

Come, Bless the Lord - Psalm 133 **Notes, Family Worship, Bible Reading**

Notes from the Sermon

Have you ever taken a family road trip. You know, the whole family is excited. Everyone brings their luggage out to dad who plays a creative Jenga game as he tries to figure out how to get everything in the car. Kids grab their pillows and video game, while mom has a good book to read. So everyone jumps in the car, the anticipation and excitement is tangible. But it doesn't take time for the back seat fighting and complaining to begin. Couple that with dad's daring the gas tank, maybe a blown tire, and an endless array of "Are we there yet." Well, the journey can be interesting, to say the least. But then there is that moment when your family sees the beach, the first mountain, or that destination city in the distance, and the excitement grows until the fa arrives. Hopefully, most trips end with a destination that was worth the headache of the travel.

We come to the end of a journey as well. During the Summer we have been traveling through these Psalms of Ascent, a series of 14 Psalm sung by the Hebrew people during their travels. Three times a year they were to gather their family and make the trek to Jerusalem. These were their songs for the road. As weary travelers, they helped them wrestle with their emotions as they trusted in Jehovah as they made their way. For many, the journey was long, often difficult, and wrought with danger. Their arrival in Jerusalem was sweet though, as they found the glory of the chosen city (this is the theme of Psalm 131), gathered together in unity (132), and were summoned by the priests to enter the Temple to worship their promise keeping God together.

The final Psalm is a short yet deeply rich one, because it is a summons to worship together. They are called to bless the LORD and lift their hands to the holy, with a second invitation to bless the LORD. Meanwhile the priests invoke the blessing of Jehovah from Zion, as the covenant God who is also maker of heaven and earth. This short Psalm is a beautiful reminder that the book of Psalms is a gift from our God and treasure to be cherished. God has given us an invitation to enter His presence and enjoy Him forever. The first question of the Westminster Catechism asks, "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is, "To glorify God and enjoy Him forever." John Piper edits it a bit to say that our ultimate purpose, joy, and fulfillment are found when we glorify God by enjoying Him forever. We exist for Him and to glorify the True and Living God. The Psalms are a beautiful invitation to do this from any place, any pain or struggle, every emotion. They lift our chin to see the Lord, and they are an invitation from our God to enter His presence and to bless His name.

It may seem strange to have a God who over and over declares, "Bless me," "Praise me," "Adore me," "Sing to me," and so on. It can feel like God is a needy being who will only find His self-esteem if we prop Him up. That would not be much of a God. The truth is that we don't praise God because He needs our props. We praise God because ultimate enjoyment is found in Him and the fullness of our joy comes through our praise. The invitation to bless the Lord is a call from the King of Glory to enter His presence and enjoy His fullness. The transcendent Creator of heaven and earth has come near to His people, made Himself close, and entered a covenant relationship. The invitation is to joy through relationship. As the people entered Jerusalem after the long trek, they would hear this song off in the distance in the city, knowing it was coming from the Temple Mount. So they would make their way to the Temple, the holy place, the location of the altar of sacrifice and the Holy of Holies where God dwelled. Here they would find their longings met and their joy made full.

Our Holy Place is no longer a city and a building. Jesus is the True and Better Temple. So the beckoning of the Psalms for the journey have a completely different tone for

those of us who know Jesus. The Psalms are rich treasury inviting us to Him. They call us to bring our fears, hurts, struggles and emotions to Him in prayer. They call us to get off our hind ends and involve our whole bodies in praise. They call us to lay our pride and sin at the cross where atonement was made. They invite us to fullness, hope, love, and joy. The Psalms remind us that life is a journey and each week we too travel to gather with the people of God to experience His presence, grace, and love. But they also remind us that life is a hard journey but has a destination that is worth the trip. So, let's bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD. Because He is the God of blessing who has given us every good and perfect gift.

Bible Reading for the Week

Daily Bible Readings

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Weds | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|----------------|----------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Lamentations 3 | Lamentations 4 | Lamentations 5 | Revelations 1 | Revelations 2 | Revelations 3 | Revelations 4 |

Reading from this past week: Psalm 134

Reading in preparation for this coming Sunday: I Corinthians 12:12-26

Family Worship

Song - *Grace Alone*

<https://youtu.be/O0k7HguvnyU?si=PHQp3myeo50SAcWF>

Gospel Project

Unit: The Church's Hope

Story: We will be a Part of a New Heaven and New Earth

Big Picture Question: What is the hope of the church?

Answer: The church looks forward to Jesus' return when He will make all things new

Scripture: Revelation 21-22

New City Catechism

Question 35: Since we are redeemed by grace alone, through faith alone, where does this faith come from?

Answer: From the Holy Spirit.

Verse: Titus 3:4-5

Scripture

Psalm 133

- What does it mean to bless the LORD? What are some synonyms for bless in the Psalms?
- Are you comfortable with lifting your hands? Can you think of other body postures and actions used in the Psalms as invitations to worship? Why would Psalms invite the use of our bodies in the praise of God?
- How can we use the Psalms in our discipleship and spiritual lives for continued growth? What are some ways the Psalms should shape us?

Prayer

*Pray for our Community Groups, leaders, and hosts.

*Pray that God would give our church a heart of prayer and worship as we continue to read and use the Psalms.