

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas  
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Dwelling In the House of God

Psalm 27:4

27:4 One thing have I asked of the LORD, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple..

**1. Three Wishes**

There is a folktale, titled “Three Wishes.” Once upon a time lived hardworking husband and wife. They were not rich, but they never experienced short of food and illness. One day, they saw a count and countess in a carriage passing before their house. The wife said, “I want to ride a carriage wearing a nice hat and earrings like the countess.” The husband also said, “It would be nice to be helped by servants.”

They thought that their life was poor while they were talking such things. The wife gave out a sigh and said, “I hope I have a fairy this moment. When she swings a magic wand, any wishes will come true.” Immediately after her words, a fairy came into their house with a flashing light. She said, “I have heard all of your conversations. I will give you a chance that three wishes will come true. Just say your wishes, then they will come true. However, you cannot cancel your wish once it came out of your mouth.” A fairy disappeared after telling so.

“Have you heard it?” “Yes, I have heard it. How wonderful is that wishes, three of them will come true! What’s your first wish?” “Well, my wish might be to live long.” “Though we could live long, it is not fun if we just have to work hard. My wish is to become rich. If we are rich, most of our wishes will come true.” The husband and wife thought about the wishes, but they couldn’t find good ones. Then, they decided that they must go about their day. They spent the day working.

At the evening, they sit before the fireplace. The wife said, “I wish we had a nice measure of sausage for celebration of our wishes come true. It would really taste good if I burn a sausage by the fire.” And suddenly a long link of sausage appeared before her eyes on the table. She said, “Oh, no! It was not my real wish!” But the wish never be canceled.

The husband said to his wife, “What a fool you are! We missed the first precious wish. How could you wish for a sausage when there is so much in this world. A curse on sausages. I wish that sausages were hanging from the end of your nose!” Immediately after he said, a sausage was attached to her nose. “Oh, no!” The husband tried to pull sausages, but it never left from her nose.

The wife cried, “I cannot go out being this terrible shape. I wish these sausages be away from my nose!” Immediately, sausages left from her nose and dropped on the floor. They made three wishes in vain, but they never complained and were satisfied with their life since then.

This folk tale teaches us that happiness is in the modest life never wishing big things. Happiness is not in the life people are envious, but

in the life our hearts are always content. However, the Bible teaches that we can ask God big things, and God will gladly answer them if they are not selfish. Psalm 81:10 says, “Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.” As birds give food to chicks opening mouth wide, God gives the needs to those who ask earnestly. What are you asking to God always? If God promised you to answer your three wishes, what are your three wishes. You will be blessed if you can say your wishes in a real form. Such person has a specific goal and is always aiming it. If your goal is related to God, you would be blessed more.

David had three concrete wishes. It is written in Psalm 27:4. His first wish was “dwelling in the house of the LORD,” and the second one was “gazing upon the beauty of the LORD,” and the third one was “to inquire in his temple.” As the verse says, “One thing have I asked of the LORD,” his wish was actually only one. It was “presence” of God.

## **2. Presence of God**

David wished “I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.” As you can tell from this verse “seek him in his temple,” “House of the Lord” is God’s temple. In David’s time, the temple was made with tent, and it was called “tabernacle.” In the tabernacle, there is an alter but not a bed. There is a basin for washing but not a bathroom. There is bread for offering but not a gorgeous meal. There is a light but not entertainment. He could find everything in the palace. But why did David say that he want to live in the house of God, which is made with tent rather than the gorgeous palace. Because it is where the Lord is. God is with people, and it is called “presence.” David was

looking for this “presence.”

There is a difference between “presence” and “existence.” “Presence” means that God is with in order to bless and encourage human beings, to save them from their sufferings, and to comfort them. When Moses asked God his name, God said, “I am Yahweh.” His holy name indicates that he is not supported by others, but exists by Himself. It indicates that he gives the existences to all other things. Not only that, it indicates that God will be with human beings. The name of “Yahweh” shows that He is the God of “presence.” It can be said that God has name “Presence”.

According to Exodus 3:12, God promised “But I will be with you.” and encouraged Moses. Also, God promised Joshua, successor of Moses to be with him. When the Israelite was defeated by Babylonia, God said, “Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” (Isaiah 41:10) The prophet Jeremiah said, “Fear not, O Jacob my servant.... I will be with you.” (Jeremiah 46:28). The Haggai said, “Be strong, all you people of the land, declares the LORD. Work, for I am with you, declares the LORD of hosts.” (Haggai 2:4) He encouraged the people who were working for rebuilding of the temple by pointing God’s presence.

As I explained, in the Old Testament time, God had shown His “presence” to His people. In the New Testament time, He was with us, lived among us through Jesus Christ. In order to write the Gospel, Matthew started with the word of angel, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us.)” (Matthew 1:23). And, he concluded his

Gospel with the Lord's word, "And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:20) God is truly with us, He is God of "presence" God saves us through His "presence". Where the presence of God, there is a salvation. His blessing, power, comfort, and all necessities will be provided from His presence. Our prayers will be answered by the presence of God. According to Revelation 21:3-4, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."

### **3. Asking for His Presence**

David asked His presence. It is quite natural that once we know the Lord is with us, we wish to be with Him, we wish to be near Him and we wish to experience His presence. These desires are necessary for those who sincerely believe in God.

In Psalm 84 starts with "How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God." Then verse 10 says, "For a day in your courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness." This is not David's song but I assume David felt exactly the same way as this one. "Doorkeeper in the house of God" refers to a guard of the Temple. The work is so hard as to stay awake throughout the night. David wanted to be in the house of God rather than in a palace. I think he wanted to "be a doorkeeper in the house of

his God than being a king”.

David must have had been waited by so many servants in the palace. There, many people came in and out and the parties were held. People think that those who had every power in their hands just like David, must have had been satisfied both materially and emotionally. But David’s soul was thirsty, asking for the presence of God. We also have a thirst and hunger just like David did. But when our life is busy and our heart is occupied by various pleasures, the desire of our soul often disappears.

Someone has said “solitary is not in the mountain but in the town”. I totally agree. People feel lonely being in a large crowd. They feel they are missing something. Even though you have dinner with your close friends and enjoy joyful conversation, you sometimes feel empty when the fun time is over. Especially for believers, even if it is a church gathering and many people gather to have a fun time, they sometime feel they need “His presence”. The more people become enthusiastic over a certain topic, they really want to listen to “His voice”. They want to leave the crowd and man’s words, come closer to “God’s presence” and have a conversation with God. Believers receive many blessings in this world, but their soul always has a thirst to seek for “His presence.”

The notion that David wanted to live in the house of God points to the fact that he wanted to escape from a busy life as a king and live with God in the house of God. In every era, the believers got together and worshiped God together and celebrated the salvation of God as well as they thought of God in a silence and treasured the time to taste God’s Word. Lord Jesus, being alone and went to a lonely place and

spent time together with Father God, and He taught the disciples to do the same thing. Therefore, when those who has interaction with God come to church, the church gathering can now show the presence of God.

The Lord is the God of presence. He promised to be with those who believe in Him. His presence can completely satisfy humans. If so, the believers must not stop asking for His presence. We want to put this to the first wish list that “I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to inquire in his temple” and come closer to God. God will surely listen to our desires.

**(Prayer)**

Dear God, please lead us to Your presence. Please help us taste Your presence in our daily life. Then, heal us, comfort us, encourage us, and sanctify us in Your presence. In Jesus’ name we pray, Amen.