

Psalm 84. True & Greater Passion

**“True & Greater Passion”**  
**Psalm 84**

*Introduction:* Pg. \_\_\_\_

At the turn of the millennium, yes, the year 2000, I was a 20 year young man, playing ball in college and working on staff in the youth ministry at my church. That summer, a handful of college students and young professionals loaded in a van and traveled south an area outside of Memphis, TN, known as Shelby Farms.

That is where we gathered with 40,000 people for what was known as **One Day PICTURE**.

The Passion Movement - started by Louie Giglio... brought in some of the most powerful speakers in our nation and some of the most renowned worship leaders: Tomlin. Matt Redman, Crowder.

- I'll never forget riding in the van listening to “The Road to one day.”
- I'll never forget John Piper's sermon that exhorted us to live for a greater vision of life than retiring on a beach somewhere to collect seashells and standing before God one day and saying: “Hey God, look at my shells!”
- I'll never forget - Praying with a man who prayed over me for God's future purposes in my life.
- I'll never forget singing songs of praise with friends as the rain fell on that field.

The passion movement is built off of a verse in Isaiah 26:8 (268 generation - “In the path of your judgments, we wait for you; your name and your renown are the desire of our soul.”

Today, we are going to consider what it looks like to...

**The Point: Passionately pursue the presence of God as you pilgrim home.**

*FCF:* Last week: commitment. This week: passion. Sounds like a repeat. We need that track ran back (like a good song, whose lyrics we want to ingrain in our memory, because we believe in them so much)

This morning I want to help us think about what drives our passion (why), what passion looks like (what) and what passion leads to (where).

**I. His presence motivates our passion.**

*The Why of Passion: Presence of God (in the Psalm)*

- The setting of the psalm is most likely marked by a time of the year when those living in Israel outside of Jerusalem would have journeyed into the city for one of the great festivals like Passover or Pentecost.
- Psalm 84 is focused on Jerusalem, and more specifically, the temple, which was the epicenter of Israel's worship and the place where God makes his presence known in a special way.
- That is why verse 1 begins: “How lovely...”
  - With the language of a poetic, love song, the psalmist says the presence of God is supreme in his heart. He wants to be near God! (Psalm 73:28)
  - He wants to be in “the courts” where God was worshiped by the great multitudes of people, both [the thousands] who lived in Jerusalem and [the thousands] who journeyed there.

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- And here we discover the stunning reality that God delights to dwell among ordinary people like us. This is how it has always been.

### Biblical Theology of Presence

- **Creation:** Garden of Eden, God and man dwelled together in complete harmony.
- After the **Fall**, God chose to make the manifestation of his presence known in special ways...
  - First through the **Tabernacle**, as the Israelites were a Nomadic people (holy of holies).
  - Then, through the **Temple**, that was constructed by Solomon.
    - But even then, we must understand, it was that God chose to make his glory known there in a special way, not that his presence was limited to that place or any place. The people knew that very well, for their greatest King David, said: “ David’s words
    - And Solomon, when he dedicated the temple, said in 2 chronicles 2:5-6: “ house for the name.
- But God would make his true and greater presence known through **Redemption:**
  - When he sent his son: **Jesus**, of Nazareth, the Christ: “***And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us (tabernacled among us), and we beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.***” **John 1:14.** Jesus is Immanuel, **God with us.**
  - liveSTRENGTHEN CHRIST-CENTERED??
  - But he didn’t stop there: After Jesus ascended to heaven, the **Holy Spirit** was sent to be the presence of God, not simply among us, but **[God] in us!**
- **New Creation:** Restored to God’s Presence

Here’s the point: God wants to make his presence made known to us. If not for our sin, we would never be separated from God’s presence. The whole goal of Psalm 84 is to experience more of God. And did you see the staggering picture of God in these verses!

*God is the Goal: YHWH is his name*

Bible reading tip: Every time you read any portion of the Bible, and this is particularly helpful when you read the psalms, ask: What does this passage say about the Triune God?

When you come to God you are coming to...

- **YHWH** (2,2,3,11,12)- (translated I am. Exodus 3. What’s your name God? (If God were to wear a name tag (grab a name tag), it would say “YHWH” - scholars call that the tetragrammaton. We should call it the most four powerful letters ever known. It means - I am.
  - Who is God? The one who is. He always was (unlike us), always is (unlike us), always will be (unlike us).
  - We cannot make God who we want him to be (really good at that) as if he didn’t already introduce himself: YHWH!
- He is YHWH, **Lord Almighty, Lord of hosts (1 & 3)** - the one with complete & perfect power. He can do anything. No one can strong arm God. He always has the final word. But . . .

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- YHWH is the **living God (2)** - He is “involved and active in our world.” He is alive. (Hello resurrection!) and he is the...
- YHWH is the Lord, **the King (3)** - He reigns over our world and over us, as our benevolent protector. AND...
- YHWH, the Lord is **my God (3)** - He is personal. I belong to him, and he belongs to me.
- YHWH, is “**the Deity**” (7 in the LXX is translated: “**God of gods**”) In other words, he has no rivals! We’re not done. :)
- YHWH, is the **God of Jacob (8)**, whose redemptive plan stretches back to a man of faith who had a family of faith, that become a nation who worshipped the one, true God. If you have faith in Jesus you are part of that family!
- YHWH, **sun and shield (11)**.
  - God is a sun: He gives life, illuminates, is radiant (symbolizes all that is “outgoing and positive (light, joy, heat, energy)”
    - The sun is “Symbolic of the era of restoration.” (Is 60:19, Mal 4:2 & Rev. 21?)
  - God is also a shield: protective
- YHWH, is the **giver of good gifts (11)**.
  - What does he give? “favor and honor” as expressions of his blessing. Favor: is the nearness of God and the distribution of his gracious gifts. If God shows someone favor, it means he showed up! Honor: children of the king.
  - What does he give? Every good thing in our lives. Don’t miss the end of v.11: “No good thing does he withhold from those who walk uprightly.”
    - “Goodness and mercy follow us all the days of our lives” (Ps 23:6, Bobby, Francis Turley). That’s legacy...

Listen: YHWH, Lord Almighty, my King, my God, the living God, the God of Gods, who is the God of Jacob, a sun and shield to his people who gives completely good gifts. This is our God and our God is NOT one-dimensional. In fact, you can do this with every Psalm... show me a psalm that fails to present a multi-dimensional of God!

T: His presence is our passion. When we see God clearly, it will compel us to...

### II. Live with a consuming passion for God.

*Look at the passion of the psalmist:*

Verse 2 says:

- “I faint with longing”
- The psalmist is saying: “My whole being craved, yes exhausted itself, for Yhwh’s courtyards. My heart and my body, they resound to the living God.” (Goldingay)
  - Craved - suggests “desperation.”
  - Exhausted suggests the “person was consumed by this feeling.” (Psalm 42 & Psalm 63)
- It’s little wonder C.S. Lewis, in his reflections on the Psalms, chose to speak of having “an appetite for God.”

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- What's your appetite like? Are you so satisfied on other pursuits that you have no appetite for God?
- When you walk into a house, and that crock pot has been on for about four hours, or something has been simmering on the stove, and the aroma just hits you in the face the moment you walk in? What's for dinner? It's tantalizing! It only increases your hunger.
  - That's how it should be when we hear a conversation about God. Let me in...
  - That's how it should be when we see people worshiping. Give me some of that...
  - That's how it should be when we see people serving people. Can I lend a helping hand?
- What's your appetite level for God?
- And like a good meal, our appetite will be satisfied in a way that we savor the experience and enjoy and want to go back for more! (Lobster Shack)
  - Blessing (a happy state) comes from a passionate pursuit. The blessed are those who: praise God (4), find strength in God (5), and trust God (12).
  - The psalmist "Sings for joy" because of his relationship with God

Let me give you three illustrations from this Psalm.

1) Verse 3: We get the idea that the psalmist is jealous of a bird. "Even the sparrow finds a home" there. That bird gets to be there, all the time. What about me? And then...

2) Verse 10: Just one day > than one thousand elsewhere. The supremacy of God dwarfs all other pursuits. Give me 1,000 day (poetic way of saying - as many as you'd like, wherever you'd like) and I'll take one with God.

3) Verse 10 goes on to say: "I would rather be a doorkeeper..." Just get me close. Give me the broom. I'll take the lowest task if I can be with him.

***Is your life consumed with a passion for God? Give me more on what it looks like...***

*An Earnest Ministry*, John Angell James (British Pastor from the 19<sup>th</sup> cent.)

- *Passion is "the selection of one object of pursuit and a vivid perception of its value and importance... admitting no reserve, no diversion."*
  - If you only had one thing, what's your one?
  - **"One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire (meditate) in his temple." Psalm 27:4**
- The passionate are "resolutely bent [and] tenaciously fixed. [They seem to live under] an influence which we feel to be contagious."
- *"[Passion] urges the soul onward in its career of action at such a speed that it is set on fire by the velocity of its own motion."*
  - You say: "That sounds ridiculous!" Exactly...
  - If you're thinking that, it might be wise to question your level of passion for God.
- The passionate have an: Intense focus (on God), Great Energy (for God), Contagious Enthusiasm (from God), and Believe what few will believe, attempt what few will attempt (because of God).
- But Tanner, that's too theoretical not concrete.

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- Show me a person of prayer, show me someone who loves (worship), whose Bible is falling apart, who loves to put others before themselves in service, and I can probably find some passion.
- But when a passion for God consumes you, it transforms every relationship and responsibility.
- George Herbert: (The Elixir) Teach me, my God and King, In all things thee to see, And what I do in any thing, To do it as for thee: A servant with this clause Makes drudgerie divine: Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws, Makes that and th' action fine. (Give me the broom!)
- You don't know what this is looks like: come to NEXT today, we're here to help take practical next steps (it may or may not involve a broom).
- But the best thing you can do is look to the one who lived with a true and greater passion.
  - Don't doubt the fire that blazed in the eye of Jesus.
  - Jesus in the temple: drove out the animals for sell, dumped out the coins, overturned their tables. "My Father's house is a house of prayer (not commerce)."
  - Disciples: "Zeal for your house will consume me." (Ps 69:9)
  - In speaking of the Messiah, Isaiah 59:17 says, "He wraps himself in zeal as a cloak."

Will your passion for God wax and wane? Of course, but the idea is growth. The hope is that at any point, that dude is living with a passion for God.

Will passion look different from one person to the next? Of course. It comes in all shapes and sizes, but the common denominators are desire for God & a delight in God, that translates into performing God's directions.

T: But when we live with Christ-centered passion, we will...

### III. Watch your passion spark a greater pursuit.

- "The psalm suggests that it was sung during pilgrimage." - Longman, 310 [Mention 8-9 quickly here.]
- And their "desire grows as they get closer." - Longman, 311
- The pilgrim is writing as one who is absent from the temple. What does that do for him? It makes his experience of God all the greater, because he longs for him all the more.
- **"Absence diminishes commonplace passions and increases great ones, as the wind extinguishes candles and kindles fire." - Francois de la Rochefoucauld (*Maxims*).**
- Absence can inspire and motivate a greater desire for God. This is what is happening in the psalm.
- They move from "strength to strength." "The nearer the goal, the stronger its pull; so that the pilgrims, so far from flagging, press on more eagerly than at the start." (Longman)

What else do we learn here?

- God's presence is not only available in the temple. He gives strength to those outside of Jerusalem... (5-6)
- And God's presence is there for the good times and the bad.
  - They start strong with a sense of great anticipation (5).
  - But then, they go through difficulty (Valley of Weeping - "Baka" means weeping) (6)

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Story: I was reminded of this by a friend who is going through one of the most difficult moments in his life. Michael & Emily Guyer are some of our friends from seminary days. Michael took my job (I basically got to hire him) as the President's intern at the school and then later became the Student Minister at our sending church. Michael's wife, Emily, was stunned this past week to discover a shooting pain in her abdomen... It turns out she experienced an ectopic pregnancy (where the fetus attaches to the Fallopian tube rather than uterus), which means there no hope of the baby making it and is very dangerous to the mother's health, requiring surgery.

- Michael told me he had been rehearsing the words of Steve Timmis, who wrote: "In all of our pleasures, Jesus is better; in all of our sufferings, Christ is enough!" What can sustain us in our suffering? Only the presence of Christ.

What is your greatest need in times of trial and suffering? The presence of God.

What is your greatest need in times of celebration and joy? The presence of God.

Your passion for God will push you through life's greatest pains as well as life's greatest pleasures!

*Conclusion:*

Jesus is the greater presence of God. Jesus lived with the true and greater passion of God, and as we live as pilgrims, moving from this life to the next, Jesus is our true and greater pursuit.

John 14:1-3

Prayer:

Lord's Supper: Passion (Latin: Means "suffering") Today, I invite you to look at what he has done for you. His passion drove him to suffer on our behalf that we might be brought home to God.)