

Sermon Notes

WORSHIP SERVICE - 12.8.2024

PSALM 122 - GOING TO THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

I. INTRODUCTION

Psalm 122:1-9

A Song of Ascents. Of David

1 I was glad when they said to me,

“Let us go to the house of the Lord!”

2 Our feet have been standing

within your gates, O Jerusalem!

3 Jerusalem—built as a city

that is bound firmly together,

4 to which the tribes go up,

the tribes of the Lord,

as was decreed for Israel,

to give thanks to the name of the Lord.

5 There thrones for judgment were set,

the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

“May they be secure who love you!

7 Peace be within your walls

and security within your towers!”

8 For my brothers and companions' sake

I will say, “Peace be within you!”

9 For the sake of the house of the Lord our God,

I will seek your good.

- The Psalm we will look at today expresses and captures the anticipation and excitement of making the journey and arriving at the only place for true worship, the temple in Jerusalem.
- It expresses the deep affection the pilgrim had for Jerusalem, the center of Israel's religious life.
- This psalm is part of a group of 15 psalms each titled, A Song of Ascents. (120-134)
- These psalms were likely sung by those on pilgrimage to Jerusalem for one of three annual feasts.
- Psalm 120, the pilgrim finds himself far away from Jerusalem. He describes the world he lives in as one of misery, war, and falsehood.
- Psalm 121, the pilgrim is within sight of Jerusalem. He lifts his eyes to the hills and he sends up prayers for the Lord to keep him safe from evil on the pilgrim way.
- And in our psalm today, Psalm 122, the pilgrim has arrived in Jerusalem.

II. DELIGHTING IN CHRIST'S CHURCH

- v1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!"
- V1 captures the anticipation and joy of going to the house of the Lord in the holy city.
- The house of the Lord is the Temple.
- If this psalm predated Solomon's temple, we know that David had brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem and the tabernacle was previously referred to as the house of the Lord when it was at Shiloh (1 Sam 1:7; 3:15).
- The house of the Lord was the central most important place for the people of God.
- The house of the Lord was where the presence of God was among the people.
- The psalmist says he was glad when other worshipers invited him to join them.
- The reason they were going to the house of God was to keep the annual festivals which were joyful occasions for the people of God.
- Feast of Weeks/Pentecost--celebrated the end of the harvest season and expressed gratitude to God for the harvest.
- Feast of Tabernacles/Booths--reminded the Israelites of their sojourn in the wilderness prior to taking possession of the land God promised them and God's provision for them.
- Passover--celebration of God's redemption of his people from Egypt.
- All of these feasts were typological, foreshadowing Christ and ultimately fulfilled in Christ.
- v2 Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!
- The glad pilgrims have arrived. They are standing within the gates of the holy city.
- "O Jerusalem!" This is an expression of deep affection. They've finally arrived at the place they have longed to be at.
- I want you to consider how this psalm was sung by Jesus as he entered Jerusalem.
- First, at the age of twelve, Luke 2:42-51, his family went up according to custom.
- The gospels record Jesus going up to Jerusalem for several of the feast days.
- We know that he would go up one last time to Jerusalem.

- Could this psalm have been on his mind as he made his way up and stood within the walls of the holy city?
- The temple, the house of the Lord, Jerusalem, all of these are types and shadows pointing to Christ and find their ultimate fulfillment and meaning in Christ.
- This psalm goes from shadow to substance when we interpret it in light of Christ and being sung by Christ.
- Jesus is the temple, the house of the Lord.
- Read John 2:18-22; John 4:19-24; Matthew 12:1-8
- Hebrews 10:19-21 Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
- Revelation 21:22 in John's vision of the new heavens and the new earth, and the new Jerusalem coming down from heaven, he sees that there is no temple, for Jesus himself is its temple.
- Psalm 122 points our affection to Christ, the true and greater temple.
- And as we await that glorious Day, the Jerusalem from above, the church is also seen as the true temple under construction, being built up.
- 1 Peter 2:5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- 1 Cor 3:16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you?
- Ephesians 2:19-21 So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. 22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.
- In John's vision, of the new heavens and earth, the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God—it's the people of God. (Rev 21)
- We are his bride, we represent the new Jerusalem from above.
- This psalm, sung by us, in Christ, the temple of the Lord, expresses our longing for the peace that will come in the new Jerusalem.
- The church universal, and the local visible church, is a foretaste of that Jerusalem from above.
- Jerusalem for us, is not a geographical city, it is the Church of Jesus Christ, his body.
- Are you glad for the Church?
- Is there joy when you gather with the people of God, who are the house of the Lord?
- As you are going through the week, do you have a sense of joy and anticipation for the coming Lord's Day?
- Do you understand the glorious privilege we have when we gather together, as the true temple of the Lord, in Christ Jesus?
- There is something deeply significant and meaningful in the seemingly ordinary gathering together of God's people who constitute the Jerusalem of God, the Jerusalem from above.
- If you are glad to be part of Christ's Church, delight in her.
- Don't treat this heavenly foretaste of the new Jerusalem as a trivial thing.
- We should seek the blessing of public worship, we should be engaged in public worship.
- We should invite others to join us for worship.
- The opening of this psalm should stir us to heartfelt gladness whenever we go to meet the people of God, Christ's Church.

- Every week, we convert this space at the Y into a holy place, it is sanctified by the presence of God and the people of God as it is used in service of God for worship.
- I hope you're glad to be in the house of the Lord today!

III. APPRECIATING CHRIST'S CHURCH

- The psalmist expresses some of the glories of the holy city Jerusalem as he marvels standing within its walls.
- Three specific statements are mentioned which are affirmations with great theological significance.
- He expresses appreciation for the security the city represents, the unity and diversity of the worshipers present, and the justice the King administers.

- **1. Security the city represents**

- 3 Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together...
- "built as a city," -- Jerusalem is built as a city should be built.
- "Bound firmly together," this reinforces the idea that it is well-enclosed, well-designed, it has walls that provide protection and security for its inhabitants.
- In contrast to the places the pilgrims were coming from, Jerusalem is a well-organized city of impregnable safety in a world full of threats and chaos.

- How do you see the Church of Jesus Christ?
- Jesus described his disciples on the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5 as a "city on a hill." (Matt. 5:14)
- Jesus said that his Church would be built upon this rock, which He is, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. (Matt 16:18)
- Hebrews 11 tells us that by faith the patriarch Abraham obeyed God and left his land to live in the land of promise for he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God. All of the OT saints believed by faith, the promises God made, trusting that God was preparing for them a heavenly city.
- The book of Revelation gives us a picture of the militant church going through the tribulation period, and the triumphant church in the new heavens and earth.
- And she is glorious! She is the blood-bought church of Jesus Christ!

- How truly sad for a believer to think little of the church.
- Paul discloses that Christ loves his church, demonstrating that by love by giving himself for her, sanctifying and cleansing by washing her with the water of the word, and that he will perfect his church so that he might present it to himself a glorious church, without spot, wrinkle or blemish, he will make his church holy. (Ephesians 5)
- For whatever the church looks like now, she will be holy and perfect on that Day!

- **2. The unity and diversity of the worshipers present**

- 4 to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.
- The pilgrim sees representatives from all the tribes of the Lord present for worship.
- In the holy city, all the people of God are united for a common purpose, to worship God and give thanks to him as he has decreed.
- What keeps them in unity? They are worshiping the Lord together.
- That's the Church of Jesus Christ!
- Only Jesus can bring this kind of unity (John 12:32).

- Jesus declared that he would gather other sheep that were not of the flock of Israel, and they would also be part of his one flock under the One Shepherd. (John 10)
- Jesus commissioned his disciples to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.
- John's heavenly vision in Revelation 7, of the innumerable multitude of people from every nation, from all tribes and languages worshiping before the throne of God (Revelation 7:9-10).
- What a glorious picture of the universal Church of Jesus Christ.
- When you consider the global church, you can appreciate the vastness and comprehensiveness of the saving work of Jesus Christ, bringing people from every nation, tribe, and tongue under the banner of his Kingship and rule.
- We should delight in the unity and diversity of the church.
- We should strive to maintain the unity of the church in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:3)

• **3. The justice the King administers**

- 5 There thrones for judgment were set, the thrones of the house of David.
- The plural thrones expresses the amplitude of the justice administered.
- The King was the supreme court in Jerusalem. He had a duty to administer justice.
- The psalmist recognized that in this city, because of the King's justice, things are put right.
- We long for perfect justice in a world of injustice.
- But we have this promise, that our God is just and he will put all things right when he comes to judge on that Day.
- The cross is the picture of the justice of God. Our sins were punished, only not in us, but in another, who took the punishment in our place.
- When Jesus comes again in glory, he will come in perfect judgment.
- More than that, we have this glimpse of our role in that coming judgment.
- 1 Corinthians 6:1-4 When one of you has a grievance against another, does he dare go to law before the unrighteous instead of the saints? 2 Or do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world is to be judged by you, are you incompetent to try trivial cases? 3 Do you not know that we are to judge angels? How much more, then, matters pertaining to this life!
- Praise God that there will come a day when Jesus returns, as King over the new creation and he will rule with flawless justice.

IV. PRAYING FOR CHRIST'S CHURCH

- In the remaining verses the psalmist expresses his great love for Jerusalem. He longs for the city to prosper, he is concerned for the wellbeing of the city and its inhabitants.
- 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! "May they be secure who love you!"
- For the psalmist to pray for peace he was asking for all that could make the city great.
- "Peace" is the Hebrew word "shalom" and it doesn't just mean the absence of strife and conflict and war.
- "Shalom" means welfare, universal flourishing, and prosperity.
- From ancient times, Jerusalem has been associated with the promises of peace.
- "May they who love you be secure." Secure means to be at rest, at ease, to be satisfied, happy and secure. Secure is a synonym for peace.
- Peace "within your walls, security within your towers!"

- Walls and towers make a city safe from attack, this is prayer for the city's peace and continued strength.
- Ultimately, we know that true and lasting peace can only come from the Prince of Peace.
- He is our peace. In him we have peace WITH God having been reconciled to God through his sacrifice.
- In him we have the peace OF God.
- People who know true peace can pray for peace.
- And this is an exhortation to pray for the peace of the universal church of Jesus Christ.
- The prayers of OT saints for the peace of Jerusalem foreshadowed the prayers of the NT saints today.
- Those who love Jesus Christ (1Peter 1:8), those who love his Church because Christ called us to love one another and that would qualify us as his disciples (John 13:34-35), those who long for and have loved his appearing (2 Timothy 4:8), will pray for the peace of the Church of Jesus Christ.
- When we hear of division and strife in the church we should pray for the Church.
- Notice the psalmist prays for the sake of his brothers and companions. "Peace be within you!"
- This is not just words but deeds that match those words, to be a peacemaker in the church.
- There are so many exhortations in the NT of living in peace with one another. (Romans 12:19; Hebrews 12:14; James 3:18; 1 Peter 3:11; 2 Peter 3:14)
- Hebrews 12:14 Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord.
- The psalmist is also concerned for the honor and the glory of God; he prays for the sake of the house of the Lord.
- He won't just pray for the peace of Jerusalem, he will seek to be part of the answer to the very prayer he is making.
- "I will seek your good." He makes a strong resolution.
- He will give whatever it takes to bring about the peace of Jerusalem.
- We, as members of God's household, his church, should have the same attitude of heart.
- We will give whatever it takes to advance the glory of God in the Church of Jesus Christ.
- Christ fulfilled this resolution perfectly and completely.
- Through his sacrifice, he secured our eternal good and wellbeing.
- This psalm is one that was sung by our Lord and one that we should sing as well on our pilgrimage to the new Jerusalem.
- We have been invited to "go up"-- we are going up to Christ.
- We should delight in Christ's church,
- by joyfully engaging in our gatherings for worship.
- by inviting others to be part of it.
- by appreciating what Christ has done in purchasing his Church: the security we have in him, the unity and diversity of his Church, and by rejoicing in the perfect justice our King administers.
- We should be stirred to pray and to work for the peace of the church of Jesus Christ.
- We should pray for our brothers and sisters around the world who are persecuted for the cause of Christ.
- We seek the wellbeing of the church for in doing so we are also blessed.
- "...seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your

welfare.” (Jeremiah 29:7)

- May we, like the psalmist, be taken up with what God is doing in His Church.
- May we, like the psalmist, pray that God would be honored and glorified in His Church, for the sake of Christ and his people.
- May we make it our prayer and our longing and duty to seek the good of His church for the glory of God.

APPLICATION AND REFLECTION

In light of today's message....

- What did I learn about the gospel?
- How can I apply what I learned about the gospel to my life?
- With whom can I share the gospel this week?