

Psalm 132.¹⁻¹⁸

Home

Background

This is by some way the longest of the ‘songs of ascent’, twice as long as any of the others. Throughout this manual on discipleship I’ve sought to provide a single word to sum up the essential theme of each psalm: and I’ve suggested that the theme of this psalm is most helpfully understood as that of ‘home’.

The 3 annual pilgrimages which the Israelites made to Jerusalem were a regular and perpetual reminder to them of just this truth. The homes they all left to travel to the city of Jerusalem were not their true home: the Lord had something better for them. The ‘songs of ascent’ were the songs of a people who were ‘homeward bound’.

This is a basic truth about discipleship. As we respond to the call to follow Jesus, we discover that He’s leading us *home*: He is the good shepherd who’s come looking for His wayward sheep, and who’s placed that sheep on His shoulders to carry it home (see [Luke 15.3-7](#), and especially vv.5-6a).

Peter refers to believers as [‘exiles’](#), likening our experience in this world to that of the Jews who’d been exiled to Babylon, but who’d been given the assurance that one day they’d be taken back home. The writer of the letter to the Hebrews depicts the life of the believer in similar terms, describing us as ‘foreigners and strangers on earth’ who are ‘longing for a better country’ ([Heb.11.13-16](#)).

We’re headed home. We’ve been made with a certain ‘homing instinct’: indeed, as the first ‘song of ascent’ ([Ps.120](#)) highlighted (“*Woe to me that I dwell in Meshek!*”), it is (at least in part) as that ‘homing instinct’ is awakened in us and we sense that there must be something better, somewhere better – it’s thus that many of us first started looking to the Lord.

The structure of Psalm 132 is simple. It divides neatly into two closely related parts: David’s oath to the LORD ([vv.1-9](#)) is matched (and of course entirely trumped!) by the LORD’s oath to him ([vv.10-18](#)). What is common to both is the ‘dwelling’ of the Lord (see vv.5 and 13, for instance) – David’s longing that the Lord should dwell among His people, and the Lord’s delight in so doing.

This is a theme integral to the message of the Bible. The garden of Eden was the ‘temple’ where Adam and Eve met the Lord. The tabernacle in the wilderness, and the subsequent temple in Jerusalem, were similarly the place where the people were able to encounter the presence of God. That physical temple has been replaced by the person of Jesus who is now our ‘temple’ (and we in Him become the ‘temple’ of God). And the culmination of God’s purpose is the absence of any ‘temple’ – because then we will enjoy in full measure that to which the temple could only give in some small measure, namely the presence of God: “*Look! God’s dwelling-place is now among the people, and He will dwell with them*” (see [Rev.21.1-5](#)) (Psalm 23, too, culminates on just this note! “*I shall dwell in the Lord’s home forever*”).

The 3 ‘days’ on which to concentrate are probably **(1)**, **(2)** and **(6)**: as ever there are additional questions on each of those ‘days’.

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1) Monday 28th March – priorities

Read [Psalm 132.1-5](#)

“.. till I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling for the Mighty One of Jacob..” (Ps.132.5)

David had known enough of the Lord’s ennobling grace and delivering power to have established clear priorities in his heart: he committed his energies to ensuring that the Lord would have His rightful place at the heart of his, and his nation’s, life.

What vows have you made before the Lord? And how have you been fulfilling them?

In what ways are you seeking (or might you seek) to ‘find a place for the Lord’ in your life, and in the life of your community?

Paul made it clear that believers (rather than any building) are now, both individually ([1 Cor.6.19](#)) and together ([Eph.2.19-22](#)), the ‘temple’ of God: do our lives prompt people to exclaim ‘God is really among you!’ ([1 Cor.14.25](#))?

How under Christ might our lives, and our communal life, prompt such a response more?

Prayer: *Help me today, O Lord, to seek Your glory in all I say and do. Keep me from those ‘idols’ which displace Your rightful place in my heart and life.*

2) Tuesday 29th March – peripheral

Read [Psalm 132.6-10](#)

“Arise, LORD, and come to Your resting place ..” (Ps.132.8)

The ark of God was a visible sign to His people of the presence of God among them. For long enough at this point in their history, the ark had been located on the periphery of their life: David longed that the Lord might again be front and centre.

Has your faith become a peripheral thing in your living, and the Lord no longer central? What steps might you take today to remedy that?

How are the characteristics of ‘righteousness’ and ‘joy’ cultivated in our hearts?

How might the weekly meetings of the Community Groups serve to foster and sustain such ‘righteousness’ and ‘joy’?

David’s zeal for the Lord’s glory impacted the next generation (v.10): who has impacted your life for Christ?

Prayer: *Thank You, Father, for the faith of those whose zeal for Your glory has brought blessing to myself. Help me to take up that baton of faith and pass it on to others.*

3) Wednesday 30th March – reverence

Read [2 Samuel 6.1-11](#)

“.. the LORD’s anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act ..” (2 Sam.6.7)

The Lord is not some sort of ‘mascot’, nor the ark some ‘lucky charm’. A ‘casual’ Christian is a contradiction in terms! It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God ([Heb.10.31](#)) (but a much more fearful thing to fall out of them!)

David was both angry (v.8) and afraid (v.9): is that how you react to a reading of this narrative?

The New Testament illustrates similarly the importance of a reverence in our faith (see [Acts 5.1-11](#)): have we too much lost that ‘fear of the Lord’?

Prayer: *Create in me a pure heart, O Lord: forgive my all-too-casual manner in regard to holy things, and cultivate rather a reverent joy and awe in my service of Yourself.*

4) Thursday 31st March – exuberance

Read [2 Samuel 6.12-19](#)

“.. David was dancing before the Lord with all his might ..” (2 Sam.6.14)

David’s reverence was matched by his exuberance. The two belong together. There is nothing staid about the life of faith. The reality of the presence of God dwelling among His people kindled in David unbounded joy. Be stirred yourself in a similar way!

David’s delight in the Lord’s presence found expression in a generosity towards others (v.19): how might your delight in the Lord find similar expression today?

Are you inhibited in your worship by the fear of what others may think?

Prayer: *How marvellous, how wonderful – and my song shall ever be – how marvellous, how wonderful is Your love, my Lord, for me! Keep me singing and dancing today!*

5) Friday 1st April – enthroned

Read [Psalm 132.11-18](#)

“.. the LORD swore an oath to David, a sure oath He will not revoke ..” (Ps.132.11)

David’s oath (v.2) was thoroughly trumped by the Lord’s oath! You are the beneficiary of that promise: the descendant of David has come and is now enthroned for ever. God Himself has come to reign over His people. Jesus is Lord!

In what ways does the knowledge that Jesus is King impact the way you live your life and view the world?

Read [Heb.6.13-20](#): what does the writer of the letter mean you to understand by the fact that God had sworn an oath?

Prayer: *You are the King of glory, Lord Jesus: as angels bow down before You, so may my living today be an act of continual worship in all I say and do.*

6) Saturday 2nd April – abundance

Read [Psalm 132.13-18](#)

“.. the LORD has chosen Zion, He has desired it for His dwelling ..” (Ps.132.13)

Far from remaining distant from His people, the Lord in His grace comes to dwell among them: He dwells among us as King, and even as the land He gave was ‘good and spacious, flowing with milk and honey’, so His kingdom is marked by abundance.

What has been your experience of the Lord dwelling among you as your King?

The generosity of the Lord (v.15) was reflected from the start in the life of His church ([Acts 2.42-47](#) & [4.32-35](#)): in what ways might you give expression to this?

Read [2 Cor.9.8](#): against the backdrop of all that is going on in the world at present in what ways might we as a fellowship, your Community Group, and you as an individual, ‘abound in every good work’?

Prayer: *I thank You, Lord Jesus, that You have counted me trustworthy, appointed me to Your service, given me strength and poured out Your grace on me abundantly.*

7) Sunday 3rd April – home

Read [Revelation 21.1-8](#)

“Look! God’s dwelling is now among the people, and He will dwell with them..” (Rev.21.3)

Your present experience of the presence of God, by His Spirit in your life, is but the merest, tantalising foretaste of a blessing far more glorious yet to come. The Lord is taking His believers *home*. With Him you’ll have everything. Without Him, nothing.

What makes the new heaven and new earth ‘where righteousness dwells’ ([2 Pet.3.13](#)) so special according to these verses in Revelation?

The challenge of the Bible remains – outside of Christ there is no hope and no life: are there those with whom you’re being called to share the message?

Prayer: *You have made us for Yourself, O Lord, and we are always restless until we find our rest in You! May the worship of Your people today be a ‘taster’ of our home!*