

# DEEP SOUTH PASTOR'S CONFERENCE

## LIFE IS A PILGRIMAGE

### THE PSALMS

**Psalm 84:5-7**, "Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage, as they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a spring; the rain also covers it with pools. They go from strength to strength; each one appears before God in Zion."

Life is like a roller coaster. It's full of ups and downs – highs and lows! There're *sharp turns*, and *steep drops*, and *slow climbs*, and *fast straightaways*... At times you're calm and chatty with friends... At other times your knuckles turn white clutching onto the bar that covers your lap. In every life there's *good news*... and *bad news*. And it's the same way in Christian ministry. A pastor's service to God also consists of *some good news* and *some bad news*. For example...

**Good News:** You baptized seven people today in the river. **Bad News:** You lost two of the new converts in the swift current. **Good News:** You open up a Facebook account to stay in touch with your congregation. **Bad News:** No one accepts your friend request. **Good News:** The elders want to send their pastor to the Holy Land. **Bad News:** They're stalling until the next war breaks out. **Good News:** You finally found a worship leader who plays your style of music. **Bad News:** Everyone in the band revolted and quit.

**Good News:** The High School Group in your church came to your home for a surprise visit. **Bad News:** It was in the middle of the night and they were armed with toilet paper and shaving cream. **Good News:** Someone emailed you the perfect illustration for your Sunday sermon. **Bad News:** You preached that sermon *last* Sunday. **Good News:** Your Calvary Chapel women's softball team finally won a game. **Bad News:** They beat the men's softball team. **Good News:** Church attendance rose dramatically over the last three weeks. **Bad News:** You were on vacation.

Even in ministry there are ups and downs. *Life is a roller coaster*... People get saved... *but you can't manage to save a dime*. People you trusted and served alongside... *stab you in the back*. People angry with God... *take out their frustrations on you*. At times you're on Cloud Nine! The Spirit is at work! His blessings are flowing - His faithfulness is evident – His joy is tangible. Yet there are days when clouds of hopelessness roll in like a heavy fog and hang in the air...

Here's the truth... Life is messy. It doesn't always pan out the way you planned. Why does Tiger Woods win championships while he's cheating on his wife - but he straightens up and can't hit the fairway. It's not fair... Live long enough and you'll end up dealing with all kinds of contradictions, and injustices, and perplexities. Life isn't always predictable and straightforward. Life is like Cliff Lee... *it throws some mean curveballs*.

And as a pastor with strong faith, and high expectations, we feel this more than others... The church prays for the lady in the coma and God miraculously heals her – her condition gets upgraded from *critical* to *stable*. Then you go home from church and can't sleep because your baby has the croop and coughs all night. *If God handles comas, why not croop?*

When I was younger I had a lifetime ahead of me to serve the Lord. The possibilities were endless... I had a boundless supply of energy... Now I'm 53... *I'm not ready to be put out to pasture. I've got a few good years left*... but I'm not the same dude I was at 23... or 33... After three services on Sunday my body now takes a mandatory nap. It doesn't matter where I'm at... *in an elders' meeting - at a friend's house - in a counseling session*... at exactly 3 PM my body defaults to nap mode. It just happens! And at 53 there's more of life behind me than in front of me. No longer does life seem *endless* and *unlimited*. Every birthday is now a reminder that I'm running out of time. I didn't plan on *the post-prime stage of life*.

It's been said, "Life is the continual process of getting use to things we never expected." And this has not only proven true in my personal life, this sums up our ministry. On the one hand, I've pastored the same church for 30 years... *but not really*... This church has turned over countless times. People come and go. Folks who were pillars in the church get replaced.

Our church is like a Tap-Tap. If you've been to Haiti you know this is the main mode of transportation. It's a covered pick-up that drives around Port-au-Prince stopping and starting – letting people on and off. You tap on the side when you want the driver to stop. A Tap-Tap is colorful and crowded. It's a cross between a carnival bus, a taxi, and paddy-wagon. All kinds of folks are hanging on to the Tap-Tap. A Tap-Tap is like a giant Love Bug. And you don't measure the usefulness of a Tap-Tap by counting the people in the seats at any one time. You watch it as it travels along its route... People *tap on* here, and *tap off* there... there's constant change. Sometime you wonder, did she jump off too early, or did he stay on long enough? But that's not my issue. *Jesus is Lord!* I'm just a Tap-Tap driver. For the time you're onboard I'm going to love you and move you forward in your maturity. But it's never the same group of people on a Tap-Tap...

Just as life goes through certain seasons, so does a church... We've had times of bounty where we did more abroad... We've had lean years where we tightened our belt to keep the homefires stoked... For years we felt led by God to have a single worship leader. For the last few months we've been rotating three different guys... For 20 years we had a Sunday night service. Recently, we've gone to a different format... God never changes. His Word is eternal. It's always sure and certain. But a church goes through seasons of change just as a family or a person.

Here's my point, whether we're conscious of it at the moment or not, life is a roller coaster. Change is inevitable. Life is a progression. There are definite seasons. God never intended for our circumstances to be constant. We use a pleasant term. We call each other "creatures of habit." We like our coffee with two sugars and one cream... We go to the grocery store on Thursday, "*not Monday, Thursday is our day*"... When my 75 year old mom goes to a diner she orders sweet tea, with "*light ice*." We want life to be exact - predictable. We like the illusion that we're in control.

But rather than call ourselves "creatures of habit" – we'd be more honest if we used the term, "worshipper of stability." Isn't that what we really want? Rather than embrace life's temporary nature – rather than realize God made life *not to hold on to*, but *to use up* – we worship stability. We do everything possible to resist change and guard the status quo. This is especially true in church. Church folk are notoriously resistant. They get stubborn and stuck in their ways, and then blame it on God's will.

John Piper writes, "Life is not a straight line leading from one blessing to the next, and then finally to heaven. Life is a winding and troubled road... And the point of biblical stories like Joseph and Job and Esther and Ruth is to help us feel in our bones (*not just know in our heads*) that God is for us in all these strange turns. God is not just showing up after the trouble and cleaning it up. He is plotting the course and managing the troubles with far-reaching purposes for our good and for the glory of Jesus Christ."

And this is also the reason *the Psalms* are in your Bible. These ancient Hebrew poems were written out of every possible human emotion and set of circumstances. No matter who you are, or where you've been, or what you're up against there's a psalm that shares your plight.

And here's what the psalms teach us... The point of life *and ministry* is not to **hold on**, but to **trust God**. *Situations change... people change... my family changes... my church changes... I change...* but God's character never changes. He is faithful!

This is why 11 times in 150 psalms the psalmist calls God, "**my Rock**." God is our *Stone Mountain*. He's solid. He holds in the storm. Life and seasons come and go, but God remains. *Don't ever take Him for granite!* King David says it best in Psalm 62, "**When my heart is overwhelmed; Lead me to the rock that is higher than I.**" When the twister hits, and the psalmist's life turns topsy-turvy he leans on the rock. It's higher, stronger, surer than the king himself! He's *overwhelmed*, but the rock *overcomes*!

This is why the psalms begin the way they do... Psalm 1 describes what makes a man blessed, he “*delights in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water. That brings forth fruit in its season...*” In a world that’s *spinning*, the blessed man is *planted*. He’s like a tree growing out of the bank next to an ever-flowing and ever-changing river. God’s Word keeps Him grounded. The only surety and certainty in this life is found in the Scriptures.

The psalms portray our changing lives as the circumference, but God is the center... Whether it’s David in a cave - or fleeing Absalom - or on the run from Saul... whether the psalmist is facing an invading army, or some unjust treatment, or a relentless persecution - *he connects it all to God*. One author puts it, “*Somehow, David and the other poets managed to make God the gravitational center of their lives so that everything relates to God...*” Every act, and feeling, and experience, and fluctuation of life is measured as it relates to and revolves around the changelessness of God. And this is a pastor’s job. We connect the dots. For many of our folks life is a *rubik’s cube*, but we help them align the rows and colors with God’s Word. We show them how God made life, and it’s still intertwined with Him!

In his book “*Soul Searching*” author Christian Smith boils down the perceptions of God that exist in our contemporary culture. He says most young evangelical Christians believe in what he describes as “*moral, therapeutic, deism*.” What we might refer to as “*the Santa Claus god*.” “*Moral*” means there’s a right and wrong. Thus, God expects us to be nice - and to prod us in that direction He *rewards good* and *punishes evil*. “*Therapeutic*” means God helps us resolve hang-ups and be happy. And “*deism*” is the idea that God is distant and uninvolved in daily life. On really important occasions God might come down and get involved, but for the most part God leaves it up to us on how we run our day-to-day.

“*Moral, therapeutic, deism*” - God wants us to be good for goodness sake - He exists to make us happy - He drops in once a week on Sunday. *Y o u might as well believe in Santa!* That’s not the God of the Bible. Yet according to Christian Smith this is the perception of God held by most of our church members... *The 150 psalms totally refute this concept!*

Yes, God is moral. It does pay to be good and godly, but payday doesn’t always come in this life... Psalm 14 and 73 mull over the prosperity of the wicked. Every moral contradiction doesn’t get sorted out in this life. And God cares about our mental health. He heals the broken hearted... Yet God doesn’t exist to make us giddy. We exist to bring Him glory. And God is far from aloof or removed... The psalms teach that God is intricately woven into every detail of our lives. His heart beats with ours.

One of the reasons I’ve been so drawn to the psalms in recent days is their *rawness* and *frankness*. This collection of Hebrew poems approach life with a brutal honesty. None of the psalmists hide behind a mask. They all come to God free from the shackles of religiosity, and phony spirituality. They speak their mind... Their joy is unbridled... They unleash their angst... Their questions are clear... *These brothers let it all hang out!*

Prior to the Spring 2010 no one even knew Iceland had a volcano. But in March through May of last year *Mount Eyjafjallajokull* blew it’s lid. The funny name means, “*island-mountain glacier*.” A glacier is an ocean of ice. It wasn’t real apparent that hot molten lava was bubbling under a thick sheet of ice. But the eruption sprayed debri, and ash, and dirty ice all over the continent of Europe. The volcano brought air travel to a standstill. And when I think of that volcano I think of some pastors... Emotions and hurts and disappointments are bubbling deep down inside. They’re trapped under a thick, hard layer of coldness. Because they’re never allowed to vent, one day the feelings erupt and do damage.

The psalms on the other hand, give a voice to our inner rumblings. They let us know it’s okay to approach God with what we really feel. Not what we’re suppose to feel – or what is *religiously correct* to feel – but what we actually, deep down in the depths of your being really and truly feel. If you’re mad at your enemies, and want God to kick in their teeth... *There’s a psalm for you!* I love Psalm 58, it’s one of my personal favorites, “*Break their teeth in their mouth, O God! Break out the fangs of the young lions, O LORD!...*” God allows us to vent a righteous rage.

In fact, in a sideways world where the wicked prosper if there aren’t times when you don’t scream at the top of your lungs there’s probably something wrong with you. I question the prospects for your longevity. As a pastor I hear stuff that curdles my spit.

It grieves me... Sin is nasty. Sinners take advantage of innocent people. It can't be healthy for a pastor to hear of these cruelties day after day without reacting in a visceral way. Emotional nausea can be healthy.

I like what one author writes, "God can 'handle' my unsuppressed rage. I may well find that my vindictive feelings need God's correction – but only by taking those feelings to God will I have that opportunity for correction and healing." The psalms prove there's nothing wrong with expressing my feelings to God – *no matter how ugly, and angry, and toxic!* In fact, poisonous feelings can't be neutralized until they're confessed.

Have you noticed Jewish people like to argue? On our trips to Israel it's not uncommon to see angry encounters between bus drivers. In the heat of traffic they yell at each other. You don't know what they're saying, but they're not exchanging pleasantries. Apparently, Hebrew has cuss words. Yet later you'll see the same guys in the hotel restaurant laughing and swapping stories as only old friends can do. It's an amazing contrast. But here's what I've learned - among Jews, *loud, boisterous expression* and *deep friendship* go together. *Here's why...* In a culture that places a high priority on hospitality to strangers, confrontation is a sign of intimacy. Jewish custom demands politeness to strangers. That's why letting off a little steam and passionately arguing your point is reserved for friendship.

And maybe this is what God is cultivating in the psalms... God is after our friendship, so He baits us to come right out and tell Him what we think. *Even what we think about Him...* Psalm 10 opens, "Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide in times of trouble?" Imagine the nerve, accusing God of hiding when the going gets tough? Then the psalmist describes the wicked man and how his ways prosper. He wonders why God won't stop this evildoer and settle the score...

The psalmist then encourages God to do what's right - *as if God needs the suggestion* - "Arise, O LORD! O God, lift up Your hand! Do not forget the humble..." *He's venting how he feels... expressing how it seems...* Apparently, the psalmist has a faith that allows him to voice his *frustrations with God*, without it diminishing his *respect for God*. Psalm 10 ends, "The LORD is King forever and ever; the nations have perished out of His land. You have heard the desire of the humble... that the man of the earth may oppress no more." The psalmist concludes with the correct theology, but in getting there he's been honest *with how life seems* and *with what he feels...* Obviously, his faith is a real-life faith.

The psalms teach me that real faith is honest. It doesn't dodge issues or stick its head in the sand. God is big enough to handle my true feelings. Real faith doesn't tap out when life and faith become a struggle. The psalms encourage me to keep *wrestling with truth* and *grappling with God*.

To me it's no accident that the lion's share of the psalms - 73 - almost half were written by David. If ever a man connected the dots between life and God it was David. Everywhere he looked he saw the glory of God. In Psalm 8 he looks upward, "When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers..." In Psalm 139 he turns inward, "You formed my inward parts... I am fearfully and wonderfully made." Wherever David looked he saw God. There was no dichotomy of *secular* and *sacred* in David's mind. All life belonged to God. I believe this is why God called David, "a man after His own heart." David was king, but he never stopped bowing to God.

*Yet David was far from perfect...* He had passionate love for God, but he had strong lust for women... He saw God's glory, but failed to see the slow deterioration of his own family... David tried to build God a temple, but couldn't for the blood on his hands... Like life itself, David was a mixed bag - a *brave heart* with *clay feet*.

David didn't always get it right in life, but he kept seeking God. David wrote Psalm 27:8, "When You said, 'Seek My face,' my heart said to You, 'Your face, LORD, I will seek.'" David kept responding to God's inner urges. Some pastors have abandoned the inner life. It's easier to clutter the calendar with meetings, and activities, and studies, than to press in to God. The historical books *turn us outward* to find God. He works in the affairs of man. The Gospels *turn us to the cross*. God ultimately works through Jesus. The prophetic books *turn us toward the future*. God wins in the end. But the psalms *turn us inward – heartward* - to find God. It reminds us that we are His temple. *God cares about what goes on inside our hearts!*

People often take the wrong approach in interpreting the psalms. They treat them as a theological treatise. They look to find articles and doctrines.

That's a mistake. Rather than dot theological "I"s, and cross theological "T"s, and foster creedal accuracy – to me, the psalms seem content with confusion. Rather than *sort out* truth, they *spew out* a cacophony of emotion. The psalmist isn't always *right*... sometimes he just *honest*. You could say, *The Psalms are a journal of a soul engaged with God!* The psalmist doesn't always understand God, or what God is doing in his situation – yet he's loyal to God, and bows to God, and praises God.

I take the psalms as reflections, eruptions, complaints, praises, and peeves from men who loved God dearly while struggling with the realities of life. Put it all together and it goes by another name. We call it **"prayer."** Ron Allen distills 150 psalms in 7 words, **"Life is hard, but God is good."**

One of the lessons we learn by studying the psalms is that both *pain and pleasure* are intended by God to be part of the human experience. Yes, there are triumphant, celebratory psalms. *But not Psalm 6*... The psalmist writes, **"I am weary from my groaning; all night I make my bed swim; I drench my couch with my tears..."** Here's a weeping psalm. Squeeze the page... it's drenched in tears. It doubles over with pain.

According to the psalms, at times God even uses pain to enrich our lives. We should never run from a hurt... but embrace it, and learn from it. CS Lewis had a famous line, **"God whispers to us through our pleasures, speaks to us through our conscience, but shouts in our pain. It is His megaphone to arouse a deaf world."** The Hebrews would agree.

But not so in our modern world. Today's response to pain and despair is to avoid it at all costs. We spend millions of dollars on *mind-numbing entertainment* and *mood-altering perscriptions* to avoid God's shouts. Rarely do we ride out a headache without popping a handfull of Advil.

Did you know sometimes a hospital withholds pain medication - not because they want the patient to suffer – but too much sedation masks the symptoms the doctor needs to observe in order to diagnose the illness? The point is this - at times pain becomes the doctor's ally. Pain serves a real purpose. It helps the doctor identify what's amiss in the body. This is why it's unwise for us to avoid all pain. We miss God's shout.

There is a poem by Lois Cheney that sums up the way modern people deal with their sullen moods, and emotional pains, and negative feelings... Ms. Cheney writes, **"Feeling blue? Buy some clothes. Feeling lonely? Turn on the radio. Feeling despondent? Read a funny book. Feeling bored? Watch TV. Feeling empty? Eat a sundae. Feeling worthless? Clean the house. Feeling sad? Tell a joke. Ain't this modern age wonderful? You don't gotta feel nothin', there's a substitute for everythin'!... God have mercy on us."** She's right. We try to escape unpleasant feelings rather than let God use them to mold, and shape, and deepen our lives.

Today's *"prozac generation"* has the chemical means to numb its pain rather than grapple with it. Yet as a result, we lack a strength and depth we would gain if we were forced to deal emotionally with life's harsher side. Some people put their hope more in *medication* than *dedication*.

Today's world has overlooked the underlying premise of the book of Psalms - that God created humankind with a full range of emotion... Each of us has the capacity to rise to heights of ecstasy, or sink into the pit of despair... and there are times when only a thin line separates the two extremes. At some point, we're all at either end of the pendulum.

The Psalms teach us that *pleasure and pain* are **both** opportunities for God to speak into our lives. There are lessons we learn only on the *peaks of joy*, and there are lessons learned only in the *valleys of depression*. And as with life itself, the Psalms are sure to take us both places. It's been said, **"The Psalms are like a grand piano, and all 88 keys of human emotion get played."** I would add to that... And to make beautiful music the maestro has to play both the white keys and the dark keys.

*Life*, and *ministry*, and the *psalms* all have a trait in common: all three are like a rollercoaster. There're dips and climbs - squeals and screams – ups and downs. But ***A rollercoaster begins and ends in the same place! So it is with life*** - It's dust to dust. You come in with nothing, and leave with nothing... ***So it is with ministry*** – After I've led people to Jesus and the parking lot empties out, I realize again no one needs Him more than I do... ***And so it is in the Psalms*** – these 150 chapters portray life as a journey ***from God and to God***. We *set out with God*, but then we *return to God*.



Listen to Psalm 42. “As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.” It doesn’t matter *where you’ve been* or *what you’ve done*, your life doesn’t really start until you sense a hunger and thirst for the living God! God plants in every human heart a built-in homing device that leads us back to Him. One day you lose your taste for this world, and you hunger for more. I love Newton’s observation, “Only God is permanently interesting.” But here’s the next line in Psalm 42, “When shall I come and appear before God?” The hunger we receive from God is what draws us to God.

To the psalmist, life is a journey *from God, to God*. Psalm 42 calls it “a pilgrimage.” Each year the Hebrews journeyed to and from the Temple. Life was a cycle – year after year, three times a year they journeyed - to the Temple, then from the Temple - to the Temple, then from the Temple. David writes in Psalm 42 writes, “I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept a pilgrim feast.”

On our pilgrimages to Israel a must stop is where David penned Psalm 42. A beautiful waterfall is the site where David wrote of his thirst for God. It’s a holy place, but a pain to reach. It’s at Banais, high in the Golan. We usually arrive around lunch time so everybody is hungry. Normally, the guide is behind schedule. He doesn’t want to stop. Then you have to hike down a steep staircase. There’s lots of reasons to forego this trip. But when we reach the falls I’m always glad we made the effort. The roar drowns out other concerns. It allows for a special moment with God.

This is what a pilgrimage involves. It’s a journey of the heart. It’s from *longing* to *fullness* - as David put it, “deep calls unto deep at the noise of Your waterfalls.” Deep longing gives way to deep satisfaction. But it’s not always easy. A pilgrimage has a *noble start* and a *sacred destination*, but in between the pilgrim path can be hard and perilous.

I love to walk from Pilate’s pavement, *the Lithostrata*, through the streets of the Muslim Quarter in Old Jerusalem. You fight off vendors, and Arab merchants who refuse to take seriously the phrase, “no thanks.” You finally emerge out the Damascus Gate into the pollution of a bus stop. You dodge Arab taxi drivers as you cross the street and climb the hill. Finally, you enter a little door into a Garden Tomb. Instantly, the chaos is gone. You find yourself in a beautiful and peaceful oasis. There’s communion waiting for you. You sense the presence of the risen Christ. I love the garden, but it takes a journey through the desert to arrive.

As a pastor I’m also a pilgrim. My life is a journey *from God to God*. But as a pastor I’m more than a pilgrim. I’m leading my congregation on a pilgrimage. I’m a tour leader on the journey through life. It’s my job to get my group *from God to God* – but it can present some challenges at times. In a sense, life is a holy land. Go to Israel and you visit spots that aren’t hard to view as sacred - *the Garden Tomb and the waterfalls at Banias*. But there’s also some smelly, stinky places along the way. Walk *the streets of Silwan*, or hang out by *the Damascus Gate*, and there’s nothing you’d perceive as holy. Yet it’s still *the holy land*! In Israel there’s no distinction between spiritual and secular. Everywhere has Bible relevance.

And the same is true in our lives. Life is a journey *from God to God*. And all stuff in between: work, family, kids, fun, church – every season of our lives – every emotion, and complaint, and feeling – deeply involves God. The role of a tour leader is to show folks how life and God relate.

Perhaps my favorite psalm is the 84<sup>th</sup>. It’s a song of pilgrimage. It has three stanzas... *A thirst for God... The trip to God... The thrill of God...* It begins, “How lovely is Your tabernacle, O LORD of hosts!” The psalmist then envies the birds who nest in the rafters of Temple. They spend all their time in the courts of the Lord. He only gets to visit at the feasts. He longs for God, but longing is not enough. *He has to come*.

And the holy city was a difficult destination. From any direction Jerusalem was uphill. The path led through deserts, and over mountains. The highways were tight and windy, and laced with predators. Psalm 84 describes the pilgrims passing through the “Valley of Baca” or “weeping.” Jerusalem was a *destination* that required some *determination*.

And the same is true today. God *stirs our hearts*, but He won’t *force our steps*. Various distractions and barriers get in our way from seeking God. And here again the psalms encourage brutal honesty.

The historical books document David's sins, but the psalms reveal the angst in his heart. Listen to Psalm 32, "When I kept silent, my bones grew old through my groaning all the day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my vitality was turned into the drought of summer. I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I have not hidden..." Or Psalm 51, "I acknowledge my transgression, and my sin is always before me. Against You, You only, have I sinned... Create in me a clean heart, O God..." Honesty of heart begins with repentance from my sin.

The road to God no longer winds through narrow passes, and across graveled ground, and down hazardous highways. *The obstacles we face are no longer pebbles but pride - no longer food shortages but faith shortages - no longer thieves but things - no longer ledges but lusts - no longer darkness but distraction - no longer rock slides but back slides.* Here's the point, simply desiring God is not enough. You've got to come to Him! In the words of the Sprite commercial, "Obey your thirst." To know God you have to *get up from where you're at*, and *come to where He is...* And that doesn't just happen once in a person's life, but over and over. This is why the person who really wants to know God is a man "whose heart is set on pilgrimage." A pilgrim realizes the blessings of God are a prize worth *enduring anything* and *sacrificing everything* to obtain!

And according to Psalm 84 the pilgrims are never disappointed. When he arrives at the Temple he says to God, "A day in Your courts is better than a thousand. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." God is so thrilling, the psalmist would swap 1000 days anywhere else - *a thousand Saturdays in Sanford Stadium cheering on the Dawgs* – for just 24 hours in God's presence. He'd rather be God's doorkeeper, and catch a glimpse of glory when the door cracks – than to have front row seats in the tents of wickedness. The glory of God satisfies him in a way that nothing else does.

The Psalms total 2,461 verses, but this afternoon one stands out... Psalm 84:5, "Blessed is the man... whose heart is set on pilgrimage." Let's all prepare our hearts for a journey through the psalms...