

Better Things

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[0:00] Psalm 84 To the chief musician upon Gitteth, a psalm for the sons of Korah.

How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts! My soul longeth yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry thou for the living God.

Yea, the sparrow hath found a house, and the swallow nest for herself. Where she may lay her young, even thine altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God. Blessed are they that dwell in thy house. They will still be praising thee.

Selah Blessed is the man whose strength is in thee, in whose heart are the ways of them, who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well.

The rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength. Every one of them in Zion appeareth before God. O Lord, God of hosts! Hear my prayer!

[1:12] Give ear, O God of Jacob! Selah! Behold, O God, our shield! And look upon the face of thine anointed!

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand! I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

For the Lord God is a sun and shield. The Lord will give grace and glory. No good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly.

O Lord of hosts! Blessed is the man that trusteth in thee! Amen. Please be seated. I could kind of call this message tongue in cheek after a famous sermon that was preached by an infamous preacher.

How to live your best life now. Your best life now. Really I'm talking about better things. Better things. The things that are better. The things that are best for us.

[2:31] And the world's got its value system. But what of God's value system? What of the things that God counts as valuable as things that matter? What counts? What counts?

You know the Bible has various contrasts in it about things that are better. Some things are better than others. It says in the Word of God, A living dog is better than a dead lion.

So true isn't it? You'd rather be a dog and a life than a lion and dead, wouldn't you? It also says, Better to be patient in spirit than proud in spirit.

To have a humble spirit, To be patient in spirit than to be proud in spirit. And here's one for all the husbands. Better to dwell in the wilderness than with a contentious and an angry woman.

Amen. All the men said. Amen. But of course none of the men here have got that problem. No, no. So that's Proverbs 21 verse 19. Some things are better for us than others.

[3:33] And we all need to choose what is better for us. What is the best? And what do we value? What do we count as important? And in the Psalm here, The Psalmist says the things that are important.

The things that he values. It's like the old fashioned song that says, I'd rather have Jesus. I'd rather have Jesus than silver or gold.

I'd rather be his than have riches untold. I'd rather have Jesus than houses or lands. I'd rather be led by his nail pierced hands.

Than to be the king of a vast domain. Or be held in sin's dread sway. I'd rather have Jesus than anything this world affords today.

I'd rather have Jesus than men's applause. I'd rather be faithful to his dear cause. I'd rather have Jesus than worldwide fame. I'd rather be true to his holy name.

[4:35] Some things you'd rather have. Some things are better to have. Some things are more valuable, more important. And the Psalmist says to us here in verse 10.

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I'd rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God. Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. He's saying there, I'd rather have some menial task of service unto the Lord my God.

Than to have all the pleasures of this world. Than to have worldly pleasure or fame or gain. Than to dwell in the tents of wickedness. I'd rather have that.

I'd rather be in the courts of the Lord. For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand.

That's a contrast, isn't it? What a contrast is that? When we come into his courts, we come to worship. We come to worship. We come into his courts to praise him.

[5:35] And I'm not necessarily meaning here by this statement that the courts are necessarily a gathering place of worship. But it could be, as was said earlier, in that closet place.

It could be in that home place. When you fellowship. When you worship. When you praise him. When you adore him. Come into his courts. You can do that at home too.

But also with his people as we gather. In corporate worship. What a blessing. We want to be there. The psalmist cried out. In his longing to worship.

He cried out. He put a priority on that time of worship. On his relationship with his God. He cried out. You can hear him. As you read these verses.

My soul fainteth. My soul longeth. Yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God.

[6:33] Read between the lines and catch that sentiment of the psalmist. As you read these verses. He's crying out from his innermost being. He counted it as important.

He counted it as a priority. He counted it as something that mattered. Something that mattered. You know, there's folk here this morning. That work six days a week.

Seven days a week. Some of them were telling me of late. Every day consumed with the busyness of life. And yet they're here this morning. They're here this morning.

The shift workers who are here today. There's people who've worked long hours. Longer days than regular days. Yet they've made the time. They've taken the time to be here.

They're reflecting what this psalmist is saying. My soul longeth. Yea, even fainteth. For the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God.

[7:31] You know, for some of us here, it's a sacrifice. There's people here that have not been overtime to be in fellowship this morning.

They've said, no, I want to be in the Lord's house. I want to have Sunday for the Lord.

At least that. And friends, it's a sacrifice for some of us. It's a sacrifice for any of us at times. As we want to prepare. As we want to worship. As we want to get together.

It's spending time. Sometimes scarce time. We know in the world we live in, we're time poor. All of us are. All of us are time poor. There's always something that's going to take your time.

Take your time away from God. It's a cost that some people are willing to bear. They're willing to put themselves out. And make that effort to worship.

And God will bless them. As you have that heart of the psalmist. The day in thy courts is better than a thousand. What a contrast. A thousand on one side. One day in fellowship.

[8:31] One day in worship. It's better. It's better. It's something better to worship. To delight in him. As the psalmist said in Psalm 37. Verse 4. Delight thyself also in the Lord.

And he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Delight thyself also in the Lord. There's not a better activity to be engaged in today. There's not a better place to be.

Than with him. In worship. In adoration. In your heart and your soul. Crying out for the living God. As the psalmist said in Psalm 63. Verse 3.

Because thy loving kindness is better than life. My lips shall praise thee. What a heart. Have that heart. And I'm not saying again. It's necessarily about coming to church.

You might have a time in the courts of the Lord at home tonight. Because you can't make it for whatever reason. We're not putting anyone under condemnation or bondage. That you've got to come to every single meeting.

[9:30] Only the pastor has to do that. But no. There's no bondage for you in Christ. Amen. You've got the liberty. You've got no condemnation in Christ. And you can worship wherever you are.

You can worship down in the office at work. You know. If you've got the blessing of having a little office of your own. You can shut that door and commune with him. Better is that time with Christ, isn't it?

Better is that time with the Lord. Make that time. Delight thyself also in the Lord. There's no better place to be than with him. His loving kindness is better than life.

It's affected our salvation. At his own great expense, he's purchased your soul. How much more reason do you have than to praise him for that? His loving kindness is better than life.

Choose what is best for your soul. And that might be coming tonight. You might surprise me.

Choose what is best for your soul. Choose what is best for your soul.

[10:29] What is going to do your soul good. We see in John 10, Luke 10, of the account of Martha and Mary. Of Martha and Mary. And I've been a bit like Martha lately, I must confess.

You know, I'm getting a bit stressed out. I only show it to my family. I show it to my wife and my parents when they visited yesterday. I'm having a great duress and pressure trying to get this message together.

And all my time was evaporating very, very quickly. And I was like Martha, hustling and bustling. And busy and bustling. And you can get like that, can't you?

Even when you're trying to do something for the Lord, as best as you can try to and seek to. But Mary, what did she do? And what did our Lord say what she did? In Luke 10, 42, he says, But one thing is needful.

One thing is needful. And Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her. What did she choose? She chose to worship.

[11:29] She chose the worship of the Lord. She was found at his feet, listening to his word, communing with him. The worship of the Lord. That's a place that we want to be in his courts.

Another thing to have, as well as the worship of the Lord, is the word of the Lord. The word of God. The word of God. In Psalm 119. You know, read that whole psalm.

To get a feeling for the word. Of how much it matters. How much it counts. How important. How valuable it is. And Psalm 119, verse 72. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver.

The law of thy mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver. He counted the word as better. He counted the word.

Being where the word was. Being in the word. He counted that as better than thousands of gold and silver. Do you count the Bible as precious? Do you count it as precious?

[12:35] Job did. He said, I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food. He'd rather get a good feed of the word than his tucker.

Job there. In all of his suffering and testing. He said, I found the word. Something that I esteemed. Something that I value. Something that I treasure more than my necessary food.

Do you treasure the word of God? Do you treasure it? Do you care? Do you invest time in the Bible? Do you need a Bible in Bible study? Do you need a Bible in Bible study?

Do you need a Bible in Bible study? Do you need a Bible in Bible study? Do you need a Bible in Bible study? Do you need a Bible that will help you grow? Do you need a Bible in Bible study? Do you need a Bible that will help you grow? Do you need a Bible in Bible study? Do you need a Bible that will help you grow?

Do you need a Bible in Bible study? Do you need a Bible that will help you grow? Do you need a Bible in Bible study? Do you need a Bible that will help you grow? Do you need a Bible that will help you grow? In Proverbs 8, 11 it says, For wisdom is better than rubies.

[13:35] I don't know if any of you ladies here have got some rubies on your fingers or around your neck. But the Bible says that wisdom is better than rubies. And all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.

The Word of God is better than rubies. When we come into His courts, we receive His Word. We want to receive the Word of God.

And thrive on it. Hunger and thirst for it. And be fed by it. Ecclesiastes 9, 16 it says, Then said I, Wisdom is better than strength.

Wisdom is better than strength. It's better than rubies. It's better than strength. Where do we get wisdom from? His Word of God. His Word to us. Spending time with the Word.

You know, some people they spend thousands and thousands of dollars on courses of study. They spend thousands of dollars. And yet, they don't invest in the Bible.

[14:35] Get a good Bible. A study Bible. Get a Bible you can grow from. How much do you care about being a student of the Word? Being where you can study the Word.

You know, we've got our formal meetings. But we can have some informal meetings. You might be able to go to a saint down the road. And open up the Bible together. Break bread together.

The bread of life. With the Word of God. You know, visit a brother or sister. And have some Bible study. Doesn't have to be the formal Bible study meeting. But all the better that too.

Ecclesiastes 7.5 it says, It is better to hear the rebuke of the wise. Than for a man to hear the song of fools. You know, you could think about that.

Think about that for a minute. You know, there's some Christian radio stations in Adelaide.

So-called. There's one that's better now.

[15:31] Which is 1611. It's the Vision Radio. Better than the other. The alternative. But the Word of God says, It's better to hear the rebuke of the wise.

Than for a man to hear the song of fools. I'll put it to you today. There's a lot of songs of fools. On the radio stations. Amen. Songs of fools.

Hear what they sing about. It's trash. It's trash. It's trite. What are you feeding your soul on? Tune into the Word. You can get some good gospel preaching.

Or Bible on audio. MP3s and whatnot. Get that into your brain box. Into your soul. Get it into your mind.

Your heart. Feed on the Word. Better to hear the rebuke of the wise. Than for a man to hear the song of fools. Be where you can feed on the Word.

[16:29] And feed your soul. Wisdom is better than rubies. We've seen the psalmist calling, I'd rather be in the courts of the Lord. I'd rather be having one day in the court of the Lord than a thousand anywhere else.

He wanted to be where the worship was. He wanted to delight himself in the Lord. He wanted to be where the Word was. To feed his soul.

And he wanted to have the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord. And that's missing in many quarters today. It's all about light and breezy.

Carefree and fancy and razzmatazz and glowing lights and buzzy feelings and disco lights and whatnot. The fear of the Lord.

What is that? Proverbs 15, 16 it says, Better is little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble therewith.

[17:33] And I was hearing in part a message about awesome, awesome. And the holy awe, the fear of God. And sometimes we use that word awesome flippantly, don't we?

Oh, my footy team's awesome. Or so-and-so's awesome. But who is awesome? Who is only? Only awesome is our God. He is awesome.

He is awesome. Full of awe. And we should regain that sense of that holy awe of God. That sense of who He is.

And what He has done. What He is doing. It's truly awe-inspiring. Awe-inspiring. In Proverbs 23, 17 it says, Let not thine heart envy sinners, but be thou in the fear of the Lord all the day long.

You know, don't have to wait until Sunday to have the lovely music play as much as it sounds nice. And have all the atmosphere. Be in the fear of God all the day long.

[18:43] When you're down in the workplace and things are testing you out. As we know they can. In the home place. In your everyday place. Amen. But be weak and be in awe of Him.

Be in awe of Him. In the fear of the Lord all the day long. And come into His courts to catch a sense of the fear of the Lord. The fear of God.

1 Samuel 12, 24 it says, Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart. For consider how great things He hath done for you.

Regain that sense of who He is. Who He is. What He has done. When He's bleeding and dying. He's raising to life for you.

Be in awe of Him today. Be in awe of the Lord your God. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. Proverbs 9, 10.

[19:39] And the knowledge of the holy is understanding. Psalm 147, 11. There's so many we could quote. The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him. In those that hope.

In His mercy. Don't you want God to take pleasure in you? For God to be pleased with you. For God to be pleased with how you're living. Of what you're doing. Of how you're spending your life.

The Lord taketh pleasure in them that fear Him. Will you choose that which is better? Or will you be like Martha? Hustling and bustling.

Fretting and fussing. Missing out on that communing with Him. That time with His Word. Better is a living dog than a dead lion.

What? How do we put those on the scales? One day in thy courts. Better than a thousand. A thousand somewhere else.

[20:37] One day with Him. It's worth so much. It's so valuable. The worship of the Lord. The word of the Lord.

The fear of the Lord. These things are better. Will you choose what is better for your soul? Or settle for second best? No. It says a little that a righteous man hath is better than the riches of many wicked.

You know, you could, someone you could be working a job today earning hundreds of bucks maybe. Better a little that a righteous man hath than the riches of many wicked.

Better is a handful with quietness than both the hands full with travail and vexation of spirit.

Ecclesiastes 4 verse 6. The fear of the Lord.

It says the angel of the Lord encampeth around them. They fear Him and delivereth them. Friends, think of it today. Put it into context with your life. As you weigh things up, as we all do, how am I going to spend my time?

[21:39] How am I going to invest my life? How am I going to use those precious minutes, those moments? Worship Him. And you'll be better for it.

Worship the Lord. Better to be in the courts of the Lord. Better to spend a day in the worship of the Lord than a thousand days somewhere else. Better to have the word of the Lord than my necessary food, if it must be.

Wisdom is better than rapies. Better to have the fear of the Lord than great treasure. It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man.

And friends, we're told there's a better country. There's a better country. Better than New Zealand.

That's for sure. Better than Australia. Absolutely. Better than any country.

But now they desire a better country that isn't heavenly. Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God. For He hath prepared for them a city.

[22:41] You know, we think, as was kind of referred to earlier, we're ashamed of ourselves. God's not ashamed of you. Isn't that a blessing? We're accepted in the Beloved. Like the earlier Bible reading.

We're accepted in the Beloved in all of our faults and failings. He's not ashamed to call us His. How we must worship Him for that. How we must fear Him for that.

How we must want to invest our lives in that. And to be a doorkeeper in the house of the Lord.

Blessed are they that dwell in thy house.

But you can dwell with Him, can't you? And He does dwell with you. He lives in you. And you live in Him. And friends, just be urged today.

Have the heart of the psalmist. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth, for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cryeth out for the living God. Let us pray.

[23:40] Heavenly Father, You are the living God. Our heart, our flesh, we know it's wicked. Desperately wicked, deceitful.

Yet, You cleanse it, You remove it and replace it with a heart. After Your heart. Lord, You give us a heart to love, to long, to desire that which is good and godly.

Help us to long for fellowship, to long for worship, to long for Your Word, to find it, to seek it, to feed upon it. Lord, to desire, to delight in You.

And Lord, to have that fear of the Lord all the day long. Help us, Lord, to walk in the fear of God. That our lives might be lived as testaments to that which we profess to be.

To be the light of the world. Lord, we thank You for the grace You give to us that we're accepted in the Beloved. That we're accepted because of the blood poured out.

[24:42] Because of that wounding, that cursing You bore for us in. Lord, we thank You for that great payment of love that You gave freely for us. Lord, if there's any present going through trials and struggles, Lord, let them cry out.

Cry out in their situation. Cry out to find that wisdom that is from above. To find that welcome that You give to everyone.

Because You're still that man that receiveth sinners. Lord, You still receive the guilty that come to You for pardon. If there's any here who haven't trusted You, their heart is still unchanged.

It's not been changed. They're still lost in their sin. There's no hope for them. That they'll cry out before they leave this place. They'll seek counsel from someone to guide them.

How they can trust You for eternity to be saved today. Lord, and for all of us, we pray. We'll walk with You. We'll want to be found in You.

[25:53] Wherever we be. These weeks, these days ahead. That we'll count those days and spend them wisely. That a day with You is worth more than a thousand anywhere else, Lord.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. I love to tell Your story Of haunting things of God