



PSALMS

the songs Jesus prayed

OVERVIEW FOR PSALMS

Jesus grew up with a Psalter - book of songs (hymnbook) that were sung as prayers. The Psalms were written in response to the composer's experience of God's presence or perceived absence during a specific episode in life. Each Psalm is written with a general form so that others could use the Psalm to address similar experiences through song and prayer. The Psalms provided a means and a template which formed and trained God's people how to approach God with every kind of experience known to man. God wants us to come to him with our whole being.

There are several different genres that provide ways for us to express our hearts to God and provide a means to commune with God. Through praying and singing these Psalms, God will meet us and transform us in the process.

PART 5: PILGRIMAGE SONGS

Read the text: Psalms 127 & 131

Psalm 127

A Song of Ascents. Of Solomon.

Unless the Lord builds the house,
those who build it labor in vain.

Unless the Lord watches over the city,
the watchman stays awake in vain.

It is in vain that you rise up early
and go late to rest,

eating the bread of anxious toil;
for he gives to his beloved sleep.

Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord,
the fruit of the womb a reward.
Like arrows in the hand of a warrior
are the children of one's youth.
Blessed is the man
who fills his quiver with them!
He shall not be put to shame
when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Psalm 131

A Song of Ascents. Of David.

O Lord, my heart is not lifted up;
my eyes are not raised too high;
I do not occupy myself with things
too great and too marvelous for me.
But I have calmed and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with its mother;
like a weaned child is my soul within me.
O Israel, hope in the Lord
from this time forth and forevermore.

The Pilgrimage Psalms (120-134) were Israel's road trip Psalms. These were the Psalms they sang together every year as they journeyed to Jerusalem for the festivals and feasts they attended to remember God's provision for them. These Psalms draw from the other genres (Lament, Royal, Creation, Wisdom, Thanksgiving) and were meant to tune the hearts of the Israelites to God's way as they journeyed to worship Him in Jerusalem. This week, Pastor Donald taught on two of these Psalms of Ascent: Psalms 127 & 131.

1. God's not opposed to you working and building, but to you building without Him. "Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain." Take inventory of your calendar, how you spend your money, and your thought life (what occupies your mind). Are you currently building the life you want?

2. In order to let the "Lord build the house," we must let God lead us in how we build. A helpful tool for thinking intentionally this way is to begin developing a "Rule of Life" for yourself and even your family. To begin this process, take an honest look at your current life commitments (how you spend your time) and ask the following questions:
 - a. Does this build my relationship with God?
 - b. Does this build up my family?
 - c. Does this build up my community & church?
 - d. Does this build up my witness?

What would it look like to begin developing a "rule of life" with the input of your brothers and sisters around you? Take time to talk about how you can begin to do this together. How will you help each other follow through with this?

For a great resource on beginning to develop a "Rule of Life", see: [The Rule of Life Workbook from practicingtheway.org](#)

3. Looking at Psalm 131, Pastor Donald shared, "The mark of a healthy spiritual life looks a lot like a child on its mother's lap. Calm, quiet, and satisfied." We won't arrive in this place by accident, but must intentionally decide to slow down and set aside time to be quiet with our Father. At first, this will be incredibly hard and distraction will often prevail. Yet, through

the Spirit's help and grace-fueled discipline to pursue silence with God, these times will become more and more rich and we will experience deeper places of satisfaction and peace sitting with our Father. What needs to change in your life and schedule to make space and time for this? What do you need to say "no" to in order to slow down? This week, when will you stop to be quiet with God? How will you help each other follow through with this?

For helpful resource on how to spend time of silence and solitude with God, see [this guide](#).

Reading the Psalms This Week

These Pilgrimage Psalms tend to be shorter and can be really helpful for meditation throughout the day, just as they were meant to be memorized and sung during a long walk to Jerusalem. This week, pick a few of the Pilgrimage Psalms to read each day. After this week, you might pick one that resonates that you will memorize and bring with you for the journey ahead.

Psalms 120*, 121*, 122*, 123*, 124*, 125*, 126*, 127*, 128*, 129*, 130*, 131*, 132*, 133*, 134*