

## **The Tabernacle of God Psalm 15**

*By Pastor Roy Hogan*

This Psalm is sometimes referred to as David's "sermon on the mount." This Psalm addresses a solemn occasion, that being, who can dwell in the very presence of Jehovah God. This Psalm speaks of the kind of conduct that is necessary to enter into God's presence. David was, for sure, a champion worshipper of Almighty God. No one who has studied his life and the Psalms God gave him to pen down can dispute this fact. He often entered into the presence of Jehovah.

15:1

*LORD, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in thy holy hill?*

Two questions are wrapped into this single verse. The first question is "who can dwell in God's tabernacle?" The word for "tabernacle" is "tent." A tent is a temporal dwelling place. A tent is easily pitched and readily moveable. When the Bible speaks of a tent, the meaning given is that of something temporal and transient in nature. Abraham lived in a tent even though he was rich enough to build a more permanent dwelling place. Abraham wanted to be ready to move should at a moment's notice should God speak instructions for him to move.

This tabernacle is not the tent of David. David is, instead, speaking of the dwelling place of God. He had a desire to be a guest in the place wherein God dwelt. David wished to sit down with the Lord. No one will ever be arrested and brought into the presence of God. To come into his presence requires a heart that desires to be a guest in his house.

We, as children of God, are invited to enter the presence of God. Yet, as the host of his own house, God has requirements. You surely have requirements in place for folk to come in as guest where you live. God is his own host. He has requirements that

must be met in order to come into his presence as a guest. The rest of this the fifteenth Psalm gives us the requirements God has in place in order to enter his tent. II Corinthians 6:17 *Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you.* The requirements are not grievous. God is merciful and understanding. Sometime, I feel he should be stricter and have rigid requirements. Yet, I realize God has a vigorous appetite for fellowshiping his people.

The second question of verse one asks “Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?” As has been said, the tent spoken of in verse one speaks of a temporal dwelling. In contrast, the hill speaks of a permanent dwelling place. David was likely tired of traveling. He was weary from his pilgrimage. He sought a resting place where he could dwell continually in the presence of God. I, too, am seeking a permanent dwelling place. I am weary from the pilgrimage. I am tired of this tent. I want a permanent dwelling place. I know one day soon I will be called from the temporal house into the permanent house on the holy hills of heaven. I once heard a song with a line that said “the hills of home are calling me.” Abraham the tent dweller knew there was a blessed hope as we read in Hebrews 11:10 *For he (Abraham) looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.*

However, we are here on earth for the present. As do enjoy those times in this life I get to spend some time in God’s presence. It makes my imagination strain in an effort to see the place God has prepared for his people who are saved by the blood of His son, Jesus Christ. How often and how much time do you spend alone with God? Are you qualified to go into his presence? Let us see the qualifications this Psalm has set forth for entry in the tent of God.

15:2

*He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart.*

Are you in any way surprised at this requirement? Do you think this is unreasonable? It is a small matter that God has placed before us.

To be a guest in God's presence, a person's **walk** must be upright. We fear the word "holy." It seems far too much to require a person to be "holy." I Peter 1:16 *Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.* The word upright is akin to the process of the priest examining a sacrifice to see if it is presentable to God. He ran his hands over the sacrifice. He looked for defects. The animal was slain and the inward parts were carefully examined. If the sacrifice passed the priest's examination it was declared an "upright" sacrifice. Romans 12:1 *I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*

To go into God's presence requires righteous **works**. Christians ought to proactive Christianity or get out of the business. There are boundless opportunities to practice the works of a Christian.

To get into God's presence requires the guest's **words** to be right. God is not pleased with speech that condemns others. He does not approve of guile spewing from the mouth. God does not approve of speech that is critical and speech that condemns fellow man. James told us much in a single verse: James 3:2 *For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.* Yes, our speech does matter to God.

15:3-4

*He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. 4 In whose eyes a vile person is contemned; but he honoureth them that fear the LORD. He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not.*

This verse gives us more of what God expects in order to sit as a guest in his tabernacle. The speech of man is addressed once again as we see the word *backbiteth*. I believe to backbite means to speak against another person behind their back. It is an exercise of the tongue. The more modern word for backbiting is *gossip*. The world is filled with gossip. Have you heard? Did you hear? You will not believe what I heard. We have some fantastic tools for backbiting and gossiping in our society. One is the telephone. Another is social media. Gossip disgust Almighty God. If you are not able to control your tongue any better than to backbite the brethren, do not expect to go into God's presence.

The man who sits at the Lord's table must not do evil to his neighbor. His words must be righteous. God is not in the business of listening to dirty jokes. He has no desire to hear how low-down your neighbor is and how good you are. Lives have been destroyed by the evil words from the mouth of a neighbor. When we find out someone has a flaw, we cannot contain ourselves. We must tell it! Yell it from the mountain top! God knows all our flaws and shortcomings. HE does not need to hear anything from us.

One who would sit at God's table must speak reliable words and not lies. This is given in the phrase *He that sweareth to his own hurt, and changeth not*. Truth is scarce in this age. It is hard to find men who swear in their own heart to tell the truth. Men are sworn to tell the truth with their hand on the Holy Bible and still do not tell the truth. A lie seems far more advantageous. A lie would cover the sin, so we think. It is human nature to lie. Babies come into the world lying. They scream as if they are dying. Pick the baby up and shake it and it is alright. Proverbs 6:16-19 *These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: 17 A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, 19 A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren*. This list of seven includes lying twice. God has a double-hatred toward lying.

15:5

*He that putteth not out his money to usury, nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved.*

The love of money is the root of all evil. How many folks are disqualified by money from entering God's presence? Money can be awful. Blood flows daily from those who were wounded over money. How many persons took their last breath today because money did them in?

*Usury* is, of course, lending money at an enormously high rate of interest. Usury commonly involves the poor and disadvantaged. Some have no credit and their only hope of a loan is through a channel that involves the practice of usury.

Another misuse of money in this verse is he that *taketh reward against the innocent*. How many men and women are behind bars because they were framed by the paying of money. A guilty man pays the judge a handsome sum of money to pin the crime on another man who is innocent.

Are you correct and "up-front" in the eyes of God in all your financial dealings?

The chapter is concluded with the words *He that doeth these things shall never be moved*. No one can argue that God is unreasonable in his requirements in this chapter. It is the least any of God's children can do to obey the requirements contained herein. God's tabernacle will always be opened to the man who obeys God's rules in this chapter. Such a man will be a welcome guest.

