

**“BLESSED ARE THEY THAT  
DWELL IN THY HOUSE.”**

PSALM LXXXIV. . HEB. X. 19-25.

BY

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 HAVE read this Psalm, beloved friends, because I think I can see in it the miniature of the Epistle to the Hebrews; that is, the idea of the whole of Hebrews is presented in miniature in the 84th Psalm. It is divided by that little word “Selah” into three parts. You have in the first part of the Psalm the blessedness of the dwelling-place, “How amiable are thy tabernacles,” and the soul longing for the presence of God. Then the sparrows and swallows find a dwelling-place there in the immediate presence of God; and the happiness of those who dwell in the presence of God would be marked by praise.

Then the Psalm begins again: “Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee; in whose heart are the ways of them.” Now you get another idea, not only the blessedness of the dwelling-place, but of the man who was on his way to it. “Who, passing through the valley of Baca, make it a well: the rain also filleth the pools.” Christians are regarded in two lights in Hebrews. They are on their way to the rest of God, to the everlasting dwelling-place, and they have access to God now. That man is accounted happy in whose heart is the way of that place: his heart abounds with hope.

But, then, if the way to that place is in his heart, he passes through the valley of weeping. You have to go through this wilderness, but if you have to go through the valley of Baca, everything in that valley shall be an occasion for you to learn the grace and sympathy of the heart of Christ. Everything that is untoward and discomfoting, which we shrink from naturally, is turned to good account. It will be an occasion for us to find very great spiritual gain. It is a great thing to look up for spiritual gain when passing through the valley of Baca. We have weeping, sorrow, anguish down here; we cannot escape it; but these are occasions in which we may learn what God is, and the grace and sympathy of Christ. It is painful to be scooped out, but the rain will come down from heaven and fill the pools; you will be blessed spiritually in the valley of Baca, and you will also go from strength to strength because Christ in His priesthood will support you down here.

Then further, "Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine Anointed." Here you have the Person of Christ. In Hebrews it begins with the glory of His Person, and works backwards, because when you begin to read Hebrews it is the grandeur, the greatness of the Person of Christ. God has Christ before Him, beloved Christians; He will never take His eye off Him, nor His hand off you—never for one moment. "Behold, O God our shield, and look upon the face of Thine

Anointed." All God's thoughts for you are presented in that Person who lives before His face. Happy for you if you look in the direction in which God is looking!

"The Lord will give grace and glory"; that is, the grace and glory are measured by Christ. His present grace to you and the future glory are measured by that Person on whom He looks, and He will never take His eye off Him. We shall never find any satisfaction in what we have been or what we are; we cherish the thought that some day or other we shall reach satisfaction in that, but it never shall be. You have to find your satisfaction in what Christ is. David had to say, "Although my house be not so with God, yet He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure: for this is all my salvation, and all my desire, although He make it not to grow." God's resource is Christ, and He will never take His eye off Him. He is acting towards us only on the ground of what Christ is, and He will never act in any other way. It is a very great thing to get hold of that, because there is the hankering thought and desire to find some satisfaction in the work of God in us. There is no pleasure in that, but there is in what Christ is before God.

The last part of the 84th Psalm is the Person of Christ in whom everything is secured. Then comes the dwelling-place. My point in Hebrews is to shew that the privilege of the present time is

the immediate presence of God. I would impress the thought upon you, but if the Spirit impresses it upon you it will do you good. I want you to get hold of this—*distance is unbearable to God*. God's great thought and desire is to have man near to Him, and He cannot bear distance. He had to drive man out of the garden, but that was the just government of God. How could fallen man stay there? But if He had to drive Him out, His thought was to give him something better. We have forfeited our life here, we have lost our title to live down here, but God proposes something better for us, and not only so, but that we should enjoy it in spirit now, that we should be near to God. In Matthew's Gospel Christ cried that exceeding great and bitter cry, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me"? It was the cry of man at a distance from God. The Man who always pleased God was found there in the distant spot that you and I should be in nearness to God. He travelled out into the distance. His love took Him there into that dark and distant spot in order that the heart of God might be gratified in having man near to Him. Therefore the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom, and the dead arose out of their graves. God's thought is that He should come out to man, and that man should come in to Him, that man should find his home in the immediate presence of God. Is that your idea, beloved friends? What

has Satan succeeded in doing? When I think of it, it gives me great anguish of spirit. Satan said, "I will let people have a Christianity that will keep God at a distance, and I will defeat the purpose of God." In Christendom God is at a distance. There is the respectful recognition of God at a distance on occasions. God does not want that: He wants nearness. I do hate that which makes distance between people's souls and God, for I know it is distasteful to Him. It is His own pleasure to have us near Him. If that thought gets into your heart it will do you good. He wants us near Him. Take the well-known Scripture in the book of Exodus. When the tabernacle was set up the glory of God filled it, and Moses, the man of God, could not stand in the presence of that glory; he was driven out. The glory of God was too great for him. Now, dear Christians, that is full of spiritual meaning for us. God begins to speak to Moses from that spot. He says, "I want to have you near; although I have driven you out because of what you are, I want to have you near because of what Christ is." How is He going to have us back? He will have us back because of Christ, therefore He speaks of the burnt offering. You have the acceptance offering first, then you go on to the meat offering, then the peace offering, and then the sin offering. We begin with the sin offering, but we end with the acceptance offering; but, you see, God begins from His own

side. He says, "I am going to have you back in the acceptance of Christ." Well, but what about the sin side of it? Christ identified Himself with it; He took our sins, nay more, He became what we were that the thing might be judged, so that in the sin offering the Lord Jesus Christ identified Himself with the offender. I am the person the Lord Jesus identified Himself with; my sins and my sin—not only my sins, but my state. He was made sin for us, He who knew no sin, and, mind you, He was made subject to the judgment of God. The sacrifice was subjected to the fire, and all that was left were the ashes, and they were the witness that the judgment was past! Only for us it is not the ashes, but it is the living Person who died. We have not the ashes, but we have the Person who was the Victim out from among the dead, and He is the witness that that judgment is past for ever, and that all has been removed from under the eye of God that was unsuitable.

Well, there is another thing. It is not only that the Lord Jesus was the Victim and identified Himself with my condition; the burnt offering is the other way about. I am identified with the offering, because all that was agreeable to God was found in Him when the sin was removed; there is not a beauty or perfection in the offering that I am not identified with in the eye of God, and we have boldness to enter into the holiest. Every disturbing element—everything in you that would be of a

disturbing nature—has an absolute and perfect answer in the blood of Jesus. Not only so, but there is “a new and living way, which He has consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh.” In the death of Christ all that was contrary to God has been removed. How could I be happy with God if I did not know I was accepted? How could I find pleasure in God’s company if I did not know He found pleasure in mine? These two things are absolutely necessary. If I am to find pleasure in God’s company I must know that I am suitable to Him. How can I be? Only through Christ. Everything that is unsuitable must be removed, but the death of Christ has removed it. There is no reason that there should be any disturbing element: it has all been met by the blood of Christ. It is often quoted that “If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin.” That is the meaning of it; I can walk in the light as God is in the light. Why? Because the blood of Christ is always there before the eye of God.

I put a very pertinent question to every one of you. Are you happy with God? Are you at home in God’s presence? “His presence is our home.” Is that the proposal that God has for me that I should find my home in His presence? How can that be? Through the blood of Jesus; through that new and living way which He hath consecrated



for us. Is not Christ suitable to God? Has not He gone in to God? Yes, as the One who died to sin once, and lives to God. Is that my way? What other way could I go into the presence of God? His way in is my way in, and His way out is my way out. It is a very simple thing to say, but it is very profound. He has been through death; He has died to sin and He lives to God. That is my way in. How? In the life of the Man who lives to God. There I can enjoy the immediate presence of God, and find my home in that presence. Beloved Christians, God invites us to come in. Distance is unbearable to God. What did the Father say in the story of the prodigal? Oftentimes we hear that parable preached from. I heard it preached from in the light of my need, I was the poor prodigal. Thank God I was in need; I was hungry and I turned to God, and the time came when I became number two in the the parable. I was hungry, I was in need: I needed forgiveness. But there was another thing: *there was the hunger of the Father's heart for the boy*, that is the prominent thing in that parable; the delight of the Father in bringing that boy into His own immediate presence, into a spot he had never known before. What is the Father saying? "When he comes back I will let him know what the Father is he has turned from." He fell on his neck and covered him with kisses, or kissed him much. That is God's side; I have nothing

against you, I am for you, and what was the effect of that kiss? What did He make the prodigal's heart understand? *I am glad you are come back to Me.* It made the prodigal feel the Father's heart in having him back, and he says, as it were, "You must do what you will with me now." The Father says, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet, and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us eat and be merry." The prodigal had proposed to say, "Make me as one of thy hired servants." No, if you come back you come to be in sonship, not to be sent into the kitchen; the Father's kisses set that aside. People may say, that is humility. If you send me into the kitchen I will behave better. The Father says, No, I am going to bless you according to what is in My heart. People will not let God do that. He says, "Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet." What does it mean? It gives him the consciousness that he is in all the acceptance of Christ. What does that mean? That He is to be before Him in holiness and love in order that there might be no distance. And so the Father does it all, and the climax is reached. What is it? The Father finds His pleasure in having that son near Him. Is that the blessed God? That is He. Try and divert the prodigal by talking about his best robe. No; what will he keep saying? "Oh it is my blessed Father I am thinking

of." You cannot divert him; that is the point reached. He is engrossed with the infinite blessedness of his Father. To put it in other words, he is joying in God.

We have such an High Priest. One who lives there to maintain us. "Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith." I think it is very sad that we do not draw near. We are too religious: we have come to what is simply right. We are too cold, too formal, and we do not bear the marks of blessed familiarity with God. May the Lord exercise us as to this. You may come to a meeting like this and say, "That is lovely." But are you going to draw near in full assurance of faith, and that in the sense that it is God's pleasure to have you near? We often sing—one is frequently checked in singing it—"His presence is our home." "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house." The worthless bird and the restless bird find a home there in the presence of God. We, who are by nature worthless and restless, find a shelter in the presence of God, under those altars, the altars of acceptance in the new and living way which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh. It is a very blessed thing to dwell in the presence of God. What happens when we get there? We enjoy life, we begin to live to God. How sad it is that we defer our happiness; we put it off, and dwell too much in nature and in life here, and so little in the immediate presence

of God. The Lord grant that we may be led to pray in secret about it, that we may draw near in full assurance of faith. Then a new world opens up to you, and you hold fast. When you draw near you begin to look in the direction in which God is looking, and you see He is looking at Christ, and what is set forth in Christ—all the fulness of God.

In the sanctuary you get the light of another world, of which Christ is the Centre. The apostle speaks of it, and he says "though our outward man perish, yet the inward is renewed day by day. For our light affliction which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen." That is the holiest. The apostle lived in the light of another world, and he held fast to it. You learn in the sanctuary what to hold fast to. Do you not see that what you are in touch with down here must come to an end? You are down here in natural life, and you can thank God for all the mercies you partake of in this life; but the whole question is whether you see another world where there is no failure or decay. Everything in this world is marked by decay, but there is not a trace of death in the holiest. You have passed death, and you have got the sense in your souls that you belong to another scene where no death can be. I think it is a very poor thing that some

have just got the knowledge that Christ died for them, and that they will go to heaven at last. It should be that you see that you belong to that world, that blessed scene, in which Christ is. I hold fast to what is eternal, to what binds me to that which I cannot see, and I know it is marked by stability and abidingness. *Christianity proposes to put you in present touch with what abides, with what will not decay, and with what we shall never lose.*

Then there is another thing. "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works." What Christianity proposes to do is to put me in affection with other people. I go into the holiest, and I learn there what a Christian is, what God's affection is for you. You are interested in me because God is interested in me, and I am interested in you because God is interested in you. We go into the holiest to learn that we are of value to Divine Persons. If you go into the holiest you learn the value of Christian intercourse; you see what the Christian is in the mind of God. That which is in nature is all right, but the bonds which God has formed in our souls are eternal. We do not make enough of each other. Beloved Christians, these divine relationships are more than anything. How may I provoke you to love and good works? By loving you. How can I go on like that? I must be in the holiest. I have been in there to learn

your value to God, and you have been in to learn my value to God, and I provoke you to love, and you provoke me to love. And what will happen now? We shall not forsake the assembling of ourselves together. I cannot understand how people can go and take the Lord's Supper and never come to a meeting during the week. I cannot understand a Christian not caring to be with other Christians. It seems so contrary, because, if you love me and I love you in these blessed bonds, I love being with you. People often come more readily to hear the Lord's servants give an address, or ministry, than they will on ordinary occasions. If you live in the holiest you will live in the light of divine affection for God's people, and you will be provoking them to love, and you will be glad to assemble with them. In the early days of the Church the Christians were always glad to be together; they enjoyed those blessed bonds in all their reality, in all their strength. I pray that these remarks may be helpful, and that your one desire may be to dwell in the presence of God. It is God's good pleasure to have you there. "Blessed are they that dwell in Thy house: they will be still praising Thee."

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