

A Heart Set on Pilgrimage

Psalm 84:5

Set in the context of coming to worship before God, the Psalmist speaks of the hunger & thirst for God (vs 1-2) of those who long for intimate encounter with God. Since God is infinite and we finite, we often look to surroundings that speak to us of God (vs 3-4). But intimacy with God is not found in physical surroundings - thus this quest for intimacy with God becomes a journey or pilgrimage (vs 5) of the heart.

We at River of Life are on spiritual pilgrimage - both individually and collectively. The upcoming move to Christ Community Church's building is only a part of our pilgrimage. It is important that we see ourselves going from strength to strength (vs 7), knowing that the journey is as important as reaching the destination

A Heart Set on Pilgrimage - pt 2

Psalm 84:3-4

"Even the sparrow has found a home, & the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young - a place near your altar" (emphasis mine). The symbolism here is finding a "home" near the place where God is worshiped and honored (***your altar***) - this is what the heart longs for and this is what ***pilgrimage*** is about. We feel best when we have found that "home," that place of belonging, security, nearness to God. This is necessary for worship to reach its full dimension.

Those who identify themselves with "your house" (vs 4) are those who live their lives in the presence of God daily, moment by moment. They "dwell" spiritually speaking in God's house or in His presence. These are pronounced as blessed. These are the ones who know that in themselves they are weak but in Him, they find strength. That is why their hearts are set - they are pilgrims.

A Heart Set on Pilgrimage - pt 3

Psalm 84:5

Blessed are those whose strength is in you...who have set their heart on pilgrimage.

The message here is, blessed are those who recognize and admit their own weakness, for they will strength for themselves in God.

The Apostle Paul understood this truth when he wrote: ***...for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong. (emphasis mine)***

In the prior verses (7-9) Paul explains that God had said to him that God's power is made perfect (fully realized) in Paul's human weakness. Think about it! When we are confident we are less likely to rely & call upon God. But bring us to the end of our rope, our strength, ability, stamina - there in our weakness we call upon God. It is precisely then that we realize that God is always strong and will be strong for us, especially when we are weak.

A Heart Set on Pilgrimage - pt 4

Psalm 84:5

Blessed are those whose strength is in you...who have set their heart on pilgrimage.

The word ***pilgrimage*** is used in the NIV in place of the word "way" found in the KJV. The word means a ***highway or raised way***.

It is used in Numbers 20:19 to indicate a simple road; in 2 Chronicles 9:11, for the steps of Solomon's temple; in Isaiah 11:16, it is used prophetically of the "highway" of the returning remnant; and in Proverbs 16:17, it is used metaphorically describing the way of the upright. The verb form is regularly used to speak of figurative construction.

As a Church we have set our hearts **on pilgrimage**, that is, we are going along a specific spiritual road that we are constructing at the same time we are traveling on it - and we are doing this **with** another congregation.