

Walking with God – Come Home

Goldstone Church – 05-Mar-17 10:30am

Psalm 122:1-9

Introduction

Psalm 122 is the 3rd psalm in our Psalms of Ascent series, “Walking with God”. These psalms can be considered as 15 steps or movements that lead worshippers towards a deeper and closer love-relationship with God.

Psalm 122 is an essential part of the Songs of Ascent, as it sets the tone for the whole of the journey.

- Psalm 120 focuses on where we are spiritually when we start this Ascent.
- Psalm 121 focuses on who will help us during this Ascent.
- Psalm 122 focuses on why we are making this journey.

David, the psalmist, wants to direct our attention on the destination – we’re going to meet and engage with God.

1. AN INVITATION (Psalm 122:1-2)

“Let us go to the house of the Lord.” (Ps 122:1a)

David is remembering back to the happy times of previous religious festivals; times of great intimacy with God. David wants to renew the close intimacy and relationship he had with God in the past. This is an invitation that is easy to accept.

“And now here we are, standing inside your gates, O Jerusalem.” (Ps 122:2). Although this sounds like the pilgrimage is over and everyone has arrived, it is more likely that David is imagining what it will be like when he enters again into God’s presence. This memory drives his eagerness to get there again.

NB: When this psalm was written by King David, there was no temple in Jerusalem. The “house of the Lord” is referring to the Tabernacle and the Ark of the Covenant. (The Ark was the visual representation of the presence of God.)

God is not inviting His people to a ‘Temple-building’ or a religious-institution. God is inviting us to join with His family that meets in His house. This is a personal, relationship invitation; a family reunion.

Application: God is inviting us to come again into His presence. We can remember to what this closeness to God was like before, and He is inviting us to experience this again. How will you respond?

2. A CONGREGATION (Psalm 122:3-5)

These verses poetically describe who will be worshipping in Jerusalem. David outlines 3 main characteristics:

- a) [Worshippers will be] **Embracing** (v.3-4a). *“Jerusalem is a well-built city; its seamless walls cannot be breached.”* (Ps 122:3)

The word “seamless” in Hebrew means *“coupled and joined together in an embrace”*. The people who come together to worship God, may come from different tribes or nations, but they are joined seamlessly in one common worship; this embrace will be strong, God-focused and God-honouring.

b) [Worshippers will be] **Obedient** (v.4b). *“They come to give thanks to the name of the Lord, as the law requires of Israel.”* (Ps 122:4b)

Under the Law of Moses, faithful Jews were required to go up to Jerusalem to celebrate 3 festivals: the Feast of Passover, the Festival of Weeks and the Feast of Booths. Attendance was compulsory for men, optional for women.

Psalm 122 is celebrating the loving obedience that God’s people are showing as they obey the Law and follow God’s instructions.

c) [Worshippers will be] **Enquiring** (v.5). *“Here stand the thrones where judgment is given, the thrones of the dynasty of David.”* (Ps 122:5)

This links with Deuteronomy 17:8-11, *“Suppose a case arises in a local court that is too hard for you to decide—for instance, whether someone is guilty of murder or only of manslaughter, or a difficult lawsuit, or a case involving different kinds of assault. Take such legal cases to the place the Lord your God will choose, and present them to the Levitical priests or the judge on duty at that time. They will hear the case and declare the verdict. You must carry out the verdict they announce and the sentence they prescribe at the place the Lord chooses. You must do exactly what they say. After they have interpreted the law and declared their verdict, the sentence they impose must be fully executed; do not modify it in any way.”*

In Psalm 122, David says that the people that worship God are those who go to God, and are actively engaging, enquiring and asking what God wants; God’s people are to interact with God. There are no passengers.

Application: This identifies the sort of worshipers that God wants us to be. As we seek to renew a closer and intimate relationship with Him, we must be people that:

- Embrace one another in our common worship.
- Live our lives in loving-Obedience of what God wants.
- Enquire and actively participate in worshipping God.

3. AN INTERCESSION (Psalm 122:6-9)

David encourages everyone to pray: *“Pray for peace in Jerusalem”* (Psalm 122:6a). He is specifically calling on his countrymen to pray for Jerusalem and for the nation of Israel.

Psalm 122:6-9 is a model prayer; the key theme is “Peace” - as in Law and Order (v.5). David calls us to pray for 4 aspects of *our* nation:

a) [Pray for the] **Government** (v.6b). *“May all who love this city prosper.”* (Ps 122:6b) (“all” refers to the “thrones” mentioned twice in v.5.)

David’s thrones were the equivalent of our politicians today, i.e. pray for politicians who seek God’s way and wisdom – and especially pray that they will prosper and be good at what they do. We need politicians that “love this city”, i.e. they love what a God-fearing nation stands for.

“I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people – for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour”
(1 Timothy 2:1-3).

b) [Pray for the] **City** (v.7). *“O Jerusalem, may there be peace within your walls and prosperity in your palaces.”* (Ps 122:7)

The prayer that started in the throne room, spreads out to the city of Jerusalem. For us, this would be prayers that starts in London but spread out to the other major cities in UK. We pray that God's way and wisdom (sought and found by our politicians) will be evidenced at a local level; that local authorities and essential community services... that our cities will be God-fearing places.

c) [Pray for] **Families** (v.8) *"For the sake of my family and friends, I will say, "May you have peace." (Ps 122:8)*

The prayer that started in the throne room, spreads out into the cities, and now arrives in each home.

Pray that God's way and wisdom will be sought and seen in each home.

d) [Pray for the] **Nation** (v.9) *"For the sake of the house of the Lord our God, I will seek what is best for you, O Jerusalem."*

We pray that we will seek God's agenda for our nation on the world stage. This is a prayer against selfishness / self-gain; a prayer for God's way.

The happiness of a nation is not measured by its military strength, its thriving economy, or its trade deals. The happiness of a nation is because its Kings, Rulers, Cities and its Families recognise God's righteousness, and that God is sovereign.

"Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin condemns any people." (Prov 14:34).

We need to pray that, as a nation, we will seek God.

CONCLUSION

This Psalm explains why we are undertaking this journey of Ascents.

This Psalm is inviting us to 'Come Home'.

- We come to re-engage and experience again the close, intimate relationship with God.
- We come just as we are, with people who are just as they are; following God in loving-obedience and actively engaging in worshipping God.
- We come to pray for, and to seek God's peace in our lives.

AMEN