INTRODUCTION

- Psalm 84 expresses excitement felt when worshiping God and being in His presence. v11. “No good thing does God withhold from the righteous” …and it begins at our place of worship.
- Jewish Factors to Consider for this Psalm:
  - The Jewish culture revolved around Temple worship, which included singing, teaching, sacrificing, praying, thanksgiving, and feasting (lasting for 1 day was only done once each year during the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) in Sept/Oct)
  - Recall God’s House was to be a House of Prayer for all nations, where God’s people would confess their sins and repent & seek His blessings. “They shall be joyful in My house of prayer for all people” Isaiah 56:7 & cf Mat 21:13; Mk 11:17; Lk 19:46
  - Though there were daily requirements for sacrifices, Jewish men were required to visit the Temple 3x each year:
    1. Festival of Unleavened Bread or Passover, 1st fruits of the Spring wheat harvest (Mar/April - Easter)
    2. Festival of Weeks or Pentecost (May/June), and
    3. Festival of Booths or Tabernacles or Ingathering of the Fall harvest (Sep/Oct)
  - The weekly Sabbath rest did not require Temple attendance
  - Weekly synagogue worship in one’s hometown became a tradition after the Jews returned from their Babylonian captivity

How do we view going to church each week?

- It’s a pleasure to look forward to
- You miss it if you are not there
- It’s a joy to be with God’s people
- You anticipate it all week long
- You prepare for it & invite others

Passage Comments

Psalm 84:1-2

- Do We Yearn to be in God’s House?
  - As with the Psalmist, when we are absent from God’s house, we should ache to go there, and yearn to stay there – BUT do we? If not, how do we fix that?
  - Our yearning shouldn’t be for the physical facility, but to be in God’s presence with other likeminded saints

What is more important — to be in Heaven or to be with Jesus?

- Jesus did not emphasize to the thief on the cross next to Him, that Today you will be in Heaven, but Today you will be with Me! Luke 23:43
- Stephen showed more interested in Jesus gazing upon Him prior to his martyrdom than the wonders of Heaven which were opened before him Acts 7:55-56
- Apostle Paul did not say to be absent from the body is to be present in Heaven, but to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. 2Cor 5:8

What is more important, Jesus or Heaven?

- Recall that even Heaven and the Throne of God had to be created as seen in Gen 1:1. Only God is eternal, and our faith is based on a personal relationship with this eternal God and less on our heaven-bound destiny
- Where is our heart? Is it on the pleasures of Heaven? Is it on what God can do for me? Or is our heart wholeheartedly focused on God? After all, “The eyes of the Lord move to and fro throughout the earth that He may strongly support those whose heart is completely His” 2Chron 16:9

CONCLUSION / APPLICATIONS / CONSIDERATIONS

- If we can fully grasp this concept of why it is important for us to be in church with the attitude of anticipation and excitement, and to enthusiastically participate in the various worship activities (e.g., teaching, praying, singing, fellowshipping) we would truly be joyful in God’s House of Prayer, and we would look forward to going every time the doors are open.

NEXT WEEK: Psalm 95. This psalm mixes worship & warning. We need to appropriately worship our God and take warning that we do not do it flippantly with wrong motives – i.e., what’s in it for me!