

Setting Our Hearts on Pilgrimage



Psalm 84:5

Blessed are those whose strength is in YOU, who
have set their hearts on pilgrimage.

Pilgrimage - We are not home yet. We are not here to stay. We are on earth traveling through on our way to heaven. - Is your heart set on pilgrimage? Are you on the road or road kill? Are you making progress in your pilgrimage?

PILGRIMAGE — a word with three distinct meanings in the Bible:

1. The course of life on earth (Gen. 47:9; Ex. 6:4). Jacob summed up his entire life to that point—130 years—as a pilgrimage (Gen. 47:9).
2. A journey of a pilgrim to a sacred place or shrine, especially of the worshipers of the Lord who went up to the Temple in Jerusalem for special feasts (Ps. 84:5; 119:54).
3. A long journey or search, especially one of exalted purpose and moral significance. The heroes of faith are described as “strangers and pilgrims on the earth” (Heb. 11:13). The Christian’s true citizenship, or permanent home, is in heaven (Phil. 3:20). While on earth, he or she is but a pilgrim, a traveler, a temporary resident. (Nelson’s New Illustrated Bible Dictionary)

Genesis 47:9 (NKJV)

And Jacob said to Pharaoh, “The days of the years of my pilgrimage *are* one hundred and thirty years; few and evil have been the days of the years of my life, and they have not attained to the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage.”

Exodus 6:4 (NKJV)

I have also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan, the land of their pilgrimage, in which they were strangers.

Psalm 119:54 (NKJV)

Your statutes have been my songs In the house of my pilgrimage.

Hebrews 11:13 (NKJV)

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced *them* and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

Philippians 3:20 (NKJV)

For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,

Verses 1-4 -

How lovely is your dwelling place, O 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 a nest for herself, where she may have her young - a place near your altar, O Lord Almighty, my King and my God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.

Verse 5 - Blessed are those whose strength is in you, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage.

Verse 6-7 - 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.

Verse 8-9 - Hear my prayer, O Lord God Almighty; listen to me, O God of Jacob. Look upon our shield, O God; look with favor on your anointed one.

Verse 10-12 - Better is one day in your courts than a thousand elsewhere; I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked. For the Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord bestows favor and honor; no good thing does he withhold from those whose walk is blameless. O Lord Almighty, blessed is the man who trusts in you.

I. Our Individual Intimacy with God - It all Begins Here



The human heart has an innate hunger for God.

A deep-seated longing to have more of God, to sense His Presence

Do you have a childlike, not childish faith that looks at God and sees the awe? Do you treat God in casual terms and make Him small? Does the Lord cause you to fall on your knees, leave you without words, and cause your eyes to shine with His fire? When You spend time in His presence, are you a changed person? How do we recover the fire and the wonder, the desire for God every moment of every day? Do you desire to know God and not just know about Him? Is His Word like fire to your soul?

Max Lucado writes in his book *The Great House of God*, "God can be your dwelling place. God wants to be your dwelling place. He has no interest in being a weekend getaway or a Sunday bungalow or a summer cottage. Don't consider using God as a vacation cabin or an eventual retirement home. He wants you under his roof now and always. He wants to be your mailing address, your point of reference; he wants to be your home. Listen to the promises of His Son, "If my people love me they will obey my teaching. My Father will love them and we will come to them and make our home with them" (John 14:23). For many this is a new thought. We think of God as a deity to discuss, not a place to dwell. We think of God as a mysterious miracle worker, not a house to live in. We think of God as a creator to call on, not a home to reside in. But our Father wants to be much more. He wants to be the One in who "we live and move and have our being" (Acts 17:28 NIV). When Jehovah led the children of Israel through the wilderness, he didn't just appear once a day and then abandon them. The pillar of fire was present all night; the cloud was present all day. Our God never leaves us. "I will be with you always," he promised (Matt 28:20). Our faith takes a quantum leap when we understand the perpetual presence of the Father. Our Jehovah is the fire of our night and the cloud of our day. He never leaves us. Heaven knows no difference between Sunday morning and Wednesday afternoon. God longs to speak in the workplace as he does in the sanctuary. He longs to be worshipped when we sit at the dinner table and not just when we come to his communion table. You may go for days without thinking of him, but there's never a moment when he's not thinking of you."

II. A Heart for Pilgrimage



Catherine Martin says: God's call to pilgrimage is the call to find your home in God and live life here as one who journeys in a foreign land until you reach your grand destination: heaven. Your pilgrimage takes you on an adventure with "the people of God seeking a country."

To set our hearts on pilgrimage, we must make a determination and resolve flowing from the passion in our heart to find life in the only place it can be found: **IN CHRIST ALONE.**

Matthew 6:33, - But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well (receive what we really need).

I John 2:15-17 - Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world - the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, and the boasting of what he has and does - come not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.

James 4:8 - Come near to God and He will come near to you.

2 Chron 15:4 - In their distress, they turned to the Lord, the God of Israel, and sought Him and He was found by them.

What do we need? Philippians 1:9,10

Where do we get it? Psalm 103:7

God has the map/plan for our pilgrimage. I Cor 2:9-10

No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.

2 Cor 4:16-18 - THEREFORE WE DO NOT LOSE HEART. THOUGH OUTWARDLY WE ARE WASTING AWAY, YET INWARDLY WE ARE BEING RENEWED DAY BY DAY. FOR OUR LIGHT AND MOMENTARY TROUBLES ARE ACHIEVING FOR US AN ETERNAL GLORY THAT FAR OUTWEIGHS THEM ALL. SO WE FIX OUR EYES NOT ON WHAT IS SEEN, BUT ON WHAT IS UNSEEN. FOR WHAT IS SEEN IS TEMPORARY, BUT WHAT IS UNSEEN IS ETERNAL.

Romans 8:18 - I CONSIDER THAT OUR PRESENT SUFFERINGS ARE NOT WORTH COMPARING WITH THE GLORY THAT WILL BE REVEALED IN US.

III. Our Pilgrimage together - We Support One Another



Notice the word “they” - The pilgrimage to God is a matter of community. Pilgrimage was given to us to do together. We have an intimate relationship with God individually and then together we journey.

Our purpose together as travelers:

1. Encouragement
2. Accountability
3. Discernment

We are not called to autonomy in the body of Christ. When the mists are heavy and you can't see the way, call out to your fellow sojourner to show you the way.



IV. The Valley of Baca (Tears)

When your feet get knocked out from under you - one minute you are standing and the next on your back - and you rarely see it coming, you are in the Valley of Baca or tears. This can happen once or many, many times in your pilgrimage. It is not normally a one time event but occurs in many ways and times as we journey.

God keeps our tears in a bottle - Psalm 56:8

Various Quotes:

1. Tears are the soul's release.
2. Tears are words the heart can't express
3. I love walking in the rain, cause then no one knows I'm crying
4. Perhaps our eyes need to be washed by our tears once in a while so that we can see life with a clearer view again
5. The tears fall, they're so easy to wipe off on my sleeve, but how do I erase the stain from my heart?
6. Tearless grief bleeds inwardly.

Let your faith, then, throw its arms around all God has told you, and in every dark hour remember that though now for a season, if need be, you are in heaviness through manifold temptations, it is only like going through a tunnel. The sun has not ceased shining because the traveler through the tunnel has ceased to see it; and the Sun of righteousness is still shining, although you in your dark tunnel do not see Him. Be patient and trustful, and wait. This time of darkness is only permitted that "the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. - Hannah Whitall Smith in *The Christian's Secret of a Happy Life*

When peace, like a river, attendeth my way,
When sorrows like sea billows roll –
Whatever my lot Thou hast taught me to say,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Refrain:
It is well with my soul,
It is well, it is well with my soul.

Tho Satan should buffet, though trials should come,
Let this blest assurance control,
That Christ hath regarded my helpless estate,
And hath shed His own blood for my soul.

My sin – O the bliss of this glorious thought –
My sin, not in part, but the whole,
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more;
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!

And, Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll:
The trump shall resound, and the Lord shall descend,
Even so – it is well with my soul.

- Horatio G. Spafford

V. Eternity and Beyond – Back to the Garden (Revelation 21)



Verse 7 - They go from strength to strength,
till each appears before God in Zion.

1 Corinthians 15:51-55 (NKJV)

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—⁵² in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.⁵³ For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal *must* put on immortality.⁵⁴ So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: “*Death is swallowed up in victory.*”⁵⁵ “*O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?*”

2 Corinthians 4:17 (NKJV)

For our light affliction, which is but for a moment, is working for us a far more exceeding
and eternal weight of glory,

God invites us to be His pilgrim and find our home in Him and Him alone and to live life here and now as journeying through a foreign land seeking a country — HEAVEN! This is a mindset and a heartset— a resolve to dwell in God realizing the world is not your home and life is IN CHRIST ALONE! Is this the passion that flows from your heart?

**Aching sometimes,
Want to go home;
Aching with longing
Where'er I roam.
Weary sometimes,
Wishing to be
There in the glory
Eternally.
Going sometime,
Great trumpet sound!
Glorious daybreak!
Joy will abound.
Trading sometime
Body of clay,
For one immortal;
Hasten blest day!
- Lilian Guthrie**

**The Last Battle
In the Chronicles of Narnia**

“And as He spoke He no longer looked to them like a lion; but the things that began to happen after that were so great and beautiful that I cannot write them. And for us this is the end of all the stories, and we can most truly say that they all lived happily ever after. But for them it was only the beginning of the real story. All their life in this world and all their adventures in Narnia had only been the cover and the title page: now at last they were beginning Chapter One of the Great Story which no one on earth has read: which goes on forever: in which every chapter is better than the one before.”

Life Verses for My Journey

Psalm 20:7 - Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

2 Chronicles 20:15 - And he said, "Listen, all Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem and King Jehoshaphat: Thus says the LORD to you, 'Do not be afraid and do not be dismayed at this great horde, for the battle is not yours but God's.

Habakkuk 3:17-19 - Though the fig tree should not blossom, nor fruit be on the vines, the produce of the olive fail and the fields yield no food, the flock be cut off from the fold and there be no herd in the stalls, ¹⁸ yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹ GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 - So we do not lose heart. Though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. ¹⁷ For this slight momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, ¹⁸ as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

Life Goal

Irrespective of Circumstances and Focused on the Eternal: To Know God and Experience His Joy, To be Totally Dependent on God, To be Content, To Realize my Sufficiency is in Jesus Christ, To Totally Trust and Obey.