

Psalm 84

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[0 : 00] Today we're going to talk about Psalm 84. And I need to give you a little context first.! This is a person, the author of this psalm, this is a person writing from a place where they don't want to be.

Life has not turned out how they expected, not what they hoped for. Have you been there? Maybe some of you are there today. You're like, yeah, I'm not exactly where I expected to be. This week I got to talk to a lot of people. It was a fun week, and I was thinking back, processing over my week and some of the conversations I had. I work at a school, and I get to work with seniors a lot. And for a lot of them, senior life hasn't turned out how they hoped. They thought it would be this amazing mountaintop experience the whole year and tons of friends, and maybe they'd find someone to date and all these things. And for some of them, it's been lonely, or their friend groups have dispersed. And this thing about going to college, and it's going to all work out perfectly, they just still don't have direction. And there's a lot of pressure. It's tense. It's not what they thought. I got to talk to a jazz musician.

[1 : 05] He's a drummer, incredible guy. He's played with some world-renowned people. And someone asked him about challenges in his life, and he said, he's like COVID.

I was like, okay, we're still doing this. And he said, I lost everything. I was like, whoa. He said, I had a tour booked, and I said, I lost my tour. He said, I lost my wife through divorce.

I mean, it was, he lost everything. Excuse me. And now in his 50s, he's sort of starting over and trusting God daily. Not where he thought he was going to be. I had a conversation with a lady who met the Lord in her 20s.

Her life was going one direction, as far from God as you can get. And she met Jesus, and then went this way. Became a totally different person. And she got into ministry, went to seminary. But then she started working in a business.

And now she's in a business. It's a great business. It's fine. But the bottom line is just money. And she's really seeking purpose in her life. And her family's about to move. And she's like, I really want to prioritize my kids.

[2 : 05] And we're about to move. And I really, God's pulling my heart back towards ministry and purpose. I had a coffee with a guy, a good friend of mine.

Great guy. And, you know, from my perspective, I'm like, he is in the perfect place doing what, you know, God's gifted him to do. But his organization is changing. Things have moved.

Their values and priorities aren't aligning with his anymore. And the day I had coffee with him, he said, this is my last day of my job. Tomorrow he's going to wake up without a job. Not where he expected to be.

So if you've ever been in a place where you say to yourself, man, I never thought I'd be here. I didn't see this coming. You're in good company. The psalmist, he's a Levi.

This person who wrote this, he would have been someone who worked in the temple. So that's his job. Daily working in a temple. He supports temple life. And he loves being near God. And you have to have this perspective.

[3 : 02] Again, it's not like you just come to church. You come, you eat, you leave. Like God, the temple was God's presence. It was where he lived. His presence was there. The holy place, this holy of holies that as it's built through the temple and you go from the outside courtyards into the inner courts and then into the inner inner courts.

And then you have this most holy place that people were like, I can't even go near that place. Only on special occasions would someone go in there. Because that was heaven on earth. Yes, God's in

heaven, but this is where he dwells.

He is here with us. It was a beautiful, special place. And this guy has been removed from that. Possibly a skirmish with enemies, enemy nations. A lot of war happened.

It could have been an internal conflict like a civil war or kingdoms or tribes like fighting amongst themselves. But for whatever reason, this man's been displaced. And he's looking back like, man, he's picturing the temple and thinking like, I remember what it was like when I could be there in God's presence.

So here's the question I want to address today. How can I remain faithful in times of testing? And I feel like this is sort of part two. So Jesse spoke last week about lamenting.

[4 : 10] And a lot of these psalms are gritty. It's about real life. And he talked about how do we grieve well, complain to the Lord well, lamenting. And this is, it's a bit of a follow-up when we talk about times of testing. Now, don't worry.

You're like, you pastors, man, you guys, are y'all depressed? Are you okay? No, we're okay. But life is real. The psalms are real. It's about life. It's about what happens when things don't go like we expect.

And actually, it affirms that that can be good. What that affirms is like, when things don't turn out like we expect, I might have needed that to see something God wanted me to see in life that I wouldn't have seen otherwise.

So this might be a good thing. Even though it doesn't feel good, I'm fighting it. And people often say this thing like, God will never give you more than you can handle.

Sorry, church, no. Actually, the psalms affirms God will always lead us into places that are so much more than we can handle. Always. But the question is here, what do I do when I'm there?

[5 : 12] Where will I turn? So let's jump into it. Psalm 84. Here we go. A man writing who is not where he thought he would be. Verse 1.

How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty. My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young.

A place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house. They are ever praising you. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.

As they pass through the valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs. The autumn rains also cover it with pools. They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.

Hear my prayer, Lord God Almighty. Listen to me, God of Jacob. Look on our shield, O God. Look with favor on your anointed one.

[6 : 14] Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the Lord God is a sun and shield.

The Lord bestows favor and honor. No good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

I want to encourage you, we're going to be jumping back and forth in this passage. So if you have it up on your phones or you have your Bibles, just kind of stay in there and we're going to look around. And I want to give you a little more context.

You're going to do a little bit of just Bible study here. In the heading it says, for the director of music. And so I want us to remember this is a song. That's what psalms mean.

And these were for different occasions in the temple. So they'd often have different seasons. And people would come. It was their center of worship. And it actually kept the people, maybe some of you from background that use, from a church background that uses the liturgical calendar.

[7 : 15] And like, oh, we're in this season. It's Advent. It's Easter. It's Epiphany. You know, all these things. And so the temple was the place for this. And they'd often use music. There's one psalm.

It's a little interesting to read. But it's actually like the priests or the Levites, they'd be singing as people leave. You know, we do our benediction. Like, bless you. And they're singing this thing. And then the people like sing back. They're like, and you too.

Praise God. And we're leaving now. We're going for lunch. And then they're praising, like, praise you. You know, it's like this. And you read it. It's kind of like, that's weird. But then when you realize what they're doing, it's like, oh, they're blessing them as they leave. They're leaving. Leaving the temple.

And we got, I just want you to remember, this is a song. Okay? And songs are special because they have a way of moving our hearts, our emotions, in ways that just words can't. Remember that song in high school when you're driving in your car and the windows are down?

Maybe you're by yourself or you're with your friends. And it is the best song. And you're screaming it at the top of your lungs. And you feel like, I'm going to live forever. You know? You're going way faster than you should.

[8 : 14] And maybe a few weeks later, you've been through a breakup. And you're fine. Breaking up is not that bad. But then that song comes on. And it reminds you of her or him or whatever.

And you're like in your closet crying in the fetal position listening to the song over. And I don't know what that's like. I've heard about it. We got to remember, like, we just want to be mindful.

This is a song. Songs might read a little awkward. But it's poetry. And so in the midst of it, there's metaphor. It's artistic. And it can hit our heart in a special way.

So just be mindful of that. The other thing in there, it says, of the sons of Korah. Now, if you're Jewish, this would have been like a bit of a shock. This would have been a, what?

Wait a second. In Numbers 16, we have a story about Korah, who is a priest. He's the great grandson of Levi. And Korah, along with some other leaders, they actually rebel against Moses and specifically Aaron.

[9 : 15] They decide that, like, they don't like how things are going. They offer incense and a different, like, we're going to do our own thing. It was a bad deal. It was a scene. They decide to take things into their hands.

And what happens is, like, Moses makes a comment. He says, you know, watch. Well, God will decide this. Well, the earth opens up and swallows Korah.

Guys, this was happening. It was not pretty. And then fire consumes 250 people. It says the 250 people who offered incense, like, it wasn't right. And not good.

Jude, New Testament now. Okay, almost near the end, right? In the book of Jude. It mentions these false teachers. Okay, it's talking about in these times there will be false teachers and godless men.

And it says, similar to Sodom and Gomorrah, which is, like, the worst of the worst. Like, when people talk about Hitler, it's like, this Sodom and Gomorrah is, ooh, everyone. So he's, and then Jude in 1.11. Jude says this, woe to them.

[10 : 18] He's talking about all these false teachers, these godless men. He said, woe to them.

They have taken the way of Cain. They have rushed for profit into Balaam's error. They have been destroyed in Korah's rebellion.

Korah's name now has become a catchphrase for rebels. Godless people. Listen, when your major mistakes, when your blunders get recorded in the Bible for all time, for all history to read, that's not good.

That is not good. That feels very helpless. And you would think that's, that's pretty much the end of this guy. That's the end of his story. That's the end of his family. But listen to this. Numbers 26, 10 through 11.

The earth opened up, opened its mouth, and swallowed them along with Korah, whose followers died when the fire devoured the 250 men. And they served as a warning sign. The line of Korah, however, did not die out.

In the midst of this devastating rebellion, punishment, shame, shame on the family name, shame for what felt like maybe eternity, the Lord relents. He shows compassion.

[11 : 24] He saves a remnant. And listen, here's what's amazing. Because of the mercy of God, a family that had become known for rebellion against God's anointed, they became the anointed ones in the temple who led people into worshiping God's presence.

God can redeem any situation in any family. I love my grandmother. She was the light in our family. She was jovial.

She was always laughing. She was this short lady, amazing woman. She didn't grow up in a household that knew the Lord.

It was rough. And my grandfather would tell me more of the stories of her life when she was a young, young child. Her parents were partiers. This was way back in the day. We say back in the day. This was way back in the day. Okay, my great-grandparents.

They were known to have parties. They were the people. They were the house in the neighborhood where people came to play, gambling. And they would make their own liquor, I believe, during

Prohibition. And in a bathtub, I don't know why you do that. That sounds disgusting.

[12:26] But they would make their own liquor. And they were the life of the party. But it was rough. It was rough. One day, someone invited my great-grandmother, whom I never met, and a friend.

They had a good friend who were couples. They invented them to like a tent revival meeting. Like a revival meeting, right? And they go. And they sat in the back.

And at the end, God was pulling on their heartstrings. The Holy Spirit was speaking to them. And they stood up. And they walked to the front. And they gave their life to the Lord. The next day, they brought their husbands, my great-grandmother, and her friend.

They brought their husbands. They sit. They listen. And my great-grandfather and his friend. They stand up at the end. And they go down. And they give their life to the Lord. My grandmother told me that like my great-grandfather went out.

And again, they were big partiers. But she said they dumped out all their booze. And like he took his cigarettes to the train tracks and laid them on the train tracks. Let the train run it over. And she said he never smoked again.

[13:31] I'm like, dang. Okay, that's Jesus. Because y'all know like addictions are hard to break. And that was it. God can redeem families. My grandmother grew up in church after that.

She met my grandfather in church. Back in the day when you had to have a chaperone to go on a date, they like, you go on walks with groups. And there'd be adults. And like that was your date. She had the gift of hospitality when I would visit their church near Chicago.

Everyone that met me and was like, oh, that's your grandpa. Oh, your grandma. She can cook. She'd have everyone in the house. Missionaries, teachers, new people. Well, anyone who visited the church would come to my grandmother's house.

Listen, you may come from a family of godless rebels. Or you might just have some good old family dysfunction. If that's all you've experienced, it's okay.

God can change you. And you can affect generations to come. Here's my first point. Simply from the title of this psalm. How can I be faithful in times of testing when life isn't what it should be?

[14:34] Well, here's one thing. No matter how you feel, keep doing the right thing. Your actions matter for generations to come. Now, it sounds simple. I know it sounds like, wait, really? But in times of testing, when you're starting to lose your mind, when you're like, why, God?

And you're like that Levite who, I just want to be, we're doing my thing, what God's made me do. The longing, the pain. Sometimes God heals those things in our lifetime.

But even if he doesn't, even if he doesn't heal that pain or grant that longing or in your lifetime, listen, it only lasts a lifetime. More importantly, your faithfulness, your trust in Jesus, that will impact generations.

And even more important than that, your faith, your obedience, that lasts for eternity in God's presence. So keep doing the right thing.

Your actions matter. I want to look at the first few verses here. As you look at 1 to 7, and this guy's talking about how lovely your place is.

[15:37] My soul yearns. Like, he's yearning, right? When we want something so bad and we can't have it, often jealousy or envy can creep in.

And like Jesse talked about, grief or lament. I want to actually encourage you, like, just a quick note. Like, there are no, like, bad emotions. Emotions are just emotions. They can be good or bad. Like, this guy's envy is actually driving him towards the Lord. He's jealous of birds. Like, he's actually picturing, like, that temple. And he's like, man, I remember being in the temple. It says, like, what, the sparrow has found a home. The swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young, a place near your altar.

He's thinking, like, even those, I remember there's a bird nest up there. And like, even those birds, man, they got to be close to God. No one's bothering them. Like, I'm stuck over here on this mountain or in this enemy territory. Man, I just, I wish I could be like that.

Like, one of those little birds just right there close to God's presence. He's jealous for that. And then he starts talking about these pilgrims. Right? Verse 5. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.

[16:35] And then they make this way through this valley. And there's something about pools, which can mean blessings. We'll get to that. They go from strength to strength until each appears

before God and Zion. Now he's thinking about these people who are making this pilgrimage.

And this happened in Israel during certain seasons of the year. Right? Everyone would come back to the temple. We're all coming back to God's presence. This is when we all get together. And now there was food. It was exciting. There was worship. There were parties.

And he's like, man, I'm thinking about those people. I love, in Hebrew, when it says, like, they've set their hearts on pilgrimage. Actually, literally, it reads, like, in whose hearts are the highways.

So it's like, it's in their heart. Like, there's nothing that's going to stop them. Everything in their heart is, like, moving them towards God. They just want to be close to God. It is in their heart to be. And that's all God wants anyway.

Really? Like, all he wants is our hearts. And these people, it's like, their heart is pulling them to God. No matter the circumstances, their motivation is, man, I want God. He's what I want. He's what I desire.

[17:37] When my family was leaving Malaysia, we lived in a home that had belonged to the school for many, many years. Like, they'd rented it. It wasn't the school's house. But my in-laws lived in this house at one point.

And my family got to live in this house. And it was a really cool old, like, row house that was developed by the architect. I think it was from the Netherlands or something. But he was friends with a local Malay Chinese man.

And it was just a very cool, structured house. It wasn't huge. It wasn't elaborate. But it just, it was a neat place. And it had been lived in for really years. And decades from people, Christian ministries, ministers would live at our school.

Missionaries, teachers, all these people had lived in this house. And it was a very special place.

And so when we were going to leave, our neighbors were the landlords. And this was a local Chinese Malaysian family. They were Buddhist.

And they said, hey, when you guys go, we actually would like to take the house back. After years and years and years, they're like, our family is going to live there. I said, our daughter and her family are just going to move into this house.

[18:35] And I'm like, hey, that's great. Okay, no problem. And we had done a lot to fix up the house. And it just was a very special place. And so you know how it is when you've put, you've invested in something. And it means a lot to you and your kids. And so the day came for this family to come and move into this house.

Or not move into it, just to see it. And we're going to ask them, like, do you want some things? You know, should we leave this here for you? You know, all the things that you ask. And they showed up. And I was just expecting, like, they're probably a Buddhist family, like our neighbors.

And it's very common. Listen, Malaysia, it's most people are. It's a Muslim country. And there are pockets of, like, Chinese Buddhist people or Hindu Indian people. Or there's, you know, these different groups of people.

So his family shows up. And we meet them. And we start talking to them. And he's like, I'm a pastor at the local Chinese Malaysian church over here.

It's a Baptist church. And, like, our mind just exploded. I was like, are you kidding me right now? It was very cool. And so we got to know them. And then they came back a few weeks later.

[19:36] And, like, closer to the time we're going to leave, and we just wanted to go through some things. And how can we help you? What do you need? What do you want to buy? Whatever. And closer to the time we're going to leave, he comes.

They sit in our kitchen. And he said, hey, I just want to sit with you guys. Can I just, I want to bless you. I want to read a psalm. And he reads Psalm 84, which is my favorite psalm. I'm sorry. I should have probably led with that.

But Jesse's like, what do you want to preach on? And he's like, I want to give you Psalm 84. And you're like, all right. Come on, God. Really? Like, this is amazing. So I'm getting choked up before the guy even starts reading. And he says, listen, I just want to pray this blessing of strength over you.

Like, strength to strength. Like, right, it says these pilgrims are going from strength to strength. Not like strength to, like, weakness or, like, hope to despair. Oh, and then your hope again is, like, life can be that way, right?

Like, yay, one step forward, one step back. And I think he's like, no, strength to strength to strength. That's what God gives you. Like, you guys will feel courage to courage to courage. He will provide. You will feel his provision.

[20 : 32] Provision and then provision and provision. And he wanted to pray that over us. And then he mentioned, he said, did you know, like, this thing, when people would travel in the dry season, these pilgrims, and I didn't know this.

That's new to me. He said, these pilgrims, during the dry seasons, they would make their way through this valley. And it's a bit of a desert. He said, they would dig these holes, right? And he said, it wasn't for them.

It's because later, during the rainy season, like, other travelers would come through. And it would fill up with water. And the water would be there. And that word pools means blessings. He said, those blessings, that pools, that would be there for other travelers who would come through later times in the year.

And he said, we really just want to thank you guys because you've left blessings here for us. This house is a blessing for us. You've done work for the Lord here. And that was good for us to hear. That gave us courage because sometimes you can leave a place going like, man, did I make a difference?

Have I done anything here? And the day we left, it was a tough day. You guys know how it's moving. Not just like moving houses, but moving countries. And it was a whole thing. I won't go into it.

[21 : 33] There was a lot of grief. There was a lot of difficulty. But the day we left, he was there. And he was at his in-law's house right next door. He was kind of pointing over the wall at this tree. He's like, look, those are the pools right there. You've left blessings behind.

I'm like, what is he looking at? Well, my daughter Kezia had planted this jackfruit tree. She had this seed. And we're like, oh, OK. She's little. And we're like, it's not going to grow, but go ahead. And she started in a pot. And then she measured it by chopsticks. And then she wanted to put it in the yard. We're like, oh, my gosh. The thing's growing. What do we do? I'm like, honey, what's your? So we put it down near the corner. And the thing just is, it was 20 feet tall by the time we left. And it had these huge jackfruit on it, right? They're terrible. Don't eat it. I'm just going to tell you, my family loves it. I'm like, oh, so bad. Anyway, people there get very excited about it. Love this thing. And the guy's pointing at it. He's like, look. And there on the tree were these huge jackfruits. We never got to eat the jackfruit. Praise him. No. We never got to eat it. But it was left for someone else.

[22 : 32] In times of testing, when you're longing for something, when life isn't as it should be, here's my second thing I just want to leave with you. A journey with your heart focused on one destination. Okay.

God. And leave blessings behind for others. You're going to get distracted. When you're in the midst of testing, some days you'll lose all focus.

Man, you'll stray down that path of discouragement, despair. You know, my friend who just lost his job this week, it's not a good day for him. He's not feeling hopeful. I had a student who just lost a pet this week.

Their family had to put down their dog. And that's all he's known since he's been alive. As a little guy, he's had this dog in his life. And it's just like, man, I'm losing part of the family. Yeah, that life hits you, man. It's confusing.

You might get obsessed with what you want. No, you will. What you think you need. And when life isn't as we hope, we almost always get overly self-focused.

[23 : 29] We tend to isolate ourselves. I know that's the, you're like, thanks, Pastor. Good. That's great. Thank you. I feel better now. Listen, but catch your breath, right? Look to God. Look to God.

Keep journeying, even if it's one foot in front of the other, like those pilgrims going towards Zion. And he'll give you strength for that day. Yeah, again, one foot in front of the other, just for that day. That's enough. And you're moving towards the temple. You're moving towards the Lord. And then, think of someone you can help. There's someone around who needs help that you can help out. When we stop to bless other people, usually it's our own heart that gets healed. And we're blessed in the process. I know you've probably just figured that out as we serve. Like, God tells us to serve. Why is Jesus always telling us to serve?

Because as we serve, like, something in us is served with God's joy. And if you don't know who to help, just ask God. Like, God, put someone in my life. Father, would you just put someone in my life who needs help?

[24 : 27] Buckle up. All right, for the sake of time, I'm going to move kind of quickly through this next point. But this is actually the heart of the psalm. And it's so good.

Like, I want to encourage you, if you want to memorize part of a psalm, if you want to memorize part of a passage in the Bible, verse 10 on is just so good, where he says, Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere.

I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the Lord God is a son and shield. The Lord bestows favor and honor. Or, man, how can he say that? Right? One day, like, what is that about? And the question I want to address with that first is, like, well, what do you want? What do you expect in life? Because we're usually consumed with that question, like, what do I really want?

What do I expect to happen here? And then we have this burning, inescapable issue that we have to talk about if we're going to choose this life of faith. Okay? No way around it.

[25 : 25] Is God really better than wealth, security, pleasure, control, whatever? Pick your thing. Is God better than that? And can I trust God? Praise him. Thank you. Can I trust God to meet my needs?

Like, really? Can I really trust God? I'm not talking about, what's interesting, we're like, yeah, my salvation, I'm good. Eternity. That's a big, it's actually a really big deal. But, like, God's got it. But, like, right here on this planet, in my life, at work, at home, like, man, we're like white knuckle.

And they're like, I don't know. I don't know. You know, like, can God really meet my needs? Not my wants, my needs. This Levite, he's like, I would take a menial job.

It's not a, look, doorkeeper wasn't the best of jobs. But it was, he's like, I want to do that. That would be better just for one day if I could be close to God rather than have the whole world and all that it affords.

Because God is my son. Okay? My provider, the source of life, the great source of my life. And he's my shield, my protector, the one who guards that life that he's given me.

[26 : 28] All right, point three, real quick. Choose daily to trust God is enough. Very important. That word choose, sometimes you just have to choose.

You don't feel it. You don't, there's not writing in the sky. There aren't angels singing. You have to choose to trust that God's enough. I may not get the other things I need.

If I know God, he knows me, that's enough. If I have one more day to live, I can experience God and his presence. One day. That's more meaningful.

That's a more full, prosperous, beautiful life than years without God. Trusting God is a choice worth making, y'all. All right, here's my final encouragement.

And I'm going to be honest, it's a little kind of ethereal. It's just going to sound like up in the theological clouds, but I don't want it to stay there.

[27 : 24] Hopefully God can bring this to your heart. Verse 11 is amazing. It said, God, the sun and shield, the Lord bestows favor and honor.

That word honor in Hebrew is kabod. It really means glory. The Lord bestows favor and glory. Kabod.

This word glory, it means anything that's honorable, glorious, worthy, legitimate. Literally, it means weight. It means something heavy, valuable.

I was a server in a restaurant when I was a young man. I remember you get these little credit cards. You don't think twice about it. And all of a sudden, I got this credit card. And I was like, oh, dang. I was like, what is this? Like, I'd never seen one of those before.

And some of you don't know what I'm talking about. It was heavy. It was made out of something that is not from the planet Earth. Like, I don't know what it was made out of. But it was thick. And it was pure black.

[28 : 20] And with someone, I was like, what? I didn't know it was real. I was like, what is this? Like, it feels like it weighs a pound for a card. And someone's like, hmm. And I looked at it like, yeah, you can do things with that card. You have to be somebody.

I was like, oh, my gosh. And this is weighty. It was heavy. The Bible uses this word kabod as something that has inherent, intrinsic worth.

The biblical use is like God's splendor, his manifest presence. Okay, the manifestation of God's presence. That's kabod. In Exodus 33, it says Moses is up on the mountain with God. And he says, show me your kabod. Show me your glory. And God takes Moses and puts him. Like, he has to put him in a rock. So he can just pass by him. And then Moses is like, you know, he comes down.

His face is glowing. People are like, Moses, stop. You need to stop, Moses. Exodus 24, before that, when Moses goes up Mount Sinai, it says the people looked at Mount Sinai.

[29 : 17] And the kabod of God, the glory of God, looked like a consuming fire on that mountain. They were afraid to touch the, they didn't want to go near the mountain because it looked like that kabod, that glory was like a consuming fire on the mountain.

In 1 Kings 8, there's this incredible story. Solomon, you know, he's been building this temple for years and years. And they put all things in. And finally, it's time. And they bring in the Ark of the Covenant.

The priests are ready. And everyone's ready. And it actually says, the cloud of kabod, all right, the glory of God, Yahweh, it fills this temple. And the heaviness, the weight of his glory was so thick. It said the priests, they couldn't offer the sacrifices. Like, they couldn't do their job. Y'all, Jesus stopped church, okay? God was like, oh, Jesus sort of, yeah. Anyway, God was like, my presence is going to be so manifest.

Like, they had to stop what they were doing because that's what happens when God shows up, right? He stopped the service. It was so thick. It was so heavy. The presence of God was manifest. His kabod was there. Psalms says over and over, the earth is full of God's glory.

[30 : 20] God's kabod, right? Yahweh's kabod, his glory is on the earth. Hang with me. The Old Testament's Hebrew, right? The New Testament's written in Greek. The Greek word for the same idea, the same thing, is doxa, okay?

That's Greek. I'm not a scholar. I'm just giving it to you. You can look it up. Doxa. John 1.14. Here we go. You ready? The word, God, the reason, logos, God, became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

Dwelling is that word. I love it. Tabernacle. Okay, think temple. God tabernacled among us. He dwelt. He now is home. Think the temple. He's here, the holy of holies. So the word became flesh. What? God became flesh? We've seen his doxa, glory. The glory of the one and only Son who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. We have seen his glory.

Okay, and this is, if you're Jewish, this is a, oh my gosh, moment. Like you, that glory is now walking around with us? Hold on to this concept. This is the Old Testament.

[31 : 21] Yahweh's, remember, Yahweh's glory descends on Mount Sinai. It fills the temple. There's the Ark of the Covenant. This holy place where you don't go near it. God's presence lives in there. His glory's there.

In the New Testament now, we have Jesus descending and walking among us as God's kabod. Doxa, God's glory. When I was in Israel a few years ago, we had the amazing opportunity to visit Israel.

Some friends brought us over who lived there about seven years ago. And there's these things you can do. Some of it's a little hokey. I'm just going to be honest. Some of it's like you go to the Jordan River and it's not really that big.

And you're like, really? And then they're like, Jesus was like, he walked right here on this patch of sand. And you're like, I don't know about that. You know, like, it's just weird. But then there's a lot of things that are really cool.

There was a church they built over this mountain where they think that Jesus might have been crucified. A little strange, but it's like, it's a really eerie kind of place. And there's a place where you can, like, reach in this thing and, like, touch the mountain.

[32 : 20] Like, they've covered most of it. I'm like, why didn't you guys just leave it so we could, like, walk in? Anyway, and you can touch the mountain. And some people, like, it's a little weird for them. Like, I don't know about that.

That sounds, that might be demonic. And I don't know. I was just like, listen, I've got the Holy Spirit. Like, I'm not worried about getting what that's got. I'm like, it might get what I got. Like, it might get the Holy Spirit. I'm like, God made the mountain.

It's like, it's his. He's my father's. That's my mountain right there. But anyway, I didn't get to touch the mountain because there's a long line and whatever. But there's a place called this Western Wall. Okay? And you can, there's this wall.

And it's a beautiful place. And you can go up to it and you can stand there and pray. And I'm like, okay, I'm down. And so I walk up to this wall.

And I will look at people. And, you know, they're like, the guys are over here. Ladies are over there. They give you a little yarmulke thing to wear. You're like, this is a special place. I still put my hands on the wall. And I'm going to pray. I don't know what to expect.

[33 : 15] I'm like, well, if nothing else, I'm just going to sit in the shade here and be with God for a little while. It can't be that bad. And I sat there with my hands on this wall. And I started praying and just listening. And what came over me was this deep sense of grief.

Like I literally got choked up. Because this wall is about the closest point you could get to where the temple used to be. And the temple, it's not a news flash. Hopefully it isn't new news.

But the temple's destroyed. It's not there. There's just a big open place now. There's no temple. So I have my hands on this wall. And I'm praying. And I'm like, I start just tearing up. Because I'm like, God, this was, we were so close.

Like I'm jealous of this guy. Like there was a time and a place when you could just walk into a room and be in God's presence like instantaneously, like on demand. And I'm sitting there with my hands on this wall.

And just like, I'm just weeping. Like, man, God, that would have been so cool. I'm so close to where you used to be. Why can't we do that anymore? And I sat there for a while praying.

[34 : 14] And then all of a sudden this like deep sense of peace came over me. And I felt God, Father say to me, I'm with you everywhere. And I felt his joy.

I'm like, this is better. Yeah, I can't just walk into the temple and like, yeah, that seems, but it is better this way because he's with me wherever I go. Let me give you this.

In Psalm 94, this guy's longing for God's temple. He just wants to be close to God, even if it's just one day. But listen to what Paul says. 2 Corinthians 3.18. And we all who with unveiled faces.

Okay, Moses had to veil his face. But he says, we have unveiled faces. We reflect the Lord's doxa, his glory. And are being transformed into his image with ever increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Then in Colossians, a little teaser, because we're going there, church. We're going to be in Colossians in a few weeks. Colossians 1. The mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the Lord's people.

[35 : 18] To them, God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of his mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Doxa. Kabod. Y'all, this week as we anticipate Easter and we celebrate the death of Jesus, when the veil to the holy place was torn open and God is no longer in that box, and now anyone can walk up in there and be in his presence everywhere, at every moment.

Unlike the author of Psalm 84, he hoped for just, man, he was like, if I could just have one more day in your presence. He's just hoping, y'all, we have this day. And what's more, please listen to this, church, because this is the point that I want you to get in your heart.

No matter what your life looks like, no matter what season you're going through, maybe it's a season of testing, or maybe you're like, pure joy. Everything's great. It doesn't matter. Today, your value, your identity, the weight, okay, the way, who you are, it's Christ in you.

You carry that kabod, the doxa of God. You possess in your being the glory of God. As a new creation, you have intrinsic worth, inherent value.

[36 : 45] And we're going to receive communion. Band, you can come on up. And let's celebrate our God. Let's celebrate our connection with him.

Let's remember Jesus who cleared the path for us, who took our place. Maybe you're not a Christian. Maybe, again, this might be new to you. And you're like, man, I want that identity.

That, I don't feel glory in my life. If you want that, if you don't want to live alone, you're like, man, I want to daily live with God. There's going to be a prayer on the screen that will invite you into that relationship.

You can pray with someone else. If you have questions, that's fine. Come on up afterwards. Be like, what is this about? We would love to pray with you. Followers of Jesus, I'm going to ask today that

you make your way to the tables and you get the elements.

And then would you bring it back to your seat? We're going to observe this together today. And when you have your juice and the cracker, take time once you bring it back to your seat. Maybe you want to confess.

[37 : 42] Maybe you want to grieve some places in your life. You're like, God, this doesn't look like what I expected. Not where I hoped I was going to be today, God. But pray for help. Okay? Look to God. Whatever is on your heart, we'll take it together.

Okay? So you can go ahead and get it and come back. Let me just pray. Father, meet us in the places of our lives that may not look like what we hoped. But show us what you have for us. And show us your glory. Amen.