looking on the face.

Of God's anointed. If you take out. Verse nine. Verse eight. Runs. Quite nicely. Into verse. Ten. O Lord. God of hosts. Hear my prayer.

[ 27 : 09 ] Give ear. O God of Jacob. For. A day in your courts. Is better than a thousand. Elsewhere. Do you see? So the question is. What's verse nine.

What's verse nine doing here? Well. A shield. Is a metaphor. For God's king. Anointed. One. Is a title. For Israel's king. So here is a prayer.

For God. To look with favor. Upon. His king. Now. Why is the psalmist. At this point. Praying. For God. To look with favor.

Upon. His king. And what's that got to do. With getting to God. With getting. To God's place. Well. Quite a lot actually. Because the prosperity. Of God's people.

And the protection. Of God's temple. In Zion. Was dependent. On the prosperity. Of God's king. If God's king. Was disobedient. Then God's curse. Fell.

[ 28 : 03 ] On king and people. And if God's curse. Fell on them. Then they became. Vulnerable. To surrounding nations. Just think ahead. To the exile. When Judah. Went into exile.

It was because. Their kings. Fell into sin. And God. Brought down. His curse on them. And that curse. Resulted in the Babylonians. Coming to destroy. The temple. Which meant.

That God's people. No longer had access. To God's house. They no longer. Had access. To God. Because of the failure. Of the king. And that's why.

The psalmist. Pray. That God might. Behold. The king. And look with. Favour. On the face. Of his anointed king. Because he knows. That if the king.

Doesn't prosper. Then there is no access. To the place. That he loves. If the king. Doesn't prosper. Then this psalmist. Has no access.

[ 28 : 58 ] To the God. He loves. We see that. In verse 10. And 11. Notice the two. Fours here. Behold our shield. O God.

Look on the face. Of your anointed king. For. Because. A day in your courts. Is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper. In the house of my God.

Than dwell in the tents. Of wickedness. For. The Lord God. Is a sun and shield. The Lord bestows. Favour and honour. No good thing.

Does he withhold. From those. Who walk uprightly. See the logic. You want to get. To the courts. That are better. A day in the courts.

That are better. Than a thousand elsewhere. You want to get. To the God. Who is a sun. And shield. Who is light. And life. And protection. You want to get. To that God.

[ 29 : 53 ] Then you need him. To look with favour. Upon. The king. Behold. Our shield. O God. Look on the face. Of your anointed. Because.

We want to get. To you. We want you. God. And we can't have you. Unless you look with favour. On your king. Verse 11.

Shows us. That if. God does. Look with favour. Upon his king. Then we get. To God. Who is a sun. And shield. Who bestows. Favour and honour.

No good thing. Does he withhold. From those. Who walk. Uprightly. The question is. What are these. Good things. Or what is this. Good thing. That he does not. Withhold.  
A spouse. Children. Many children. Job promotion. The right house. All your children. Married off.  
[ 30 : 54 ] Grandchildren. All of those things. Are good things. But I don't think. That's what's being. Promised here. The answer. I think. Is fine. In verse.

10 and 11. For the Lord. Is a sun and shield. The good thing. Is being with God.  
In his courts. Verse 10. The good thing. That God does not withhold. Is himself. God does not withhold.  
Himself. From us. John Piper wrote a book. God is the gospel. God is the gospel. God is the good news. God gives you. Himself.  
In the gospel. The good news of the gospel. Is not that you get benefits. You do get benefits. The good news of the gospel. Is that you get the benefactor.  
[ 31 : 50 ] And when you get him. Then you get all the benefits. But you can't have grace. And glory. And good things. Without the God of such things.

Grace. Glory. And good things. Don't actually exist. Without God. God is the gospel. But we can only receive those things.  
Reach those things. Receive God. And those things. If he looks with favor. On the appeals. Of his anointed king. Which means. That for us Christians.  
We ask him. To look with favor. On King Jesus. He is the anointed king. Who makes appeals. To God. On our behalf. That's why. When we pray.  
For the sake of your son. Or in Jesus name. What we're praying. Is that God. Would look with favor. On Christ. So that we might. Might receive heaven.  
[ 32 : 48 ] And the God of heaven. I started tonight. With two quotes. C.S. Lewis. C.S. Lewis. If I find in myself.

Desires. Which nothing in this world. Can satisfy. The only logical explanation. Is that I was made. For another world. And Augustine.

Oh God. You've made us for yourself. And our hearts are restless. Until they find. Their rest in you. And I want to finish.

With a third quote. It's by John Calvin. He said. The Psalms. Are a mirror. To our souls. The Psalms. Are a mirror.

To our souls. What does a mirror do? It reflects. Whatever you put in front of it. And when you put this Psalm. Up against yourself. Let me ask you.

[ 33 : 41 ] What does it reflect? If it is a mirror. What is your soul. Reflecting? Well. By God's grace. May this Psalm. Be. A recalibrator. May it show us. That the desires. Of our hearts. Ought to be for heaven. Ought to be.

For the God of heaven. Because one thing. Is for sure. If we don't fix. Our desires. On God. Then we will live our lives. As restless people. We were made.

For another world. We were made. For God. My soul longs.

Yes. Faints. For the courts of the Lord. My heart. And my flesh. Sing for joy. To the living God. May God's spirit.

[ 34 : 37 ] Give us the grace. To sing love. To sing love. This evening. Amen.