

DO I CRY OUT FOR FELLOWSHIP WITH GOD?

Russ Bowman

“My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the LORD; My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.” (Psalm 84:2)

I don't know which of the “sons of Korah” wrote this psalm, or whether it may have been the product of a collective effort. But I would love to spend some time with him, if for no other reason than to appreciate better his heart. I am shamed by his yearning for God.

Here is a man who lived under the Mosaic covenant, most likely in the days of David's rule. There is no temple yet, though it does appear that David has in this day constructed the tabernacle in Jerusalem and that the regular worship and sacrifices are being conducted there. And though the tabernacle may have been impressive, it was still just a tent surrounded by curtained courtyards. This man understood forgiveness and atonement as they were revealed in animal sacrifices. He saw the tedious nature of God's law and the difficulty of keeping such. Worship, and daily living, involved prescribed rituals, repetitive holy days, burdensome restrictions.

He did not know Yahweh as a God who humbled Himself to live as a man, attain a sinless life, die a horrid sacrificial death, emerge in glorious resurrection, and ascend again to heaven. He did not appreciate the love of God expressed in the offer of redemption for all mankind. He had never read of Jesus, of His benevolent miracles, of His words of hope. He did not know the parable of the prodigal son. He saw the shadow, not the reality. He did not know God as I know God.

And yet, he cried out for the fellowship with God that comes in worship. He saw God as a welcoming, providing, powerful, listening, attentive, protective, gracious, glorious benefactor to His people. He wanted nothing more than to be in His presence.

That's the heart I want. I am impacted at times by others. I have resented opportunities to worship because someone has frustrated me, hurt me, marginalized me, dismissed me, disparaged me, discouraged me. Or simply because I wanted to be elsewhere. I have lost my focus occasionally. And my joy. God help me to recapture my longing simply to be in His presence. May I ever see Him as my sun and shield, the source of grace and glory. May I remember that the blessed man is the man who trusts in the living God. And may my heart and flesh cry out for You, O LORD of hosts.