

THE LORD GOD — A SUN AND A SHIELD

Psalm 84:11, 12

Intro: The last two verses are the text that I have chosen for our meditation tonight. Verse 11 especially seems to be the explanation for all of the wonderful statements that are made in the Psalm. The Psalmist seems to revel in the house of the Lord where the presence of the Lord was manifested. Even the sparrow seemed to prefer the altars of the Lord to any other place as a nest and home for her young. It is in the presence of the Lord that the man mentioned in verse 5 has found strength, increasing strength, "from strength to strength." It is the place where his prayers are heard. And he concludes that a day in the Lord's court is worth a thousand any other place, and that he would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of his God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness where so many seem to find their pleasure. This Psalm echoes the truth of Psa. 16:11,

Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore.

But why is this the case? Verse 11 gives us our answer. (Read.)

I want to point out four things from verses 11 and 12:

- 1) What the Lord God is: "For the Lord God is a sun and shield."
- 2) What the Lord God gives: "The Lord will give grace and glory."
- 3) What the Lord God promises: "No good thing will He withhold from them that walk uprightly."
- 4) The only reasonable conclusion (v. 12): "Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee."

Let us consider these statements tonight.

I. WHAT THE LORD GOD IS (Psa. 84:11a).

He is "a sun and shield."

Now we all know what the sun is, and we all know what a shield is. The Psalmist did not say that the Lord is *the* sun, but he said that He is *a* sun. If He were *the* sun, then we would worship the sun. But when the Psalmist said that He is *a* sun he meant that the Lord occupies the same place in the lives of his people that the sun occupies in our solar system. The sun is the center. All spiritual life finds its center in Him. From Him we receive all of the light and truth that we have. Anything that claims to

be truth, but ignores Him, is the worst kind of error. The sun gives us our warmth. The sun gives us growth. Without the sun there could be no life on the earth, and it would be impossible to grow any of the foods which are so essential for our very existence. The sun drives away the darkness. All that the Lord Jesus meant when He said, "I am the light of the world," is also contained in the words, "For the Lord God is a sun." The sun has existed since the fourth day of creation, and it will continue to shine until as we learn from Rev. 21:23 about the new Jerusalem,

And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon,
to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the
Lamb is the light thereof.

Malachi described the coming of the Lord with these words found in Mal. 4:2a, "But unto you that fear my name shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings." So the perfection of the light of the sun is a type of the absolute righteousness of our Lord, and the healing power of the sun portrays the spiritually healing power of "the Sun (S-U-N) of righteousness, our Lord Jesus Christ.

To ignore the importance of the sun to our universe would be the height of ignorance and folly. And the same can be said about our Lord. He is to our spiritual needs and our relationship with God what the sun in the sky is to this earth on which we live. How wonderful it is to understand that now, and how tragic when people realize it after death--when it is eternally too late.

But the Lord is also our shield. He is our Protector. Did you notice this word in Psa. 84:9? (Read.) This is what He was to Abraham, according to Gen. 15:1. Several times in the Psalms the Lord is recognized as the Shield of His people. Actually He is the Shield of all people. Everyone enjoys His protection even though the non-Christian only recognizes it when things really go wrong. The Lord not only is our shield against physical dangers and material needs, but He is our shield against doubts, fears, guilt, and judgment.

The Psalmist would have us know that the Lord has always been a sun and a shield, He is now, and He will always be as long as this world in its present form exists. "Lord God" is the translation of the names of God, Jehovah Elohim--the God of eternity, and the God of creation; the unchanging Jehovah and the almighty Elohim. What the Lord has been, He always will be, and we can rejoice that He is the "Lord God" just as much today as the Psalmist did when this Psalm was written.

But let us go on.

II. WHAT THE LORD GOD GIVES (Psa. 84:11m).

"The Lord will give grace and glory." God's grace always leads to glory, and it also follows that there can be no glory without grace. If the Lord God did not give grace, there would be no hope for any of us. And the grace of God has to be a gift because none of us deserves His grace. We don't deserve His grace in salvation, nor do we deserve His grace in the years after we are saved. Every day that we live we stand in need of the grace of God. And how wonderful it is that, as the Gospel song goes, "He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again."

But just as there can be no glory without grace, so we need to understand, as the Psalmist did, that to enjoy the grace of God in salvation and in daily life, is to be assured of the glory that is to come. And this is His gift also. It is not a gift that we have asked for; it is a gift, like His grace, which comes from His heart of love for us.

What does "glory" mean? It means no more tears, no more death, no more suffering, no more sin, no more pain. But more than that it means being with the Lord. The day is coming when we will actually see the Lord face to face. And I can take it a step beyond that: It means being *like* the Lord. This is what the Lord gives us. We have foretastes of it in the blessings that the Lord gives us here on earth, but we will not experience the fulness of God's glory until we are with Him in heaven.

Our song services are wonderful here Sunday after Sunday, but we will sing as we never have sung before when we experience the glory that is to come. We are to be to the praise of *His* glory. There won't be any pride in heaven. We will leave all of that behind because we will all be absorbed in behold the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I know that I am not doing justice to my subject tonight, but perhaps I can give you enough so that you will do your own follow-up on these great words: sun, shield, grace, and glory. Psalm 84 would not be out of place if we gave it a place in the NT. Every time a person is saved we know that God has given grace, and that another saint is on the way to glory and to being glorified.

But let us go on to the third statement.

III. WHAT THE LORD GOD PROMISES (Psa. 84:11b).

"No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." This statement gives us hope, but at the same time it presents a problem. The problem is being able to "walk uprightly." The problem which the people of God have always had is not that we are ignorant of what God wants us to be, and what He wants us to do; the problem is that we fail to do it. There is not a one of us who hasn't failed the Lord in some way today — either in what we have thought, or in what we have said, or in what we have done, or in what we have failed to think, or say, or do.

What does it mean to "walk uprightly"? One of our memory verses in our last memory book was Prov. 2:7,

He layeth up sound wisdom for the righteous: he is a buckler (a shield) to them that walk uprightly.

The versions suggest the word blamelessly, or with integrity in place of walking uprightly. They both suggest adhering to some standard of behavior. That standard for us is the Word of God. So whenever we depart from the Word in our behavior, we are not walking uprightly.

And the problem is that we never are perfect in our walk, in the life that we live. But God is a God of grace, remember. Psalm 103 reminds us that He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. He knows that we can never be absolutely perfect as long as we are in these bodies. But what matters to the Lord is our desire, our intention. And He does not withhold anything that is designed in our lives to make us more like He wants us to be.

This statement in Psa. 84:11 is the OT equivalent of Rom. 8:28. The "good" that both passages refer to are those things which will benefit us in our quest for glory. And so the Lord is not going to hold back anything that will make us more like the Lord Jesus Christ. If He did, we would never reach the goal. Even trials, and usually trials, are given to us to make us more like the Savior. In our weakness God makes us strong. All of the resources that we have in God are available to us as we move from grace to glory. As Paul told the Philippians in Phil. 1:6, having begun His work in us, God is not going to give up on us, but will keep working with us and in us until that wonderful day of Jesus Christ.

Now for the last point in Psa. 84:12.

IV. THE ONLY REASONABLE CONCLUSION (Psa. 84:12).

At this point I feel like the Apostle Paul did when he was getting ready to finish Rom. 8. He asked, "What shall we say then to these things?" That

is, the 84th Psalm, and verse 11 in particular, demands a response from us. Since the Lord God is a Sun and Shield, and since He gives grace and glory, and since He will not withhold any good thing from that who seek to live to please Him, "what shall we say then to these things?"

Verse 12 gives us our answer. (Read.)

Here he addressed the Lord, not as the Lord God, but as "the Lord of hosts." What are we to learn from this Name?

The word *hosts* means a mass of persons, whether they be angelic persons, or human persons. It can be descriptive of a mighty army, and is used to show *the power* of the Lord.

Martin Luther called attention to this word in the second stanza of his hymn, A Mighty Fortress. Let me read that verse to you:

Did we in our own strength confide,
Our striving would be losing;
Were not the right Man on our side,
The Man of God's own choosing.
Dost ask who that may be?
Christ Jesus, it is He,
Lord Sabaoth his Name,
From age to age the same,
And He must win the battle.

Lord Sabaoth means Lord of hosts. *Sabaoth* is an English word coined from the Hebrew word for hosts.

If such a salvation were a goal we have to obtain, we might just as well never start. It is beyond us. But if the Lord is our sun and shield, and if He gives grace and glory, and never withholds anything that will make us more like our Savior, then it would be folly not to trust Him.

Conc: The question is, Are we really trusting Him to make us what He wants us to be. Do we know that blessedness, that joy, that peace? It does not mean that we sit back and are completely passive, but it means that we press on to the goal, like Paul did, knowing that it is the Lord Who is our assurance that we cannot fail but reach the goal. May the Lord enable all of us to trust Him for our perfection even more than we do.