

The Tabernacle of the Lord

This lesson begins several months' study of Psalm 84. The Bible never says read to show your self approved; it says study to show yourself approved. There is a whole lot more to study than just reading. Many times during study the Holy Spirit reveals things to you. Study means to meditate. Actually, the word for meditate in the Hebrew means to "ruminate" or to chew over and over again. It's used of a cow that brings up the cud and chews it again. And that's what you do with the Word of God. You bring it up out of your inward man and you think on it and meditate on it, and that is when revelation comes. That's studying to show your- self approved unto God. So we are going to closely examine this Psalm and study it.

This Psalm was written by David when he was under tremendous pres- sure. It is a tremendous Psalm. You can't just plow through quickly be- cause there is so much meat in these particular verses. David, unlike most kings in the Old Testament, was a man of war. Many of the kings in the Old Testament went to war but not like David. David aggressively went to war. God did not tell David not to go to war; in fact, God commanded him to go to war. Peace never comes cheaply. Until Jesus comes, the price of peace often has to be blood, and that's what happened under David's reign. David was at war during most of his lifetime, but he set up the foundation for the great reign of peace which came after him which was Solomon's reign.

The way to have peace is not to lay your weapons down and walk out there in the middle of the battlefield and say, "We've laid ours down, now you lay down yours." You are liable to meet a spear in the face. When Joshua conquered the nation, he would not have succeeded if he stood there and didn't do anything. God told him to go to war. He said, "You go to war and I will be with you." God commanded it, and God condoned it. I do not appreciate anybody who will not stand up for his country and fight for it in the name of the "Word of God." The Word of God does not condone that we don't fight for our country; it commands us *to* fight for our country.

David would go out, fight and come back to Jerusalem. He continually did this and he got criticism from the nations around him, and he also was criticized from within the nation. Fortunately, David was a man of tremendous spiritual strength. One

thing you need to understand (because many of you are called into the ministry) is that promotion does not come over night. Many people who have had fast promotion, fall apart from the criticism once they get the promotion. If you get promoted and you begin to rise in the ranks of any organization or in the Kingdom of God you are going to find yourself being criticized by those around you. Those who criticize you are usually immature; mature people don't criticize. Mature people understand the responsibilities of leadership, and will help. Those who stand on the sidelines and criticize usually show their immaturity in the criticism.

When criticism is constructive it is important to listen to it. But, if criticism keeps coming at you and coming at you and you listen to it long enough, you can open yourself up to depression. That's what happened to David. David was coming to the point where he knew depression was coming; he could sense it. David is at this point when he writes Psalm 84.

This Psalm is divided into three sections of four verses each. You'll notice at the end of verse four and at the end of verse eight there is a *selah*. That *selah* indicates a rest, and the rest is to stop and think about what's been said in the previous part. Verses one through four are going to be the place of David's strength. From where does David draw his strength? If you draw your strength from the praise of people, you've gone to the wrong place. Now, the praise of people will come and that's good. It's good that people do praise you and pat you on the back. But don't let it go to your head, because people can pat you on the back then turn around and stab you in the back a short time later. Since David was receiving so much criticism he had to go someplace for his strength, and the place he went to naturally was the Word of God and Spirit of God. All his life he had practiced knowing how to stand on the Word of God and be in the Word of God when the criticism wasn't there, so that when the time of criticism came he had something to draw from. Many don't go to the Word until the time of crisis comes, and that's not the way to win in this life. You don't prepare for war when you're being attacked. You prepare for war when there is peace, so that when you are attacked you will be strong.

In verses five through eight we have what David did with that strength. And here we have the exploits of faith. And then in the closing verses, nine through twelve, we have David's rejoicing.

You will notice in this Psalm there is a small beginning that says, "To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah." This is actually the first verse. I want you to see something about the chief musician. What does chief mean? Top ranking. What this is saying is as there were levels of authority in the government, there were also levels of authority among musicians.

So this verse starts off by David turning this Psalm over to his chief musician. This particular Psalm is upon Gittith, and Gittith was actually the harp of Gath. This is important because it gives us the key to the whole Psalm. Under criticism depression will come, and David knew how to handle depression. We find out what David did in I Samuel chapter 16 beginning in verse 14. "But the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord troubled him." An evil spirit does not come from the Lord. We must understand that. It is simply saying, when the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, Saul was open to evil spirits. The Lord could not stop the evil spirit from coming, because the Holy Spirit's protection was lifted off of Saul. At any time all Saul had to do was to ask the Lord to forgive him and get back into fellowship with the Lord, and at any time he could have gone back in to that office God called him to. But, because of his laziness and his dependence on others around him the Spirit of the Lord would depart from him and an evil spirit would come on him.

It says in verse 15, "And Saul's servants said unto him. Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. (verse 16) Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on a harp." Go back to verse 14 and let's find out what this evil spirit is called. The Hebrew for evil spirit was a spirit of melancholy or depression. A harp was used to get rid of the spirit of depression. Read on in verses 17 through 23

And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethle-hemite, that is cunning in

playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the Lord is with him. Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took a harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.

Now is it any coincidence that David called for a harp whenever he was under criticism, and that criticism was about to bring depression on him? He remembered that when those same evil spirits were trying to attack Saul that he, David, played the harp. David knew if he got off into fear of those things that those things could come on him *too*. So what did he do? He came back to this remembrance, and he called for the chief musician and he said, "Bring me one of those harps, play on that harp. I want you to sing these words and play it on that harp."

Going back to the 84th Psalm, it says in that verse again. "To the chief Musician upon Gittith, A Psalm for the sons of Korah." Who are the sons of Korah? It tells us in Exodus 6:21 that Korah was a first cousin to Moses. So, being cousins Moses and Korah were both of the tribe of Aaron, the Levitical tribe. When Moses was in the wilderness, there was a rebellion led by Korah. Korah was trying to take over Moses' leadership position and was killed for it. But, we find in chapter 26 of Numbers that the two sons of Korah lived. Apparently the sons of Korah did not cooperate, nor did they agree with what their father did, so they were spared by the grace of God. The beautiful thing is that they, being in the tribe of Levi began to lead the choir and the music from that time on. They went on for generations and generations to lead in the musical worship unto the Lord, and they were also the guardians of the gates of the tabernacle.

Psalm 84 goes on, "How amiable are thy tabernacles." Most of your translations say, "How lovely are your dwelling places," but that isn't quite right. Actually what it says is, "How loved or how admired are your tabernacles." When David was looking around him for the thing that he most admired and the thing that he most loved in life, he came back to the tabernacle.

The teaching of the Word of God was conducted in the courtyards of the tabernacle. The people stood in the courtyard and they came into His gates with thanksgiving and into His courts with praise. The majority of the people could go only that far. You had to be a priest, and later on even a high priest to go into the Holy of Holies. In other words, the farther up in rank you were, the farther you could go into the Holy of Holies. The people themselves could go into the outer courtyard and this is where they were daily taught the Word of God. David's delight was in the courtyard. You would think his delight would be in the inner Holy of Holies, but his delight was in the courtyard, because that was where the teaching of the Word of God was. If David needed to receive the joy of the Lord, he returned to the teaching of the Word of God.

From where do you draw your strength? It's the teaching of the Word of God that you must receive on a day by day basis. Receiving the Word twice a week at church doesn't do it. Do you think you could live on two meals a week? You'd get very weak. What you receive on Sunday and what you receive on Wednesday is only supposed to whet your appetite so that you will dig into the Word at home on a daily basis. It is God's desire and God's will that you get into His Word everyday, and that you come into His presence and draw strength for your daily life.

In David's day as it was in Moses' day, most of the people were illiterate. If they would have had a Bible they couldn't have read it anyway. The Word of God was taught by people who understood the Word of God. Besides that, there wasn't that much of the written Word at that time, so the Word was taught through pictures, types, and shadows.

The law was never designed to save. The New Testament tells us in Galatians chapter 3 that the law was a school master, a teacher to instruct us. Paul was talking about the time when the Law was given as an instructor. An instructor in a school

doesn't draw attention to himself. A good instructor draws attention to the subject that he is teaching. The Law was an instructor, and taught of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Law itself was not designed to save, but the Law was holy, just, and good. The law was like a good instructor it was designed to teach the people about the One who could bring redemption. They called Him Jehovah; we call Him Jesus. Every part of the Law taught of Jesus. Every sacrifice taught about Jesus. Every part of the furniture and all that went on and all the different types of offerings, the grain offerings, the meat offerings, the meal offerings - all these things taught of the Lord Jesus Christ. Every part of the Law taught of Jesus, but the Jews became so jealous over the Law, that they embraced the instructor as the means of salvation.

The Law was to be lifted up to a high level; a good teacher is to be lifted up to a high level. But, we are to always uplift the Lord Jesus Christ the very one of which we teach. When Jesus is lifted up He will draw all men to us. So you see, the Bible is wonderful and the teachings of the Word of God are wonderful, but all the praise has to go to the one of which it teaches, and that's the Lord Jesus Christ.

So, what David was saying was that the tabernacle was the lovely place. He said, "How lovable, how admirable," If there was something he looked back on in his lifetime that he loved most of all, it was the place of the teaching of the Word of God, because that's from where he drew his strength.

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