

A Longing Soul
Psalm 84:1-12
February 2, 2025

Last week we celebrated Titus, today is another day recognized as a special day. Today we are looking to the purification of Mary and the presentation of our Lord.

This is the day where Anna and Simeon are introduced to the baby Jesus. Leviticus 12 explains when and why this was. *Leviticus 12:1-8, The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the people of Israel, saying, If a woman conceives and bears a male child, then she shall be unclean seven days. As at the time of her menstruation, she shall be unclean. And on the eighth day the flesh of his foreskin shall be circumcised. Then she shall continue for thirty-three days in the blood of her purifying. She shall not touch anything holy, nor come into the sanctuary, until the days of her purifying are completed. But if she bears a female child, then she shall be unclean two weeks, as in her menstruation. And she shall continue in the blood of her purifying for sixty-six days "And when the days of her purifying are completed, whether for a son or for a daughter, she shall bring to the priest at the entrance of the tent of meeting a lamb a year old for a burnt offering, and a pigeon or a turtledove for a sin offering, and he shall offer it before the Lord and make atonement for her. Then she shall be clean from the flow of her blood. This is the law for her who bears a child, either male or female. And if she cannot afford a lamb, then she shall take two turtledoves or two pigeons, one for a burnt offering and the other for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for her, and she shall be clean."*

Did you notice that if you had the money, you would offer a lamb. But what did Mary have to bring? It was the offering of those who didn't have much. Mary and Joseph were not wealthy so the coming of the wise men hadn't happened yet in the first month. You think of this for Mary but it was for every woman who gave birth. We can imagine the priests were pretty busy.

We celebrate the day of our baby's baptism. It is a great day, knowing that our precious son or daughter is now the Lord's and we are now Mom and Dad in charge of raising them in the Lord but also knowing that the Lord will be watching over them, not wanting to lose even one of them to the devil, the world or their own sinful, Old Adam, nature.

Yes, we celebrate today as I imagine there was a celebration in the days of the sons of Korah, the writers of the Psalm for today. The woman could then touch what was required not to touch. She now was clean according to the Law of God and could go about life with a little more freedom.

This celebration in the sons of Korah's day that carried over to Jesus' day must have been a good day. Can you imagine yourself, walking up to the house of the Lord with your little bundle of joy? No doubt there would be a celebration afterward and maybe you had planned a get together to celebrate. Those days of celebration would have been memorable as we see that day in the Luke passage for today.

We have the Gospel lesson and the Psalm for today looking to the dwelling place of God. It is the temple, the place where God said He dwelled where Jesus was presented along with Mary and a pair of turtle doves or two young pigeons. With the sons of Korah musicians in the time of the Psalm for today, it would have been in the tabernacle in the days of David before the temple was built or Solomon or possibly Rehoboam after the temple was built.

So much was put into the building of the temple. All the gold and stone and timbers. Very ornate and a sight to behold. We can imagine the sons of Korah, if this was written after the temple was built entering into the temple and the Lord providing the words we have in the Psalm for today. Did they see the transformation from tabernacle to temple? We don't know but imagine if they did. How might the words of the Psalm seem appropriate?

The sons or a son, which could be a grandson or great grandson or even farther down the line relative of Korah, says his soul longs, yes faints for the courts of the LORD. His whole being sings for joy to the living God.

What does he know? He knows the Lord is great. He probably has seen or has heard of David and how the Lord was with Him. He is looking around, looking over his life and the lives of others and realizing that he is blessed because of one thing, and that is the Triune God. Yes, the writer's total life is in the Lord's hands and he feels very secure in His hands.

The tabernacle or the temple was where the Lord said He dwelled in the days of Korah. The people looked to it as the dwelling place of God and to stand there, in the tabernacle or temple must have been an awesome feeling. The God who created all

there is and who had chosen you to be His very own was right there, within a few feet of you. Yes, it must have been exciting to be there, to sing of His praises.

To be in His presence or a few feet from Him would bring praises and to think of being a bad guy, one who tried to put God on the back burner or to try to deny him, yes, would seem like a real letdown compared to even being a doorkeeper in the house of God. We can imagine what that is like and yet we benefit in many ways by the Lord dwelling in us through His Holy Spirit. He is within us. Since He is, we can get so used to Him in us that we forget that He is there. We can lessen the longing of our soul for the Lord.

When you prepared for bed last night or when you woke up this morning did you long for coming to church this morning? Did you long, knowing that you were coming here on a 1st Sunday of the month where you would come to partake of the body and blood of your Lord and Savior, Jesus or did it just become another Sunday of the many Sundays when you got up and went through the routine of a Sunday morning, yes, different than another day but just another Sunday?

I think it was probably like that. You have been here many times, most of you. You take so much for granted that it is hard to long for this day. Each Sunday is so similar.

But what if there were not church for awhile? What would Sunday feel like? Would you develop a longing that you had never experience before?

If you can remember back a few years when the Chinese virus came to us. It was decided to not have services for a few weeks. Did you develop a longing? Yes, there was the thought of the freedom to not to have to get dressed up to go to church or for me to not have to prepare a sermon but there was that ache, that longing for the house of the Lord. The elders and I knew we need to open up after a few weeks. Even if there was that chance the virus might be spread, we saw the need was greater than the risk so services were again scheduled as we looked into putting the services online for those who didn't feel safe coming to church or couldn't make it for one reason or another.

There are those now who count on services online especially if they aren't feeling well or just can't get ready to come at the time we have it. Those staying home or those viewing other places may not be here in person, but they feel a part of the service, with you in a way, as they watch it before them. I haven't asked the homebound if they long

to be here if circumstances were different but I imagine they all would. Yes, I imagine they long for the days past when they got ready and came into these 4 walls and sat in the pew next to some of you. Yes, they probably long for those days, days past when they were easily able to be here.

You are here and whether you longed for the Lord or not, you can give thanks, with your heart and flesh singing for joy to the living God. You sing for joy to the living God even though we don't have singers singing each day as David had or the sons of Korah who sang daily in the tabernacle or temple.

They go to use their talent to do for the Lord what He had blessed them to do, to sing. We have a few of their Psalms like the one we have today. They sang but we don't know how many heard. We can imagine it would be quite a few, many like Mary who presented Jesus to the priest that day as well as other new mothers bringing their sons and daughters and turtle doves, pigeons or even a lamb.

We don't bring sacrifices anymore as we have Jesus, our perfect sacrifice, who was offered in our place so many years ago. He, the perfect sacrifice, did away with the sacrifices of the days of the sons of Korah, to usher in a new sacrificial system, the one Jesus, by His perfect, once for all sacrifice made eternal.

He brought a different sacrifice for us, not of animals but the one David spoke about after he was confronted by Nathan after Bathsheba, the wife of Uriah gave birth to a son of David. David said: *Psalms 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*

We come here to the house of God to receive from Him. We come and one of the first things we do is to, with a broken spirit and a broken and contrite heart, confess our sins and receive absolution from me as if from the Lord Himself. Yes, He removes those sins and even sins we can't think of as David expressed in *Psalms 103:11-13 For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him.*

Yes, our souls should long for the Lord for He has sent His Son to die for us but didn't stay dead but rose, promising eternal life for all who believe. So our souls long for the day when He will take us to be with Him forever.