



SESSION 5

The Where of Worship

LOOKING BACK TO THE STUDY OF PSALM 27

Pastor Emmanuel in his sermon on Psalm 27 said that the antidote to our fear is God's loving presence. Comment on this. Do you find this to be true? Why or why not?

What are ways that someone who has odds against them maintains fearless faith?

How can we be a people not defined by fear, but by faith?

READ ALOUD | PSALM 84

Head | 15–20 Minutes

Observe the text and the author's main points

- There is a longing and necessity to be near the temple, not only because it is where the true God dwells, but it is the symbol that holds the cosmos together. Why do you think the temple is so central to the worship of Israel?
- Read Psalm 84 again in its entirety and listen for themes of creation being restored and renewed. As the exiled Israelite makes a pilgrimage to the temple through the Valley of Baca ("Valley of Weeping"), what themes of new creation do you recognize emerging?
- Knowing the story of Israel as a chosen people to be the means by which all creation will be restored animates the backdrop of this psalm. Think about this: the purpose and structure of the Temple (aka God's House) is not analogous to a church building or synagogue. It is a different kind of structure altogether, one that recaptures the theme of the whole story of scripture - God's personal presence dwelling among His people. In what way does this Psalm express the centrality of the Temple/Tabernacle in the larger biblical story?

Heart | 15–20 Minutes

Envision how the text—when applied—might transform your inner life in terms of your thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors

- What emotions do you feel when reading about the psalmist's yearning for the courts of the Lord?
- On one level this Psalm is about the worship of God in His presence. On a more subtle level, it is about the piety and well-being of God's people (verses 5, 10, 12). There is great responsibility in worshiping at the place God chooses to dwell (hence the reason why a Psalm like 84 exists to "exiled" Jews). If Israel is unfaithful they lose God's presence and the Temple, and with that the world that was held together by them. What can we learn from the worshiper in exile longing to be in God's presence?
- John the evangelist riddles the first chapter of his gospel with temple language, identifying Jesus as the new eschatological dwelling place of God. "The Word became flesh and tabernacled among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory..." (John.1:14). Now that Jesus has transformed where and how we worship, how can this Psalm continue to encourage our longing to be near to God?

Hands | 10 Minutes

Apply the text by moving from inward reflection to outward action looking for ways to live the text out in our lives to serve others.

Reaching Upwards: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- The psalmist expresses a deep yearning to be in the presence of God, stating, "My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of the Lord." How do you experience a longing for God's presence in your life? What steps do you take to nurture this desire and draw closer to Him?
- How can you cultivate a deeper longing for God's presence in the more mundane aspects of your daily life?
- What actions will you take this week to prioritize worship and time with God?

Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- **Back to School:**
 - Continue to pray for all academic institutions in our city as the new school year begins.
 - Pray for FPC local mission partners who serve children and families in our communities as they launch their new school year programs.
 - Pray that our congregation will respond to the call to serve with these partners as mentors and volunteers, for example, at the **Cullen Military Academy Staff Appreciation Breakfast** on Wednesday, September 4 from 7:45-8:30 AM. For more information, email Madie Weir at mweir@fpchouston.org or sign-up here: signup.com/client/invitation2/secure/12421671500104/false#/invitation
- **Movie Night - September 14 - 3 PM - LC 080** - Pray for and invite friends to come to the September 14th Movie Night. For additional information contact Emmanuel Paulpeter, Pastor of Outreach, at epaulpeter@fpchouston.org.
- Find opportunities to serve others in love and humility. Acts of kindness and service are powerful ways to experience and share God's presence. Get in the habit of visiting this site for ideas fpchouston.org/serve/ways-to-serve/upcoming-opportunities.

Reaching Beyond

- **Uganda Mission Trip** - The FPC Uganda team returned to Houston safely with thanksgiving for your prayers. They ask for these follow up praises and prayers:
 - Praises for amazing experience at the Renewal Summit and the time with Africa Renewal Ministries (ARM) staff and ministries;
 - Prayer that the Lord will use their experiences in Uganda in new ways to deepen their faith and involvement with ARM through prayer, volunteering, contributing, and other ways the Holy Spirit might move them to do.
- **Post-Alpha Groups** - Pray for the success of Post-Alpha nights (September 12 & 26) to deepen relationships and interest in Jesus Christ. Pray that those who come feel welcome and continue their interest in and commitment to the gospel. For additional information contact Emmanuel Paulpeter, Pastor of Outreach, at epaulpeter@fpchouston.org.