

“The Heart of the True Believer – Part 2”
Psalm 84
(Preached at Trinity, October 23, 2011)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Matthew 17:1-2 KJV** - "And after six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart, ² And was transfigured before them: and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light."
 - A. This, of course is the account of our Lord’s transfiguration. He was gloriously changed before the eyes of His apostles. Why do I bring this up here? Because of the Greek word translated “transfigured.” It is the Greek word, μεταμορφόω
 - B. It is also the word used in **2 Corinthians 3:18**
2 Corinthians 3:18 KJV - " But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, *even* as by the Spirit of the Lord."
 - C. Christians have undergone a unique transformation as unique and awe inspiring as our Lord’s transfiguration. We have been changed and are being changed from glory to glory.
2. Why do I bring this up here? Because **Psalm 84** describes such a transformation. In **Psalm 84** we find the full expression of the heart of a believer. You can feel the psalmist’s passion for God and love for His worship.
Psalm 84:2 KJV - "my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."
3. In our generation it is important for us to step aside on occasion and examine what such a heart looks like. We live in a day in which we’ve lost the wonder and awe of Christian conversion. The miracle of Christian conversion has been reduced to empty professions of faith that lack the power of God.
2 Timothy 3:1-5 KJV - "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. ² For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ³ Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, ⁴ Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; ⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."
4. Multitudes of people profess to be Christians but there is no love for God or for His worship, no hunger and thirst after righteousness, no desire for prayer, no love of God’s people or passion for the work of the church.

Salvation results in a transformation of life:

John Piper wrote in “Desiring God” – “. . . something miraculous happened. It was like the opening of the eyes of the blind during the golden dawn. First the stunned silence before the unspeakable beauty of holiness. Then the shock and terror that we had actually loved the darkness. Then the settling stillness of joy that this is the soul’s end. The quest is over. We would give anything if we might be granted to live in the presence of this glory forever and ever.”

5. This is what we find in **Psalm 84**. We find the heart of one who has experienced God’s transforming grace. He hungers for God.
Psalm 42:1 KJV - "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God."
6. ** Christians are all on different levels of maturity in their Christian journey. There are times when we feel quite weak, like a burning ember about to go out. We feel dry and spent. Yet one thing remains in the heart of a believer—his love for Christ. Even this may grow weak but it never fails. The Christian continues pursuing Christ.
7. Last week I pointed out that I was going to divide it into four points:
The heart of a true believer will find:
 - I. Comfort in worship – **Verses 1-4**
 - II. Confidence in trial – **Verses 5-7**
 - III. Continuance in prayer – **Verses 8-9**
 - IV. Consecration in life – **Verses 10-12**
8. Last week I covered the first two points.
 - A. The heart of a true believer will find Comfort in worship – **Verses 1-4**
 1. The Psalmist’s greatest desire was to be where God is
His greatest desire was resting in the presence of God
 2. His heart is filled with song
Psalm 84:2 KJV - "my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."
NAS - "My heart and my flesh sing for joy to the living God."
 3. This is at the heart of every believer.
At the very substance of our transformed heart is a longing for God
This has become the substance of our life – a love for His fellowship; a desire for ever sweeter communion.
 4. Is this the desire of your heart? What place does God have in your life?
Jonathan Edwards in *Religious Affections* – “True religion is evermore a powerful thing; and the power of it appears, in the first place in the inward exercises of it in the heart, where is the principal and original seat of it.”
 - B. The heart of a true believer will find Confidence in trial – **Verses 5-7**
Psalm 84:5 KJV - "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee"
 1. The believer has discovered the source of all strength
Our strength is not our own
The man who trusts God finds strength that is beyond himself
 2. This life is a wilderness full of difficulties – yet we find refreshment in God. “Baca” is found only here but it means “weeping”
In the places of weeping we find the rich blessings of God.
Psalm 84:6 NAS - "they make it a spring, The early rain also covers it with blessings."

3. Our comfort is not found in anything of this world. We are not promised a life free from difficulty—quite the opposite. Yet, we find our strength and comfort in Christ.
7. Lets continue examining the heart of a true believer.
 - I. Comfort in worship – **Verses 1-4**
 - II. Confidence in trial – **Verses 5-7**
 - III. Continuance in prayer – **Verses 8-9**
 - IV. Consecration in life – **Verses 10-12**
- III. The heart of a true believer will find Continuance in prayer – **Verses 8-9**
 - A. **Verse 8** actually serves as a conclusion to the first 8 verses, yet it stands alone
 1. It ends with the Hebrew, “Selah” which was a pause; a time for meditation and consideration.
 - a. There are two pauses in this psalm – One at the end of **Verse 4** – a pause to consider how glorious it is to dwell in the presence of God. How glorious to have such a relationship of praise.
 - b. After **Verse 4** the psalmist declares God’s blessings upon the man who trusts Him.
Psalms 84:5 KJV - "Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee"
 - c. The second pause is at the end of **Verse 8**. It is as if he pauses just to pray before God.
 2. We find the familiar repetition so common to the psalms
Psalms 84:8 KJV - "hear my prayer: give ear"
 3. For the psalmist, speaking to God in prayer was as natural as breathing.
 - a. This is true for every believer
 - b. Prayer was our first response when God saved us. I’m not saying we prayed a sinners prayer or that prayer of itself has any sort of merit, but when God awakened our dead heart we prayed. And it has been our lifeblood ever since
 - B. The psalmist had a hunger for fellowship with God
Psalms 84:2 KJV - "My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God."
 1. On this earth prayer is the chief means of communion with God.
That alone should drive God’s people to their knees
 2. True prayer is first of all an act of worship before God. It is forgetting self and putting our full focus upon God.
This is different from what most people think about prayer. Listen to the priority in the Lord’s prayer. “Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.” Prayer puts our focus upon God before any thoughts of self.
 3. **Verse 8** flows naturally off of **Verse 7**
 - a. After declaring that God was his strength his heart was turned to prayer.
 - b. If God is our strength then we will continually cry out to Him
Psalms 84:9 KJV - "Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of thine anointed."

- C. As with the previous descriptions of the true believer, I'm not speaking these things to discourage you but to encourage you.
1. I'm not saying that prayer is easy for the true believer. Although prayer is a natural activity for a true believer it is also the most difficult
Prayer is one of the most difficult things we do in the Christian life
Colossians 4:12 – "Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a servant of Christ, saluteth you, always labouring fervently for you in prayers, that ye may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God."
 2. We strive in prayer. We labor in prayer. We contend in prayer even when we feel that we cannot pray.
Spurgeon: "Pray for prayer—pray till you can pray; pray to be helped to pray, and give not up praying because you cannot pray, for it is when you think you cannot pray that you are most praying; and sometimes when you have no sort of comfort in your supplications, it is then that your heart all broken and cast down is really wrestling and truly prevailing with the Most High."
 3. We must make prayer a priority but we do so because we desire communion with God and we know by faith that He hears our prayer. And so we make it a chief part of our life.
Luther: As it is the business of tailors to make clothes and of cobblers to mend shoes, so it is the business of Christians to pray."
 4. God knows our weakness, but He also knows our desires. He sends rich aid to those who seek Him.
Romans 8:26 NAS - "the Spirit also helps our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we should, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for *us* with groanings too deep for words;"

IV. The heart of a true believer will find Consecration in life – **Verses 10-12**
Psalms 84:10 KJV - "For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness."

- A. The Psalmist was completely dedicated to being separated unto God
1. One day in the tabernacle was more precious than a thousand elsewhere
Think of this literally—Would you be willing to trade 30 years of your life for ten days of worship?
 2. He would rather have the most humble job in the service of God than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.
 3. Remember, the sons of Korah *were* doorkeepers.
1 Chronicles 26:1 NAU - "For the divisions of the gatekeepers *there were* of the Korahites, Meshelemiah the son of Kore, of the sons of Asaph."
 4. They were among the least prestigious of the Levites. After the priests carefully covered and wrapped the furniture and all of the utensils of the tabernacle the sons of Korah were brought in to carry them. They were not allowed to touch them or even look upon them. Yet the psalmist here says he would rather do this than anything else in the world!

5. He was overwhelmed by the privilege of being set apart for the service of God and to be able to dwell in the presence of God.
 6. As God's servant his high priority was maintaining purity.
Psalm 84:11 KJV - "For the LORD God *is* a sun and shield: the LORD will give grace and glory: no good *thing* will he withhold from them that walk uprightly."
- B. As God's New Covenant people we are set apart for His service. We are a kingdom of priests.
1 Peter 2:9 KJV - "But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:"
1. Without practical righteousness a person's profession is empty
Hebrews 12:14 – "Follow peace with all *men*, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:"
 - a. This means a practical righteousness
 - b. From the word ἁγιασμός – "consecration, purification, sanctification of heart and life
 NAS translates it "sanctification"
 2. The Hebrew word for holy is קָדֹשׁ It means apartness, separateness
 3. God set his people apart for His own possession
 God set them apart for His own use – consecrated
 God set them apart from the defilement of the pagan nations
 4. Most of all, God has set His people apart that they might worship Him
 God's repeated words to Pharaoh were:
 " Thus saith the LORD, Let my people go, that they may serve me."
- C. There is a great distinction between the believer and the unbeliever
1. We are in two different worlds – two different kingdoms.
 Our attitudes, beliefs, goals, motives – all are different
Psalm 1:1-2 KJV - "Blessed *is* the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. ² But his delight *is* in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night."
 2. Paul says we are the temple of God. The Temple was the very dwelling place of God. The inner room where the Ark was kept was called the "Holy of Holies." We are this holy place. We are able to have intimate fellowship with Him.
2 Corinthians 6:14 KJV - "what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"
2 Corinthians 6:16-17 KJV - "for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean *thing*; and I will receive you,"

- D. God has placed His mark upon us
1. Under the Old Covenant all of the men in Israel were circumcised
 - a. This marked them as being separate and distinct
 - b. Circumcision symbolized a man's full submission to God
It symbolized God's mark upon His people. It was permanent and irreversible
 - c. The other nations mocked and ridiculed Israel for such foolishness. Circumcision confounded the wisdom of the flesh – yet, it was pleasing to God.
 - d. Any male who did not bear this mark was cut off from the congregation of Israel
 2. Under the New Covenant God places His mark upon His people in regeneration – it is permanent and irreversible
 - a. We have literally been recreated
 - b. Christians are a people distinct and separated from the world
God has set us apart as a holy people
 3. Does our salvation depend upon our attaining to some degree of holiness?
Yes and no – Scripture teaches both
 - a. On one hand, no amount of our works or self-righteousness can merit our salvation. Salvation is by grace alone through faith alone in the merits of Christ alone.
This is justification – the imputed righteousness of Christ
 - b. On the other hand, the Christian is marked by consistent holiness – the mark of regeneration
Without the mark of regeneration a man today is cut off from the people of God.
Jesus made this clear
Matthew 7:19-20 – “Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. ²⁰ Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.”
 - c. Although we have been declared holy through the work of Christ we are also commanded to strive after holiness – to be consecrated or set apart unto God – to be holy.
J.C. Ryle, bishop of Liverpool from 1880-1900
“I doubt, indeed, whether we have any warrant for saying that a man can possibly be converted without being consecrated to God.”

Conclusion:

1. Do these things describe your life?
The heart of a true believer will find:
 - I. Comfort in worship – **Verses 1-4**
 - II. Confidence in trial – **Verses 5-7**
 - III. Continuance in prayer – **Verses 8-9**
 - IV. Consecration in life – **Verses 10-12**
2. Is God first in every aspect of your life?
Do you strive to be conformed more and more to the nature of Christ?
3. Is your fellowship with Him more precious than anything else?
Psalm 84:10 KJV - "For a day in thy courts *is* better than a thousand."