

# Better Days Ahead

**Opening text: Psalms 84:1-2, 4, 7, 10-12**

**Introduction:** A few months ago, I felt the Lord speak to me in my prayer time these two words, which I believe to be prophetic for 2024: *“better things”*.

2024 is to be a year of better things: a year to run our race better, to grow in maturity, increase our faith, to make better decisions, to have a better game plan for our lives, to hear God better, to worship better, etc. The key word for your 2024 is ‘better’.

**Hebrews 6:9** - *But, beloved, we are confident of **better things** concerning you, yes, things that accompany salvation, though we speak in this manner.*

**Better** is a key word in the book of Hebrews. It is mentioned at least 12 times. One dictionary defines ‘better’ as

- Something in an improved state
- Something that surpasses a previous achievement.
- Something of a higher standard, superior or more excellent

With those things in mind, let us look today at Psalm 84, and particularly verse 10:

**Psalms 84:10** - *For a day in Your courts is **better** than a thousand.  
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of  
wickedness.*

## 1. God wants you to experience better days in 2024!

**Deuteronomy 11:21** *“that your days and the days of your children may be multiplied in the land of which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, like the days of the heavens above the earth”.*

I like that expression: *days of heavens above the earth*. To me that speaks of *better days* - *days of heaven on earth*. Can we experience better days, days of greater joy and greater peace, days of strength and fulfilment, days of better decisions etc?

I certainly don’t believe that days lived outside God will get better. I suspect not. In the last days perilous times will come (2 Timothy 3:1). However, days lived within the covering of His presence can certainly be better and get better!

*For a day in your courts is BETTER than a thousand*

**Better:** happier, more profitable, more advantageous, superior, more to be desired, more excellent, of greater value. A day under the covering of the Almighty is definitely a better day!

## 2. One of the greatest keys to a better year, filled with better days, is to be found in the presence of God.

David who wrote many of the psalms was someone accustomed to the splendour of royalty and the magnificence of royal palaces. However, his heart and preference was always for the courts of God.

**V.1-2** - *How lovely is Your tabernacle, O Lord of hosts! <sup>2</sup> My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.*

Nothing compares with the courts of our God. One day there is better than a thousand.

**The key to a better year, filled with better days is to live a life based in the presence of God – not just being a casual visitor, but a dweller!**

**V.4** - *Blessed are those who **dwell** in Your house; they will still be praising You.*

**Psalms 91:1** - *He who **dwells** in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.*

### **3. What is your location in life?**

- a) What is your location in this life? What choices are you going to make in 2024 to live closer to God's presence?

This passage contrasts two different locations: the courts of God and the tents of wickedness (one translation says, those “*outside the gates*”). This verse points us to what is better: the courts of God! In the courts of God, we find so many benefits:

**V.4-5** - *Blessed are those who dwell in Your house; they will still be praising You. Selah <sup>5</sup> Blessed is the man whose strength is in You, whose heart is set on pilgrimage.*

**V.7** - *They go from strength to strength each one appears before God in Zion.*

**V.11** – *For 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.*

There are so many benefits of living our days in the presence of God:

- Blessing
- Growing strength (from strength to strength)
- The Lord's undivided attention (each one appears before God)
- Grace
- Provision (no good thing will He withhold)

There are so many benefits of living in the presence of God! Where is your life located?

- b) We have all heard the expression “location, location, location”. Spiritually speaking ‘location’ is very important.

**Acts 18:7** - *And he departed from there and entered the house of a certain man named Justus, one who worshiped God, whose house was next door to the synagogue.*

I don't think that the bible mentions Justus and where he lived by accident. Who he was and where he lived were important to mention: he was a worshiper who lived right next to where worship happened.

What choices are you going to make this year to live more and more in His presence?

**Exodus 33:7** - *Moses took his tent and pitched it outside the camp, far from the camp, and called it the tabernacle of meeting. And it came to pass that everyone who sought the Lord went out to the tabernacle of meeting which was outside the camp.*

*Moses took his tent* – his tent was his house, literally. But he so treasured the presence of God, that he made his own house into what became known as the “*tabernacle of the meeting*” – a place of encounter, a place for intercession, a place to seek the Lord, a place for the presence of God. He chose to literally camp in the presence of God!

Location is so important.

**Matthew 6:21** – *“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”.*

The key to better days in 2024 is to be found frequently in the presence of God – to dwell there. One day there is better than a thousand. Moses, David, Justus, all treasured the presence of God more than anything else.

#### **4. The map to better days in this life starts with the presence of God.**

David so treasured God's presence, that one of the first things he did when he became a king was to bring the Ark of the Covenant back (2 Samuel 6:1-18). He acknowledged and valued the presence of God. That was his first executive decision. God's presence was first in his life.

Even when he sinned, he immediately repented and prayed,

**Psalms 51:11** - *Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.*

David had such a heart for the presence of God:

**Psalms 63:1-3** - *O God, You are my God; early will I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my flesh longs for You in a dry and thirsty land where there is no water <sup>2</sup> So I have looked for You in the sanctuary, to see Your power and Your glory. <sup>3</sup> Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You.*

**Psalms 42:1-2** - *As the deer pants for the water brooks, so pants my soul for You, O God. <sup>2</sup> My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. when shall I come and appear before God?*

**Psalms 16:8 GNT** - *I am always aware of the Lord's presence; he is near, and nothing can shake me.*

**V.11** - *You will show me the path that leads to life; your presence fills me with joy and brings me pleasure forever.*

The map to better days in this life starts with the presence of God! Are you a regular there? Is that the location of your life?

### **Conclusion**

We are confident of better things and better days this year. However, our starting point needs to be a place that the Bible describes as *better* than anywhere else: the presence of God. One day there, beats any other, 1000-nil.

God can do more in your life in one day you give Him, than you could probably ever achieve in a thousand years on your own (*with the Lord one day is as a thousand years* - 2 Peter 3:8).

*One day in your courts:* If you want to know what God can do in one day just read the account of Creation in Genesis. The issue is how sometimes we fail to even give God a day. No wonder there is no change, no breakthrough.

In Psalms 63:3 we read, *your lovingkindness is better than life.* In Songs of Solomon 4:10 – your love is *better* than wine. God always points us to what is better but it is always our choice to reset our compass and to walk in it.

Are you struggling, dry or empty? Are you distracted, overworked or under pressure? Are you stressed, frazzled or burning out? Is your life busier and not easier? Well, there is a better way, there is a more excellent way.

Maybe you need to do like Moses who moved his dwelling from among the crowd and pitched it somewhere where he could be with God.

Maybe you just need to return to the presence of Jesus and dive deeper than ever. He said,

**Matthew 11:28-30** - *Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.*

**Jesus showed us a better way and it has everything to do with His presence.**