

## Quarter one: The Book of Psalms

### Lesson 11—Longing for God in Zion

#### Monday: Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

March 11, 2024

- **Last Week:** “Lessons of the Past”
  - Historical Psalms – remembering what God has done for us gives us faith for today
- **This Week:** “Longing for God in Zion”
  - Psalms of Zion – Zion represented God’s living presence among His people
    - It’s a place of divine blessings & refuge – Jerusalem & the sanctuary
    - Zion = the city of God, Jerusalem, as opposed to Babylon, the city of Satan

**Memory Text:** “My soul longs, yes, even faints for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.” (Ps 84:2, NKJV)

The week in brief:

- 1. **Sunday:** A Day in Your Courts Is Better Than a Thousand (John D)
  - Ps 84 – joy in the presence of God – in the sanctuary with God & other believers
- 2. **Monday:** Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem (Jill)
  - Ps 122 – joy in God’s presence (sanctuary / Jerusalem); restoration of peace with God (vertical peace) & prayer for peace with each other (horizontal peace)
- 3. **Tuesday:** Zion—The Home of all Nations (Ryan)
  - Ps 87 – salvation & unity of Jews & Gentiles – all one in Christ & redeemed by Him
- 4. **Wednesday:** Safety & Peace of Zion (Jason Bradley)
  - Ps 46 – trusting God in the midst of this world’s turmoil; ultimate hope in heaven
- 5. **Thursday:** Immovable Like Mount Zion (Daniel)
  - Ps 125 – remaining steadfast in our faith in God

## Monday: Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem

Ps 122; Heb 12:22 - 24

- Ps 122 = 3<sup>rd</sup> pilgrim song / first one by David
  - Pilgrim songs = Ps 120 – 134
    - Called “song of stairs” or “song of ascents”
    - Refers to the return from exile or pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the annual festivals
- Historical context: 3 times a year, God’s people gathered in Jerusalem
  - Deut 16:16 – “Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord your God in the place which He chooses: at the Feast of Unleavened Bread (immediately after Passover), at the Feast of Weeks (NT name = Pentecost, in the spring), and at the Feast of Tabernacles (Feast of Booths, in the fall), and they shall not appear before the Lord emptyhanded.”

- Ps 122:1 – “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go into the house of the Lord.’”
  - **Takeaway #1: Joy should characterize the worship of the believer**
    - Ps 100:4 – enter His gates with thanksgiving & His courts with praise
    - Instead, we dread church or spending time in His presence
    - Why is it –
      - Easy to arrive early for a concert, but hard to make it on time for church?
      - Easy to cheer at a baseball game, but hard to say amen in church?
      - Easy to sit up front for a recital, but hard to even sit in the back at church?
      - Easy to chat with friends, but hard to talk with God?
      - Easy to sit through a 2 hour movie, but torture to endure an hour sermon?
    - When God changes our heart, we enjoy Him
      - Spending time in His presence & with His people
- Ps 122:2 – “Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!”
  - NLT: “And now, here we are, standing inside your gates, O Jerusalem.”
  - **Takeaway #2: Joy comes in God’s presence**
    - They’ve “come home” – home to Jerusalem
      - God’s temple
      - In God’s presence
    - Ps 16:11 – “You will show me the path of life, in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forever.”
      - Joy comes in God’s presence
- Ps 122:3, 4 – “Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together. (4) Where the tribes go up, the tribes of the Lord, to the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord.”
  - Come home to Jerusalem – for one of the festivals
  - Come to the “Testimony of Israel” = the sanctuary
    - Num 1:50 – “But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the Testimony...”
    - Ex 25:22 – contained the “ark of the Testimony”
  - **Takeaway #3: God’s people are called to worship Him together**
    - In the sanctuary
    - His church / house
    - Unity in gathering together in one accord, one place (Acts 1)
    - Heb 10:25 – “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together....”
- Ps 122:5 – “For thrones are set there for judgment, the thrones of the house of David.”
  - Represents judicial system in Jerusalem
    - 2 Sam 8:15 – “So David reigned over all Israel; and David administered judgment and justice to all his people.”
    - Pilgrimage was a time when someone could seek justice in Jerusalem
  - Represents pre-Advent judgment (symbolic of future)
    - Dan 7:9, 10 - ...the Ancient of Days was seated....the court was seated, the books were opened.”

- **Takeaway #4: Worship is connected with administering justice**
  - James 1:27 – “Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world.”
    - Christianity is intertwined with helping those who need it most
- Ps 122:6 – 9 – “ ‘Pray for the peace of Jerusalem. May they prosper who love you. (7) Peace be within your walls, prosperity within your palaces.’ (8) For the sake of my brethren and companions, I will now say, ‘Peace be within you.’ (9) Because of the house of the Lord our God I will seek your good.”
  - The peace of Jerusalem begins with those who pray for it
- **Takeaway #5: Choose to live in peace with God and with each other**
  - Peace with others only comes when I’m at peace with God
  - (Jerusalem could be the city of peace only if peace existed between God & His people, and among God’s children themselves.)
  - Eph 2:1 – 10 = vertical reconciliation with God
    - We were dead in trespasses & sins
    - Vs 4, 5 – “But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, (5) even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)...”
    - Vs 8 – For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God.”
  - Eph 2:11 – 22 = horizontal reconciliation with others
    - Vs 13, 14 – “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. (14) For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation.”
    - Vs 18, 19 – “For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. (19) Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers & foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.”
    - John 13:34, 35 – “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. (35) By this all will now that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- Peace in Jerusalem begins with me
  - Seeking to renew & restore my relationship with God
  - Seeking to love my brothers & sisters
- **Takeaway #6: Pray for unity with other believers**
  - John 17:20, 21 – “I do not pray for these alone (the disciples), but also for those who will believe in Me through their word; (21) that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You, that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me.”
    - Unity exemplifies who we belong to & whose we are

- **6 Takeaways from Psalm 122**
  - **#1:** Joy should characterize the worship of the believer
  - **#2:** Joy comes in God's presence
  - **#3:** God's people are called to worship Him together
  - **#4:** Worship is connected with administering justice
  - **#5:** Choose to live in peace with God and with each other
  - **#6:** Pray for unity with other believers