

Let us Go to the House of the Lord - Psalm 122
Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading

Notes from the Sermon

“Country roads, take me home, to the place, I belong...” Even if you are not from Western Virginia the song takes you there. The description of the beauty of the Shenendoah River and Blue Ridge Mountains paints a picture, but the key line in the song speaks of her voice that, “Calls me,” as the singers radio reminds him of his home far away. It’s a great song, but for those who call this region home it beckons them back to the place they belong. Our Psalm this week is a joyful song for travelers who are moving toward Jerusalem, but it is a song about being there, coming into the city and gazing up at the Temple.

So the singer begins with a great declaration, “I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord.” I remember my mom quoting this verse to me any time I complained about going to church or tried to find a way to skip. To be honest, there were a lot of days that I was grumpy when my parents said to me... While I do believe this is the correct application of this wonderful song about a spiritual home, to get there we have to explain the longings and hopes for the singer that would be met in Jerusalem.

The city of Jerusalem has long stood at the center of the Hebrew spiritual and community life, both now, but also all the way back to the time of David in the Old Testament. The city existed on hill before the time of David, but when he became King of Israel David reestablished the city as the capital of Israel and brought the Tabernacle to the city. Soon, the Tabernacle would be replaced with a permanent structure, a Temple for the Living God. David designed the place, his son Solomon built it. Therefore, Jerusalem became the center of the Hebrew peoples spiritual life, the place where they would meet God, experience His glorious presence and grace. A true worshiper would know that the presence of God was what he or she most needed. As sinful people, we were cast from His presence. Yet in Jerusalem, at the Temple sacrifices were made to atone for sin, and therefore people could come before the Lord. The presence of God is what we most need, yet without this blood bought grace God’s presence would instantly consume us. So the thing we most need is also most dangerous. So the Temple and the city became what some theologians call a “thin place,” a place where the veil between heaven and earth is thin, because God bursts in to reveal Himself and give His presence to people. So while, on one level, God is present and with His people no matter where they live, they experience His saving and relational presence together in Jerusalem. The pilgrimage festivals represented the call to come home to the place where they belong, the place where God will meet them. Jerusalem was also the seat of power, where God’s King was to rule for Him. In other words, Jerusalem was the capital seat for the Kingdom of God in the Old Testament. This was a reminder that they needed God both as their rescuer who delivers from evil and sin, but also as King who rules over their lives.

The singers arise with joy for the pilgrimage because they have been called to the city and into the Temple to meet their God. But the question for us is how we are to recite, sing, and apply the song. One line calls for us to “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” Are we still to do this? And should we be making three trips a year to the holy city? The answer is a clear “no”. In the Old Testament salvation for the nations is found as people are drawn to the city. But all of this is merely a picture of the true and better Temple, the ultimate “thin space”, found in the person Jesus. This sermon doesn’t allow the time, but every item and ritual done in the Temple helped the people understand the glory and grace of God’s presence, they all painted living pictures of the life of Jesus. Jesus’ miracles demonstrated that He was the divine Son of God, the meeting place between sinful people and holy God. His death is the sacrifice for our sin, and His resurrection reveals that He is the true King over God’s Kingdom. But the Temple story goes even further. After the resurrection, Jesus ascended giving a promise that He would send the Holy Spirit. In Acts 2 the Spirit of God goes from being with us, to actually

dwelling in us. In Ephesians 2, Paul speaks of the church as a temple to the living God. In other words, the church gathered is now the Temple, the thin place, where God meets us. So every longing in the Psalm for a city comes true in Jesus and is then given to Jesus' church.

So yes, we should sing, "I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord." We just need to remember that the house is not a building or a space, it is a gathered people. No room is a sanctuary, the true sanctuary is your Christian brother and sister who sits next to you. We gather together to sing, pray, experience the sacraments, and hear the preaching of the Word. In our gathering we are reminded of our need for rescue, and the atoning grace found only in the cross of Christ. And, as self-absorbed people, we are brought back to a risen King who demands sovereign reign over our lives. So yes, we should come each week with joyful expectation as we gather for worship each week, knowing that our greatest problem is met here, together, in God's presence as we worship and glorify Him.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

Sun	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat
Job 29	Job 30	Job 31	Job 32	Job 33	Job 34	Job 35

Reading from this past week: Psalm 122

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: Psalm 123

Family Worship

Song - *House of the Lord*

https://youtu.be/EzJkC0-CSng?si=k_V8VFYpkkVNQeR3

Gospel Project

Unit: Paul's Mission to Rome

Story: Paul returned to Jerusalem

Big Picture Question: Why should we praise Jesus?

Answer: We should praise Jesus for what He has done to provide our salvation and because He will one day make all things right.

Scripture: Acts 21-22

New City Catechism

Question 22: Why must the Redeemer be truly God?

Answer: That because of his divine nature his obedience and suffering would be perfect and effective.

Verse: Acts 2:24

Scripture

Psalm 122

- What emotion is most common for you on Sunday mornings as you get ready for church?
- Why should we be careful about calling a room, "the sanctuary." Where do we actually find God's presence, His Temple now?
- What are some ways we can develop joy in preparation for our trip to church on Sundays?

Prayer

*Pray for our mission team leaving for the Philippines this week.

*Pray that we would find great joy in coming together for our corporate worship.