

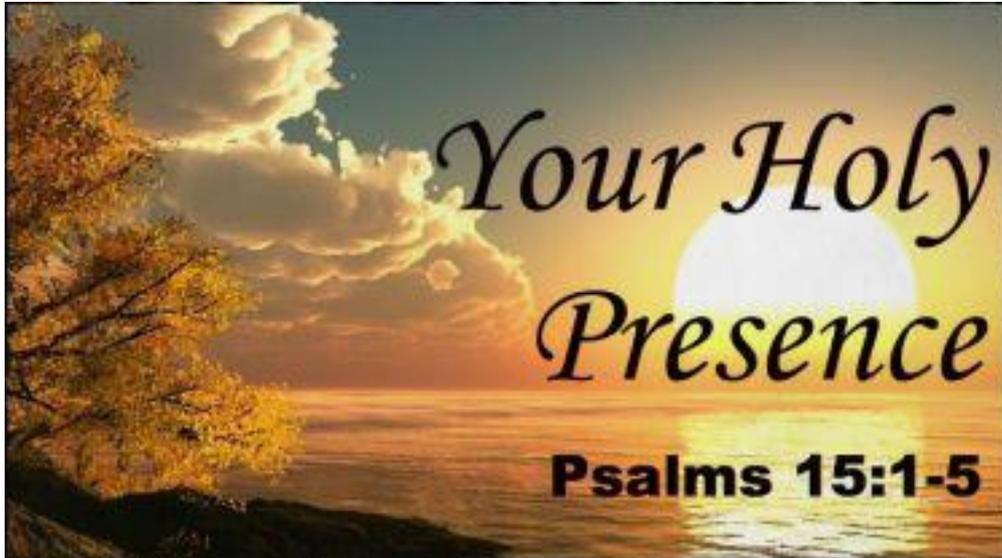
## 24. Encouragement for the Journey

Plus, Strength for the Day



### Sermon

Wednesday, 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 – Glenda Bolitho



Guidelines for Living a Blameless Life

**Bible Reading:** Psalm 15

### Greeting

Greetings and a very warm welcome to our service here at St Luke's Anglican Church Concord and to those who may be following us on line. I'm Glenda Bolitho a member of the ministry team here at St Luke's and we gather together today to hear God's word, to pray with one another, and to share our time together.

**Before I commence let me pray.**

*“May the words of my mouth and the  
Meditation of my heart  
Be pleasing in your sight  
O Lord, my Rock and my Redeemer.”*

**Amen**

## Introduction



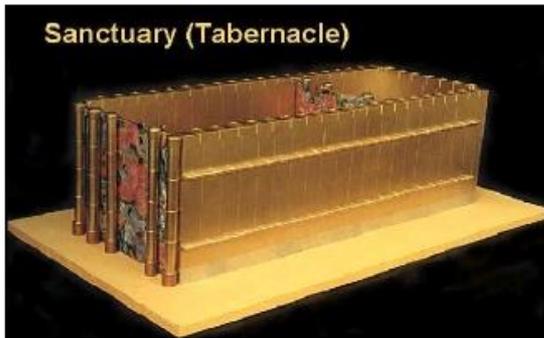
The Psalms have been my inspiration for today's talk. In fact, the Psalms have been an inspiration for countless people, both Jewish and Christians alike, throughout the ages.

The Psalms express the whole range of human feeling and experience, from dark depression to exuberant joy. They are rooted in particular circumstances, yet at the same time they are timeless, and so they are among the best loved, most read parts of the Bible. In our modern age we are stirred by the same emotions, puzzled over the same fundamental problems of life, cry out in need, or worship, to the same God, as the Psalmists of old. We find it easy to identify with them, and we find their sheer dogged faith and the depth of their love for God, both a tonic and a rebuke. (p164 Lion Concise)

Did you know there are 150 Psalms? They were written over a period of about 1000 years, from Moses to Ezra – about the same time period as the whole of the OT. The Psalms are often called the Psalms of David, but only about half (73) are directly attributed to him. Today's Psalm is one of those.

## What God Expects of His People

### Psalm 15 asks two questions



- *Psalm 15:1 NIV*
  - *LORD, who may dwell in your sanctuary?*
  - *Who may live on your holy hill?*

Psalm 15 really presents a summary of what God expects of His people. The question under discussion is, “*Lord, who may dwell in your sanctuary? Who may live on your holy hill?*” (Ps 15:1) or in other words, “*Who is good enough to meet with God?*”

The answer is interesting in that rather than giving a list of do’s and don’ts, this psalm describes Godliness in terms of character. The qualities extend to personal issues of integrity and honesty, our relationships with others and the way we handle our money.

The passage shows that we should approach worship not only in terms of our own inward personal needs, but also in light of our outward public responsibilities. It also shows that religion is a matter of character as well as conduct.

## The Bible on God and Man

**The Bible opens** with the picture of a man walking and talking with God. God had made man and placed him in a garden. He enjoyed beloved companionship in the midst of beautiful surroundings. And he was given a pleasant and satisfying occupation.

**The Bible closes** with a picture of God dwelling with the redeemed from all the ages in an eternal home where poverty, pain, disappointment, failure, death and separation are unknown (Rev 21:1-4).

**Humans began with God.** Their final destiny is intended to be with God if they will but respond to the divine efforts to forgive and redeem. It was sin that wrecked man's Garden of Eden. The Bible is a record of the activity of a gracious God who throughout the ages has sought to win people away from the way of rebellion and self-destruction. God would persuade us to walk by faith and obedience the way to fullness of joy and satisfying achievement.

## The Psalmist Hungered for Fellowship with God

The psalmist hungered for fellowship with God. Psalm 15 was written by a man who assumed that many others (as well as himself) would like to find again the position of privilege and security with God that had been lost because of sin. This hunger and delight in the presence of God is repeated many times in the hymnal of the ancient Hebrews. *“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.....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”* (Ps 84:1-2 & 10.)

- To dwell in the presence of the Lord was to enjoy safety. *“I was glad when they said to me, let us go into the presence of the Lord”* (Ps 122:1). People need the security of a sense of the

presence of the Lord in this modern age where the only thing certain is change.

- The psalmist believed that the highest possible human satisfaction was to be found in God's presence. Life apart from God was barren and incomplete, but with him life could be joyful. *"You have made known to me the path of life: you will fill me with joy in your presence; with eternal pleasures at your right hand"* (Ps 16:11).
- David pictured this experience in terms of a feast prepared by the Divine Host. *"Thou preparest a table before mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over"* (Ps 23:5).
- The psalmist had observed that those whose character and purpose of life permitted them to enjoy the friendship and fellowship of God, enjoyed a wonderful stability that was to be desired by everyone. He declares this conclusion at the end of the psalm. *"He who does these things shall never be shaken"* (Ps 15:5). The writer of Psalm 1 had made the same observation. He described the fruit of the life of the man who lived in the house of God in beautiful terms: *"He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does, prospers"* (Ps 1:3).

The psalmist pictures God as dwelling in a tent pitched perhaps out in the wilderness. The Hebrews loved to think of God's earthly dwelling as a tent or house of curtains. The low spreading tent with its curtains represented the clouds that veiled God in heaven.

## A Question is Put to God

A question is put to God. Inquiry is made as to what kind of traveller is worthy to halt and crave hospitality from Jehovah.

Who shall be found worthy to be a citizen of Zion? Who can be a guest and dwell as a permanent resident?

## The Answer

Verse 2 gives a positive answer to the question which has been directed to God. **The answer is not to be taken as a direct answer from God.** The psalmist reads it as if it were what is passing through God's heart and he himself answers in accordance with the mind of God the question he has just asked.

**Those who dwell with God must walk uprightly.** Walking is used to represent the course of life. Their way of life must be blameless, sincere and complete. There must not be any known unconfessed sins and unforsaken sins in their lives. In all of these essential features of the character, there must be sincere practice of genuine religion.

**The guest in the house of God "does what is righteous".** His life is one of positive goodness. As our Lord went about doing good, so must his followers do something more than make a good profession with the mouth. Their words must be accompanied by good deeds. They must be workers for God and their fellowman.

To have the privilege of dwelling on God's Holy Hill, **guests must practise control of their tongues.** Perfect truthfulness should characterise their speech. Those with whom God will be pleased are those who do not permit their tongue to communicate that which is untrue, hurtful and destructive to others. They can be counted on to be honest and truthful in all conversations.

**God's guests are doers of good to their neighbours** rather than doers of evil. This is possible because of the love of God within those who dwell with him.

David further says that **those who are granted to dwell with God are those who have integrity** and who honour those who are genuine and worthy. The guest of God refuses to whitewash iniquity even

when iniquity is personified in one who claims or appears to be great.

In the days of the psalmist, people did not borrow money except in times of great necessity. **Those who enjoyed God's favour were never to take advantage of the helpless.** Money was to be lent as an act of mercy not to make a profit. Usury and bribery were two common offences against justice. (Usury is the practice of lending money at a high rate of interest).

## Conclusion

So, as we draw to a close, what does God require of the individual who seeks his company? He expects right conduct, right speaking, right relationships with others and right use of wealth.

Those who would dwell with God and enjoy his presence, his protection and his provisions must be men and women of high ethical and moral character with genuine faith and faithfulness that expresses itself in kindness and mercy. Who is sufficient and adequate? Only through Jesus Christ can our sins be forgiven and can we find the inward strength and guidance that can make possible for us a life of fruitful fellowship with God and his people.

**AMEN.**

### Reference Material

Zondervan 2008 Pastor's Annual – T. T. Crabtree  
Believer's Bible Commentary – William MacDonald  
The Lion Concise Bible Handbook  
The Word in Life Study Bible – Thomas Nelson Publishers  
Life Application Study Bible – Tyndale  
Strength for Your Day – R T and Louise Kendall

## Bible Reading

### Psalm 15

#### A Psalm of David.

<sup>1</sup> Lord, who may dwell in your sacred tent?  
Who may live on your holy mountain?  
<sup>2</sup> The one whose walk is blameless,  
who does what is righteous,  
who speaks the truth from their heart;  
<sup>3</sup> whose tongue utters no slander,  
who does no wrong to a neighbor,  
and casts no slur on others;  
<sup>4</sup> who despises a vile person  
but honors those who fear the Lord;  
who keeps an oath even when it hurts,  
and does not change their mind;  
<sup>5</sup> who lends money to the poor without interest;  
who does not accept a bribe against the innocent.  
Whoever does these things  
will never be shaken

#### A Prayer for Strength for the Day

Thanks be to Thee, my  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
For all the benefits which  
Thou has given me,  
For all the pains and insults  
Which Thou has borne for me,  
O most merciful Redeemer,  
Friend, and Brother.  
May I know Thee more clearly,  
Love Thee more dearly,  
And follow Thee more nearly.

**Amen**

*Richard de Wyche of Chichester*