



CELL GROUP MATERIAL

12 JULY 2026

12 JULY SERMON

Soul Finds Hope

PASTOR BOBBY MATHEW

Based on Psalm 84

Ice Breaker

Question: When you think of "home," what feelings or images come to mind? What makes a place feel like home to you?

Sermon Recap

This sermon explored our deepest longing - for God Himself. Using the imagery of a bird finding a nest near God's altar (Psalm 84), Pastor reminded us that our souls were created to find rest only in God's presence, not in substitutes like success, relationships, or security.

Key Takeaways

1. Every Soul Longs for Something

"My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." (Psalm 84:2)

- The Hebrew word "nephesh" (soul) refers to our whole being—the deepest part of who we are
- This longing isn't casual; it's consuming and fundamental to our existence
- God has "set eternity in our hearts" (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

2. Every Heart Seeks a Place to Dwell

"Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself." (Psalm 84:3)

- Like birds building nests, we instinctively try to create security
- We build "nests" from relationships, achievements, money, reputation
- But these substitutes can never truly satisfy what only God can provide

3. We Must Choose Where to Build

"Even your altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God." (Psalm 84:3)

- The bird built its nest at the altar—the place of sacrifice and surrender
- Our souls find rest when we surrender control to God
- The altar represents saying: "This is about You, Jesus, not about me"

4. We Still Walk Through Valleys

"As they pass through the Valley of Baca, they make it a spring." (Psalm 84:6)

- Baca means weeping, dryness, hardship
- Even when dwelling with God, we face difficult seasons
- But we don't let pain become our final destination
- We move "from strength to strength" because our strength comes from God

5. Our Souls Find Rest Only in the Living God

"For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand." (Psalm 84:10)

- One moment in God's presence outweighs years of worldly success
 - Position doesn't matter—even being a "doorkeeper" in God's house is better
 - "Blessed is the man who trusts in You" (Psalm 84:12)
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Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

1. **The sermon mentioned that people often try to satisfy deep needs (security, significance, love) with substitutes.** What are some common "substitutes" people use today? Have you ever caught yourself doing this?
2. **The psalmist said his soul "faints" for God.** When was the last time you felt that kind of intense longing for God's presence? What was happening in your life?
3. **The bird in the sermon illustration guarded a ball thinking it was an egg.** Can you think of something in your life that you've been "guarding" or holding onto that can never truly give you life?
4. **The sermon emphasized building our "nest" at the altar—the place of surrender.** What does surrender look like practically in your daily life?

Going Deeper

5. **Psalm 84:6 talks about passing through the Valley of Baca (weeping) but making it a spring.** Share about a difficult season you've walked through. How did God meet you there? Or if you're in one now, how can this group support you?
6. **"When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10).** How does this paradox play out in real life? When have you experienced God's strength in your weakness?

7. **The sermon said, "One day in Your courts is better than a thousand."** Do you truly believe this? What would change in your priorities if you lived like this was absolutely true?
 8. **Matthew 11:28 says, "Come to me, all you who are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."** What burden are you carrying right now that Jesus is inviting you to lay down?
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Personal Reflection

Take a few minutes of silence for each person to consider:

- **Where have I been building my "nest"?** (Career? Relationships? Financial security? Children's success?)
 - **What do I need to surrender at the altar today?**
 - **What would it look like for me to prioritize God's presence above everything else this week?**
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Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE of the following to practice this week:

Option 1: Daily Dwelling

Set aside 15 minutes each day to simply "dwell" in God's presence. No agenda, no requests—just worship, read Scripture, and sit quietly with Him.

Option 2: Altar Moment

Identify one thing you've been holding onto for security (a worry, a relationship, a goal) and write it down. Physically place it somewhere as a symbol of laying it on God's altar. Pray a prayer of surrender over it.

Option 3: Valley Perspective

If you're in a difficult season, journal about how God might be turning your "Valley of Baca" into a spring. Look for evidence of His presence even in the hard place.

Option 4: Presence Over Position

Evaluate your schedule. What activities or commitments are keeping you from God's presence? What can you eliminate or reduce?

Group Prayer Time

Prayer Focus:

1. **Confession:** Acknowledge areas where we've sought satisfaction in substitutes rather than God
2. **Surrender:** Lay specific burdens, worries, and control at God's altar
3. **Hunger:** Ask God to increase our longing for His presence
4. **Strength:** Pray for those walking through valleys, that they would go "from strength to strength"
5. **Baptism in the Holy Spirit:** For anyone who wants to receive or be refreshed in the Spirit's power

Closing

Memory Verse for the Week:

"My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." — Psalm 84:2

"The Lord God is a sun and shield; the Lord will give grace and glory; no good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly. O Lord of hosts, blessed is the man who trusts in You!" — Psalm 84:11-12
