

**A CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP
PSALMS OF ASCENT**

THE HOUSE OF GOD - WORSHIP

Text: Psalm 122

Key Word: Worship

Key Thought: There Are Rewards for Gathering to Worship God

This is the 3rd of 15 Psalms that the children of Israel sang as they made their pilgrimage to the holy city of Jerusalem and its temple. After days of travel they have entered the gates of the city and they needed a song to express their emotions. Psalm 122 is the perfect song to bless the city of God with.

Here is the climax of an arduous journey across many dangerous roadways. For some of you it may be the picture of your weekly journey to attend our worship services. We must travel past many snares and trials along the way. Danger lurks in the crevices of our pathway. When we finally reach our place of worship it should invoke a celebrant spirit amongst us.

Here we have a deeper understanding of what Jude was telling the church.

"To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy."

Jude 24

As a pastor I think I've heard every excuse possible for people not regularly attending church services such as . . .

1. My parents made me go when I was young
2. It's so boring
3. There are too many hypocrites
4. It's the only day I have to rest

Have you ever thought about having a good excuse FOR attending church services. If you would like to have at least 3 of them, then lets dive into this Psalm and bring to the surface these beautiful treasures of thought.

What Are 3 Rewards for Gathering to Worship?

I. THE REWARD OF JOY (Psalm 122:1-2)
II. THE REWARD OF UNITY (Psalm 122:3-5)
III. THE REWARD OF PEACE (Psalm 122:6-9)

I. THE REWARD OF JOY (Psalm 122:1,2)

Picture if you can a weary pilgrim with his family who has travelled many miles along rugged roads that led up to the city of Jerusalem. Just taste for a moment the dust in their mouths and the feel the pain in their feet. How do you think their heart was beating as they made their way through the gates of the famous city of Jerusalem?

Could you see their expressions change from that of weariness to one of exuberant joy? If so, you have captured the heartbeat of this Psalm. They could honestly say even after the long journey,

"I rejoiced (was glad) when they said unto me, 'Let us go to the house of the LORD.'"

Psalm 122:1

Anyone who loves the Lord will love His Church. It is not because we are made of a whole bunch of perfect people. Lets take a moment to look on our left and right and hand side and think (don't say) "that person is imperfect." And now once again just think "I am not perfect either." No lets all relax and enjoy the service.

David's heart delighted in gathering to worship God. It became such a joy to know that others also desired to meet together to exalt the name of the Lord their God.

"If you have no joy in your religion, there's a leak in your Christianity somewhere."

W.A. (Billy) Sunday
Frank Smead 12,000 Quotations
p. 259

"Some people bring happiness *wherever* they go. Others bring happiness *whenever* they go."

Knights Illustrations
p. 189 (White Book)

Did you know that it takes only 14 facial muscles to smile while it takes 72 to frown. So lets give our face a rest!

I. THE REWARD OF JOY (Psalm 122:1,2) (Contd.)

*** Dr. R. A. Torrey was one of the greatest Bible teachers and founder of the Bible Institute of Los Angeles (Biola University).

He and his wife went through a time of great heartache when their twelve year old daughter was accidentally killed. The funeral was held on a gloomy, miserable, rainy day. They stood around the grave and watched as their little girl was lowered into the ground.

Mrs. Torrey said, *"I'm so glad that Elisabeth is with the Lord, and not in that box."* But even knowing this to be true, their hearts were broken. Dr. Torrey said the next day, as he was walking down the street, the whole thing broke anew - the loneliness of the years ahead without her presence, the heart break of an empty house, and all the other implications of her death. He was so burdened by this that he looked to the Lord for help.

He recounted, *"Just then, this fountain the Holy Spirit that I had in my heart, broke forth with such power as I think I had never experienced before, and it was the most joyful moment I had ever known in my life! Oh, how wonderful is the joy of the Holy Ghost! It is an unspeakable glorious thing to have your joy not in things around you, not even in your most dearly loved friends, but to have within you a fountain ever springing up, springing up, springing up, always springing up 365 days in every year, springing up under all circumstances unto everlasting life."*

Michael Green

"1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching"

1295 p.350

This joy should be able to find a proper expression as we join together to worship each week. It should also be expressed in our daily living.

II. THE REWARD OF UNITY (Psalm 122:3-5)

The city of Jerusalem was an architectural metaphor of the second reward of worship. All the pieces of masonry fit together in a harmonious manner. There were no left over pieces; no gaps; and no loose stones.

The city of Jerusalem was not a place of tents or booths but rather one of permanent housing. The Church is also a permanent institution that is founded upon the Rock; arranged by the Chief Architect and clothed in His beauty. Churches should never become a stop over where we come and go as we please. We need to get "plugged in" to the local body.

II. THE REWARD OF UNITY (Psalm 122:3-5) (Contd.)

The Church is formed by God's people who display a message of unity.

"Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

4. There is one body and one Spirit - just as you were called to one hope when you were called -

5. one Lord, one faith, one baptism;

6. one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all."

Ephesians 4:3-6

Worship offers us a unique opportunity to gather as a body joined by many different and unique cells. **We can come together in unity and yet not be uniform.** Israel was formed by 12 unique tribes. Each had their own character differences.

The word used to describe their unity ("**compacted**") was a common word used in the construction of Moses' Tabernacle.

"Then make fifty bronze clasps and put them in the loops to fasten the tent together as a unit."

Exodus 26:11

These bronze clasps would bring together the curtains which were to be draped over the golden boards of the tabernacle. They would prevent the outside elements from entering the tabernacle. This work was to be done with great detail. God's blueprint does not leave place for disunity.

*** Two porcupines found themselves in a blizzard and tried to huddle together to keep warm. But because they were pricked by each other's quills, they moved apart.

Soon they were shivering again and had to lie side by side once more for their own survival. They ***needed*** each other, even though they ***needed*** each other!

There are many "porcupine" Christians running around. They have their good points, but you can't get near them because their bad points prick you too hard. ***

Michael Green

"1500 Illustrations for Biblical Preaching"

198 p.66-67

III. THE REWARD OF PEACE (Psalm 122:6-9)

The word "*peace*" is repeated 3 x's in these next few verses in order to emphasise its importance. The name "*Jerusalem*" means the "*city of peace*." Therefore there is a Hebrew word play in verse 6. Isn't it interesting how such an insignificant area of land has been the centre of so many acts of violence and terrorism in just our generation. Even Saddam Hussein sent his scud missiles toward the tiny nation of Israel when they were at war with the US in the Gulf War.

The peace for Israel was requested in a special location.

*"May there be peace within your walls. . .
8. Peace be within you."*

Psalm 122:7a,8b

I have found that Churches mostly get destroyed from within and not from outside forces. They quarrel and fight against themselves. The Bible has given us some good instruction to keep us from falling into this trap.

*"But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.
18. Peacemakers who sow in peace raise a harvest of righteousness."*

James 3:17,18

In a church, peace is to be desired, expected, promoted and enjoyed. Jerusalem had three walls to offer her security and peace. **It was a trinity of security.**

The only way to have peace with each other is to have peace with God.

*"Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, **we have peace** with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."*

Romans 5:1

III. THE REWARD OF PEACE (Psalm 122:6-9) (Contd.)

4288 We Come in Peace

*** The motto of the Apollo 11 flight was "*We come in peace for all mankind.*" This motto was on the plaque which was deposited on the face of the moon.

The landing was on the "*Sea of Tranquillity.*" Neil Armstrong and Bud Aldrin found a tranquil and peaceful scene on the moon. There never had been any humans there to disturb the peace." ***

May God place a new zeal in our hearts to gather together and worship Him. The rewards of joy, unity and peace will be clearly seen. It will offer us a framework in which to grow. Lets not forget to assemble together for worship on a weekly basis.

C:\My Documents\WPWin(X7)\Sermons.2016\Psalms\Ascent\Psalms 122.wpd

Date: Apr 17/16

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: Hosanna - I See the King of Glory -

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