

WHO CAN DWELL?

THOUGHTS FROM MAJOR SANDRA STOKES

This song is based on Psalm 15. It opens with a question, clearly states the answer, and concludes with a wonderful promise which goes beyond the terms of the original question. It is a reflective or meditative psalm in which David ponders one thought: how to be the one who can dwell in God's presence.

Unlike so many of David's Psalms of Lament, in this psalm, David has all but forgotten his enemies. He wants to focus on the truly different character of one who knows God, kneels in His presence, and rests in His promises.

The question asks, "Lord, who can abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?" (Psalm 15:1)

The Lord's tabernacle was a literal tent on Mount Zion that housed the ark of the covenant, an altar, a table, a candlestick, and several other holy objects. It was the place where God communed with His people, the place where Yahweh, the Holy One of Israel, dwelt. To dwell in God's presence means to settle in and take up residence with Him on His holy hill. In other words, those who know the Lord on a personal basis are at home with Him.

David takes up the challenge to examine his heart and ways.

The answer is not about the names of individuals but rather what kind of people can dwell with God. (Psalm 15:2-5)

What are they like? What do they think? How do they live? The answer describes those who have taken on the character of God; whose character is like that of God. As the songwriter Nathan Keys sings for us:

It is the one whose walk is blameless, it is the one who does what is righteous, and it is the one who speaks the truth from their heart.

Perhaps it could be summed up in Micah 6:8 that says,

*"What does the Lord require of you? Do justly – love mercy and walk humbly with Thy God."
(Walk + Work + Talk = Integrity)*

This creates a dilemma for God's people because we cannot do this on our own! As the song reminds us:

*We are not blameless on our own. We are not righteous by our own deeds.
It is only by the blood of Jesus.*

It is **only** those who "call on the name of the Lord" who can dwell in God's presence.

Indeed, no one has perfectly fulfilled this ideal except the man, Christ Jesus. He alone has entered the presence of God in Heaven on virtue of His own merit. For us, access to God is possible only through Christ. But, having been brought near to God through Christ's work on the cross (God's incredible grace), we can enjoy continuing fellowship with Him and lead the kind of holy life which this psalm depicts.

The Promise: David concludes with this statement: "He that doeth these things shall never be shaken." (Psalm 15:6)

There is deep assurance for those who dwell in the Lord – who know Him, abide with and in Him, and follow His perfect will. They will not be moved. We can be unmovable and steady in the midst of trials and troubles as we dwell daily in His presence.

As you listen to this beautiful song and read the psalm, take time to reflect and ask yourself, is this representative of me? Do I reflect God's character in these ways?