

Singing when longing for God

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[0 : 0 0] Morning everyone. I have to say it's great to be here. I don't think I've been in church for five weeks. I'm not backsliding, don't worry. But the ministry we're all over the place and it's been exorbitant great blessing if you know what I mean by that. I'm sorry that the words on the screen were going to be. But anybody who has done this before with me will know that anything that is in capital letters except the title are the ones that you say out loud. Just helps us all to really get a sense of what this passage, Psalm 84, is all about. Okay? Happy with that? That's four of you.

That's good. Okay, so. How lovely is your wedding place, Lord Almighty. My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord.

My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God. Even the sparrow has found a home and the swallow nest for herself where she may have a young, a place near your altar, Lord. How many times have you been in church and there's a service going on and a bird flies across? Almighty, Lord Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those. Can you say a bit loud? That again.

Blessed are those who dwell in your house. They are ever praising you. Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage to Zion or Jerusalem. As they pass through the valley of Baca, they make it a place of springs. The autumn rains also cover it with pools.

They go from strength to strength till each appears before God in Zion. Hear my prayer, Lord God Almighty. Listen to me, God of Jacob. Look on our shield, O God.

[2 : 0 2] Look with favour on your anointed one. Lord Almighty. Best one day in your court than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper, house of my God, than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the Lord God is the sun and shield. The Lord bestows favour and honour.

No good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. Lord Almighty, blessed is the one who trusts in you.

And amen to that. If I suddenly wander to the left, you're going to go quiet and back again. So there we go. Okay. Andy very kindly mentioned earlier that Clive Hughes, who was a great member of this church many years ago, has gone to be with the Lord.

I had the privilege of praying with him over the phone on Thursday, just after he'd come out of hospital. And for all his voice was faltering and his energy was very low. You could see that he was excited about going to heaven.

He was ready to go. And I even heard him pray, Lord, if this is the... Oh, sorry, his daughter heard him pray, Lord, if this is the day, take me to heaven. He was at peace and genuinely excited.

[3 : 2 3] In fact, Sally said that when he passed away the following day after I prayed with him, it was incredible how happy he was and actually the rest of the family felt.

Because that, yes, they were going to miss him dreadfully. He was going to miss them. In fact, months before when he first got cancer and we talked about the prospect of him dying, he said, I have no worry about where I'm going, but I'm concerned about the pain it will cause my family.

And when I heard, or Sandy and I heard on Friday that he'd passed away just the day after I prayed, a Jeremy Camp simple chorus came to mind where it says, and when I come to die, when I come to die, when I come to die, just give me Jesus.

And that really summed up this incredible life that Clive had led. And I also realised that I'd actually known him for 40 years. I came to the Moors in 1984 as a police officer.

And God had led me there very, very clearly. And on my first shift, yes, you want to get to know about all the people in the area you've got to keep an eye on, but I'd heard that a Christian lived in the youth hostel at Westerdale.

[4 : 44] In other words, he was the youth hostel warden. I think that was right. So I knocked on the door and when I appeared in uniform, you could see his eyes go, oh my goodness.

Like everybody does or did. I'm not a policeman anymore. But he took me into his flat and he said, would you like a cup of tea? And I said, of course, I'm a policeman. And as he turned his back on me, he was just organising the teapot.

I just said to him, are you a Christian? As I said it, he dropped the teapot in the sink. He turned around and his eyes filled with tears. And he said, you will never know what an answer to prayer that question is.

He said, last night I cried out to God. I was so lonely, so desperate for fellowship. And I said to God, almost like the last ditch opportunity, God, you've got to send somebody.

And God had me knock on his door, not knowing anything of that. You know, when he cried out to God, God loves to hear the longing of our hearts. And this sermon is about the singing when we're longing for God in all circumstances.

[6 : 01] Clive loves to sing hymns and praise. But he longed for fellowship. God heard the cry of his heart. And God sent me. And just as the psalmist wrote in this Psalm 84, Clive's soul yearned, even fainted, for the fellowship of the family of God.

It was an incredible experience for me to be used in that way. Very soon, I mean like within a day or two, we established a prayer meeting and Bible study in the police house.

It got to the point at times where we prayed almost till one o'clock in the morning on some occasions. And then everybody kind of wandered off. And when people knew we were praying, more people wanted to join.

It was amazing. God did many things in those days. No time to tell now. But I wanted to say at this point that God isn't tied to any specific location in relation to us and us connecting with him.

See, where Clive lived was an old Youth Hostel Association building. And I remember back in the 80s, he had literally something like £2.50 by way of expenses to maintain the standard of the building.

[7 : 16] It's a bit odd to say maintain because it was falling apart around him. He couldn't do anything because there was no money. But I thought that God loves to repair the worn out. And when I met Clive, Clive was in a sense worn out and desperately in need of repair.

And God loves to do that in your life and mine. I hope you've come to church today if that's how you feel. Because today can be the day that God begins to change things in your life as God did in Clive's life.

He was a Christian. He'd been a Christian a while. But he just needed somebody to walk alongside him. Don't we all? 2 Corinthians 3.17 says, For the Lord is the Spirit and wherever the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

Clive longed to see Jesus in heaven when he died. We'd often walk the moors for hours and hours or a full day. And we often talked about Jesus. Whatever else would we talk about?

And when he said, it was quite funny actually, because when he was talking to me over the phone, he said, Mike, when I walk through the gates, I want to see you. And I was thinking, you're dying.

[8 : 21] I'm not. I'm not going to be there. But I will see you one day in heaven. And of that is an absolute certainty. This isn't just a man who died well and hoped that what he'd been believing in all those years was true.

It's true. And he told countless people, When I walk through those gates, I look forward to seeing you again one day.

And as the psalmist said, my heart, my flesh, cry out for the living God. We are not trusting and putting our faith in a God who is simply religious or uncaring in any regard.

And Clive had said, take me today if this is the day. And when it was, he went with joy. I say, Clive loved to tell others about Jesus.

But now he'd meet him face to face. And he was eager to do that. J.C. Ryle wrote something I think is wonderful. It said, it's true that we are sinners.

[9 : 25] But Christ has suffered for our sin. It's true that we deserve death. But Christ died for us. It's true that we are guilty. But Christ paid the debt with his own blood.

And this is the real gospel message. And on that, let us lean while we live. And to this, let us cling when we die.

And on the cross, Christ died and rose again. He has thrown open the gates of heaven to all who believe. Even you, if you're in church for the first time today. And you've never put your trust in Jesus.

If you believe that Christ died for your sin. And he rose again. He paid the penalty for them. Even you, when you die. The gates of heaven will be open wide.

Psalms 84 was written by the sons of Korath. It was sung by the Jews. Who made a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. To Zion. To worship God in his temple. Everything in those days was focused on this one place.

[10 : 30] It was an incredible building. And as we heard. That as they sang this song. The psalmist and those who sang it would be yearning.

Even fainting, as it were. To be in his courts. In that place. And I love these words. That express how desperate they would be.

Raring to go. Bursting with enthusiasm. Setting off early before the heat of the day. When Sandy and I were in Israel. Not long ago before the war. At Jericho. It was 45 degrees.

In five o'clock at night. You can imagine people when they set off to work. Or they go on a long journey like this. The pilgrimage. They'd want to avoid the worst of the day.

But do you and I find it hard to get up early. To spend time with God. Or for a purpose. You know if it's a bike show. Or a bike rally. Or we're going fishing.

[11 : 25] John and I will get up at four o'clock in the morning. If necessary. And you kind of don't feel tired. Have a shower. Get in the car. Off we go. But their pilgrimage revealed a deep longing.

To set time aside. With God. In the temple that Solomon had built. Which was described as. Nothing like it on earth. And when you look at the details.

Which I won't go into now. It really was something spectacular. But when it was built. Solomon even said. How can God possibly be contained in a building?

Well of course he can't. And when they went there. They would raise their voices. And praise and adoration. To the God of gods. And the Lord of lords. Not to the man-made gods in the temples.

That would be around Israel at that time. That had no relevance. To the gospel. And to Christ coming. And to God loving the Jewish nation.

[12 : 24] And when they raised their voices. There was no requirement to be the best singer. Or even to hold a tune. I've had some great friends in many churches. I've stood alongside them. And it's been very interesting.

To hear how they worship God in music. And believe me. I'm not the best at this. But I love it. That their voice. My voice. Comes under the heading of Psalm 101 and 2.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord. Hasn't God got a sense of humour? Mike make a joyful noise to me. Because that would just bless his heart. In fact it says.

Make a joyful noise to the Lord. All the earth. Which is what we sang when we sang. Indescribable. Serve the Lord with gladness. Come into his presence.

With singing. And that's what they would have done. After this incredible privilege. Nothing would hold them back. But nothing. And whether their journey was long or short.

[13 : 22] Depending on where they lived. It would have been hot. Dusty. Strenuous. And facing potential thieves. Hot because of the continual sunshine.

It might look nice when you have a blue sky. But it saps your energy. Sandy and I had an amazing morning. We on Friday. We went to a kitchen.

DIY kitchen store. To look round kitchens. It was so amazing. Not a fishing rod in sight. Not a motorcycle.

All the things I love. I had to constantly show that I was so interested in all these things. Shall we just buy that? No. Shall we just buy that? No. It was great.

But when we came out. It said in Pontefract of all places. My car said that the temperature was 33 degrees. Amazing.

[14 : 18] Boy it saps your energy. But thankfully we had AC in the car. I love AC. It could be dusty. And when it's dusty. It's hard to breathe. It gets everywhere. I've never forgotten when I went to Sudan.

That we spent two days going over the mountains in a truck. In the terracotta dust. And when we got to this so-called place we were staying. We were just covered in terracotta.

It was like the Sudan version of going in a spray tan. It was deep in our hair and everywhere that you don't want to know about. I thought we'd have to throw the clothes away.

They were that bad. But the chap said well there is a shower. It hasn't been used for a long time. What it actually meant was it's comparable with a derelict public toilet. In a city that's been long forgotten and had a rusty padlock on it.

Locked up so it could tell you how long that shower had been used. I had to let the shower run for about five or ten minutes. Just to get the black gunge out of it. Before it became something like water.

[15 : 17] Or strenuous. The roots over the hills. The barren hills and the dry valleys. It's not easy walking in that environment. And with the heat as well your muscles would have ached.

It would have been a tough time. But they kept going. Because they were determined to go to Zion. To spend that time with God. And the potential thieves of course. The concern for safety. Is all about when Jesus spoke about the good Samaritan.

The thieves that bashed up the guy. And one of the Samaritans came along and cared for him. Everyone in that day when they're doing that pilgrimage would need. I'm sure constant encouragement.

If you've ever seen people on YouTube. Or maybe you've done it yourself. Where people walk and think it's about a total of 2,000 miles. If they do the whole thing. Where they go to the. It always sounds like something in a garden.

A composteer. What is it? That's the one. Santiago de Compostaria. Or something like that. Yeah. But I saw a documentary about it once.

[16:18] And everybody was just doing maybe 10 miles a day. But they were overlapping each other. And chatting. And at the end of the day they got together. And maybe that was like that for them as well. Everyone needs encouragement.

Even though they're desperate to get to where they're going. It's great to have strength in numbers. You can do it. We'll make it together. And I won't leave you behind. 2 Corinthians chapter 15 verse 7.

Where God says to us. Be strong and don't give up. For your work will be rewarded. Don't let the upward course of your path put you off.

Keep going. You'll get there. Many years ago when I was a youth worker. I used to love taking youth groups with a team on the lightweight walk. I don't know if anybody's ever done the lightweight walk.

It's 42 miles of difficult terrain. And you're supposed to do it within 24 hours. And interestingly when you do it. You get a badge that is in the shape of a coffin.

[17:17] That's because in the past I think the monks used to carry dead bodies in a coffin over the moors.

And then take them for burial somewhere. But when these groups set off. Bearing in mind we used to leave at 3.30 in the morning. As the sun came up. I was about to come up.

So that we had as much daylight for the day as possible. And all these young folks. You can imagine what they're like. Turning up in most inappropriate clothing. And they're all excited and cool.

But inside they were fearful that one or other may not actually make it. Because it was a long way. They'd never done it before. We got them to do some kind of fitness routine. To make sure they have at least a chance.

One or two were literally fearful and scared of this. But we said come on we'll make this together. Nobody will be left behind. We won't leave you. By four o'clock you could see our destination still way off in the distance.

[18:15] But by that time we'd get them to sing songs. To take their minds off it. Because they had pain in their legs. They had blisters. They had exhaustion. They had thirst. So I'd talk about all the things they're going to eat and drink when they get to the end.

They really wanted to succeed. And so did these pilgrims. They encouraged each other as well. And they all made it to the end within 13 hours on average when I took people to do that. It was wonderful, wonderful times.

A great growing time for those young people. But God encourages us in the same way. Especially when we face deep valleys or barren paths as it were on our walk with God.

You know sometimes we imagine that when we become a Christian maybe everything's going to be like a flat plain and easy. But my sort of experience of knowing God and actually the way I benefited is by going over mountain passes as it were on our walk with God.

And through difficult valleys. Because it's only in those places I've learned to trust God. And have been and will be for all of us. Times when life simply seems overwhelming.

[19 : 27] And Isaiah 41.10 reminds us. Where God says to the nation of Israel. Don't fear. I am with you. Do not be dismayed. For I am your God.

I will strengthen you and help you. I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. There was many a time going up and down those difficult aspects of the terrain on the lightweight walk.

Or in the mountains. Where I'd reach out and grab somebody's hand and pull them up that bit. Because they weren't sure it was going to happen. But when God does that to us. It's far more. The embrace of the hand of God is phenomenal.

But we'll only meet it in a place where we feel we are beyond ourselves. And we need help. When you come to Whitby Christian Fellowship. You join the family here.

And you will not be alone. You will be not left to your own devices. We'll be there for you. That's how a loving church operates. And that's something I believe. This fellowship of people.

[20 : 29] Believers. Have learnt over the years. To love in a practical way. And as we said to those kids. We'll make it together. Nobody will be left out. Or left behind.

The psalmist on the pilgrim says. He wants more of God. How desperate are we. For more of God in our lives. I've never ever experienced enough of God.

That I've felt. That's enough. Don't do any more. Don't reveal any more of yourself. God I can cope with this. Not saying that hasn't been easy. But God has so much for us to know of him.

And whatever we do know. Is but a fraction. Of what there is to know. The psalmist said again. My heart, my flesh cry out. For the living God. He wants more of God.

And he won't give in. Verse 1, 2 and 4 in this. Shows his desperation. To get away from the world. And his distractions. And to be simply in God's presence. To meet with God in his temple courts.

[21 : 34] Because that place was a special place. At that time. A place where God was known. And you could interact with God. And share stories with others. And hear these testimonies of others.

And it's the soul song. That longs. For God. And something of that. Is in all of us. To one degree or another.

Or maybe a great deal more. In the future. Psalm 42.1. Is reference to the song we sang. As the deer pants. For streams of water. That means that that deer.

Is so desperately thirsty. For water. It will go anywhere. It will be able to smell. The water.

A mile or two away. And will face any terrain. To get to it. And the psalmist says. As the deer pants. For streams of water. So my soul pants. In the same way for you.

[22 : 32] Oh God. My soul thirsts for you. The living God. And nothing else. Will ever be able to satiate. That thirst. And hunger in me. And the song that says.

To be in your presence. Wasn't that a wonderful song. We've sung it many times. Over the years. To sit at your feet. Where your love surrounds me. And makes me complete.

This is what these guys. Wanted to do on the pilgrimage. To go to that place. Where they could sit. In God's presence. To sit at his feet. To know they're surrounded.

By God's love. And they feel. Utterly at one. This is my desire. Oh Lord. This is my desire. But you know. We sing these songs.

Don't we? Know the words so well. We don't have to look at the screen. And sometimes. I think we forget. Of the value. And the treasure. Of the words. Of the song. And as they passed.

[23 : 28] Through the value of Baca. In verse six. It was the valley. Of weeping. And the tears. Came. And what this wonderful.

Psalm says here. Is they pass through. The value of Baca. And they make it a place. Of springs. And the autumn rains. Also cover it with pools. It was refreshing. And it's what happens.

To people. When you and I. Choose to spend. That time with God. We may go into the room. Or into the location. Up on a mountain. Or wherever we are. And we're so desperately.

Dry and want more of God. And he refreshes us. How incredible. That it's the weeping of tears. That's reverence there. That place of spring.

Could be. The moisture of tears. Because that joy. Of being with God. Has come. It was a dry. Thirsty valley. But their praise.

[24 : 22] Brings pools. Of refreshing. If you follow me. Sandy used to live. In Namibia. As many will you know. I've never been to Namibia. I'd love to go. And see where she lived. But she always spoke. Of a dry river bed.

And this was a very dry river bed. Because it only had water. In that river. Every seven years. Now isn't God incredible. Not six and a half years. Or five.

Not eight or nine. Every seven years. And at the time. When that river. Was about to get water in it. It wasn't just a dribble. And a drip. Every time the water came.

Every seventh year. It came as a flood. Like a bore. Coming down. And all. Apparently. All the locals. Would come out. And stand there. Waiting for the water to come.

And when it came. They just ran into the water. And remarkably. It had fish in it. Not 30 pound carp. John.

[25 : 17] But little fish anyway. Incredible isn't it? Even God's creation. Does that. But we often find ourselves. In a tough valley.

That could be comparable. Maybe with that river. A bed. Nothing there. And we pray that God. Would get us out of it. But he often. Leads us through it.

Because it's not beneficial. Or fruitful. For us to be taken out. Of a dry valley. He wants us to learn more of him. He wants us to make it. A place of memory.

Of refreshed springs. Fruitful place. Even the darkest valley. Can be a place of blessing. And fruitful.

In your life. And my life. And I'm sure. There are many of us. Who have been through. The most horrendous tragedies. Or difficulties. And we've been able to say. With hindsight.

[26 : 11] Or is it God's foresight. Afterwards. That. I'm glad I went through that. Because I know God. In a whole different way. Gold is only refined.

In a fire. And sometimes. We have to go through the fire. Next slide please. Psalm 23. Is an obvious one of this. Where David says. You're with me. Your rod and staff. Comfort me.

You will. Lead me. Beside still waters. Precious. Precious times. David. Would never have known. That close abiding.

Presence of God. An embrace of God. Unless he went through. The valley of the shadow of death. So even in the midst. Of suffering. Even in the midst of. The challenges that seem. Overwhelming.

Even in the midst of. Hurt and pain. That we can't shake off. Or even in the midst of sickness. And all kinds of different challenges. God. Will meet us.

- [27 : 05] As we praise him. As we sit in his presence. God will lift us up. And somebody wrote this. Brief prayer. And I think it's wonderful.
- Because it says. God. Please cause these days. To be fruitful. In our relationship with you. Draw us into a deeper understanding. Of what it means. To be in your presence. And what it means.
- To have your protection. And what it means. To rely on your provision. Because we get in the way. Of each other. Don't we? And you know. The greatest songs.
- Are born out of adversity. At one time. That bike. Was an incredible bike. Worth a fortune. That somebody had. Put together. And then somebody had. Owned it for many years. And maintained it.
- Serviced it. Carefully. It would have taken them. On trips. To all sorts of different places. But it's in a place. Of adversity now.
- [27 : 59] It's in a place. Where it's been cast aside. It will never run again. In that condition. But some of the greatest. Christian songs. Have been born.
- Out of adversity. And they could never. Be pretended upon. It had to be. The people who wrote them. That went through. A painful time. Or a desperate situation.
- For it to have turned out. As it did. Now Psalm 51. Said I will sing loud. Of your righteousness. Psalm 59. Says I will sing.
- Of your strength. Psalm 59. Again. Says I will sing. Aloud of your. Steadfast love. And Psalm 119. Says. I will sing. Of your word. Those psalmists.
- Could not have said that. Unless they've been. In that place. And we must never forget. The price Jesus paid. On Calvary. On our behalf. Christ went there.
- [28 : 54] For you and I. That we may be. Forgiven sinners. We could sing. With everlasting joy. Even the depths. Of a valley. Because we can tell people.
- Of what Christ has done. In our lives. A man called. Horatio Spafford. Wrote an incredible. Hymn. That I've. Never forgotten. And we've sung.
- Certainly part of. That song. In this church. Before. It's called. It is well with my soul. I'm sure many of you. Have heard the story. I love hymns.
- And songs. Because I like to know. Why they were written. And. Horatio Stafford. Stafford. Sorry. Lost four daughters. On. On a ship. That went down.
- In the sea. All of them died. At the same time. And he wrote this song. As a response. Of faith. It surrenders. When peace. Like a river.
- [29 : 48] Attendeth my way. When sorrows. Like sea billows roll. Whatever my lot. Thou hast taught me to say. To know. It is well. It is well.
- With my soul. Now that doesn't. Detract in any way. From the pain of loss. And the desperation. He felt. But he said. But there's God. And that's what these.
- People who make the pilgrim. To. The pilgrimage. To Jerusalem. Who were facing situations. They didn't know how to cope with. They wanted to go. To be in God's presence. And hopefully.
- They left saying. Whatever. I face. There is God. It is well. With my soul. Or the song. Oh thou. Oh love. That will not let me go. I've never forgotten.
- The first time. I sang that in Keswick. Six thousand people. George Matheson. At 20 years old. He'd been engaged. Until his fiance. Learned that he was going blind. And there was nothing.

- [30 : 44] The doctors could do. And she came up to him. And said. I can't go through life. With a blind man. And broke off the engagement. He must have thought. His life had come to an end. And he wrote.
- Oh love. That will not let me go. I rest my weary soul. In thee. He'd learnt that. If he sort of. Spent time on his own.
- And thought. Oh woe is me. That was never going to get him anywhere. He learnt that he has to rest. His desperate weary soul. In God. And I will give thee back. The life I owe.
- That in thine oceans. Depths its flow. May richer fuller be. Incredible song. And of course. One of the greatest examples. Of praise. And longing for God.
- In the midst of adversity. Is Acts chapter 16. Paul and Silas. The magistrates. Had ordered. They be stripped. And beaten with rods. Because they shared the gospel.
- [31 : 39] In the town. And everybody thought. They were causing trouble. They were severely flogged. Thrown in prison. In a cell. Fastened their feet. In the stocks. And about midnight. Paul and Silas.
- Were moaning. And moaning. And moaning. About where is God. What are we doing in here. This is not what we signed up for. Which is what most of us.
- Probably would have done. If we're honest. But about midnight. Paul and Silas. Were praying. And singing hymns to God. And the other prisoners. Were listening to them.
- Suddenly. There was a violent earthquake. Don't forget by the way. They're still incredibly in pain. And the circumstances. Are such. That it looks. A filthy.
- Horrible place to be in. And the stocks around their feet. Were still chafing. And probably. Getting. Sort of causing. Bleeding. And all sorts of dressable things. But suddenly. As they prayed.
- [32 : 35] And sang. There was a violent earthquake. And the foundations of the prison. Were shaken. And at once. The prison doors flew open. And everyone's. Chains.
- Came loose. Did you hear that? Everyone's chains. Came loose. As we. Pray. In a circumstance. That the world says.
- Is. Without possibility. It affects. The people around us. So we need to do it real. Not pretend. Not have this plastic coated. I am a Christian.
- And the life is good. Just need to be real about it. And ask God to come. And intervene. And I think. When the earthquake happened. And the chains fell off. I don't imagine. For a minute.
- Paul and Silas. Stopped praying. And praising. Because it took their. Pray and praise. To a whole different level. John Piper said. About that passage. Why were they singing?
- [33 : 30] The prisoners were listening. But Luke says. They were singing to God. They weren't singing. To the prisoners. The prisoners got this. By way of a. You know. An extra bonus.
- They were singing. To God. That in the midst. Of what seemed like. An impossible situation. That God. Was their heart. Longing. And they needed him.
- More than anything. Because they didn't know. Whether they would stay here. They didn't know. If they were going to be flogged again. The following day. Or even killed. But why did they cry out.
- To God. In prayer. And praise. Because they needed. To experience. The nearness. The goodness. And the greatness. Of God. In the midst of that situation. God was there.
- And is our. Sustainer. If you face something. That is desperate. You need. That nearness. Of God. The goodness. Of God. And the greatness. Of God. When you're in that place.

- [34 : 29] And you sense that. And you're. Enfolded. By those truths. The rest. Will just come easy. Doesn't always make the pain. Go away. But it enables you.
- To be sustained. Through that. They experienced it. In singing. In the face. Of adversity. Not running away.
- Because even when. Their chains were loosed. No prisoners escaped. And neither did. Paul and Silas. Paul and Silas didn't. Because the. Jailer came in.
- And said. In effect. What must I do. To be saved. Imagine if they'd. Taken off. And missed that one. Sometimes in the world. Next slide please.
- There is suffering. So great. That we're unable. To sing. Songs. Of praise. By the way. Can you make out. What that is. It's a man riding.
- [35 : 23] A motorcycle. In 1920. It's an old motorcycle. He's riding around. An uplifted. Race circuit. Made of wood.
- Sandy couldn't work out. What it was to start with. Can you see him now. When we ride motorcycles. We love to go places. But this is talking about.
- We can reach out. And God. Will touch us. Anywhere. Because God is available. Everywhere. And that's the most important. Thing here. So sometimes.
- In this world. There's suffering so great. That we're unable. To sing songs. Of praise. We're in such. A desperate place. We want God. We long for him. But we just don't have.
- That energy. If you know what I mean. To say. God. I'm going to put my. Apple music on. And sing that song. I learned last week. Sometimes it's just too hard. Well at that time.
- [36 : 17] Let others. Pray. And praise. On your behalf. While you simply. Rest in his presence. Not walk away from church. Not put your Bible down.
- Not stop praying. But actually. Rest in his presence. And let the church. Or individuals. Pray you. Through that. And walk alongside you. As you face it.
- The psalmist. Wanted the temple courts. But God isn't limited now. To where that is. God's presence. Is not tied down. To a specific location. Not even at Westcliff.
- Church. But don't get me wrong. This is a wonderful place. To come. To walk in. When the doors are unlocked. John's maybe in his office. Guys are upstairs. Doing all sorts of wonderful things.
- Working on the building. And the cafes in order. Just come in here. And sit. Come and sit up there. Out the way. It doesn't matter where you go. Church building. Is a wonderful place. To pray.
- [37 : 15] To rest in prayer. And praise. But so is the beach. So is the mountain. And so is the motorcycle helmet. But don't put one on. Unless you ride motorcycles. Because you look rather silly. I pray more in my helmet.
- Than anywhere else probably. It's vital that we don't. Go and spend time with God elsewhere. And not come to church. Church is so vitally important.
- Because you can speak to God. And find that pilgrimage. Anywhere. Because God is available. Everywhere. Everywhere. Maybe it's me that's a bit numb.
- But I've been to some places in the world. That people have said. Are great Christian sites. Of interest. And all this. And I've gone. And I've thought. It just doesn't get me.
- In that way. Does others. But there are other moments. I've walked. Somewhere. Even through. A rally site.
- [38 : 13] Where all the guys are drunk. And slowly going to bed. And I've just felt God's presence. Moving through the tents. And I'm desperate for those people. To know his love. So life is hard.

But God is good all the time. All the time. I'm going to say that again. God is good. Even though life is hard.

All the time. God is good. Don't forget that. And tell people that. God is good. And to wrap this up. Charles Spurgeon said. In Psalm 8. About Psalm 84.

It should be called. The pearl. Of all the Psalms. He said. It's the one that seeks. To be in the presence of God. The sweetest Psalm of peace. I agree with him.

We are to worship God. Jesus said. To the woman at the well. In spirit. And in truth. And Alistair Begg said of that. It's the central aspect.

[39 : 13] Of our. To our encounter with God. And to the presence of God. And to meeting God. To worship him in spirit. And in truth. So I would say.

Are you longing for more of God? He isn't tied to a specific location. But he is available anytime. Anywhere. And he's waiting for you to come to him.

And I don't say that in a. Sort of a sickly. Sort of cliché way. It's true. It may be at the end of the service. When folks go for coffee. You just need to close your eyes.

And nobody go near you. And you just say. Lord. In the midst of a crowd. I want to find you. I want to rekindle. I want to be refreshed. I don't want to be like that valley.

That was. Waiting seven years. For the next rains to come. I want to be refreshed. And I don't want my tears. To be the only moisture. In the valley.

[40 : 09] I want it to be the rain of Christ. That comes. And fills our soul. Amen. Amen.