

June 11

Scriptures: Read Psalms 130-134

Key Verse: “Behold, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord...” (Psalm 134:1)

Overview

In Psalm 130, the psalmist utters a reverent, penitential prayer wherein he ascends from out of the depths of despair and misery to the heights of hope with dependence upon God’s mercy and redemption. He recognizes that he is a sinner who could never hope to stand before God unless his sins be forgiven. His knowledge that God is a forgiving God, full of mercy and compassion, gives him hope and causes him to greatly fear the Lord (cf. 103:8-13; Lam. 3:21-23; Neh. 9:17; 1 Pet. 1:17). The psalmist waits patiently, expectantly and anxiously, trusting with faith in the promises of God’s Word that He will forgive and restore. As the coming of the morning light, the darkness is gone when God looks upon the penitent with favour (cf. 37:5-7). His personal experience with God’s mercy caused him to preach to all Israel. He challenged them to hope in the Lord so that they too might come to know His inner peace, for “with Him is abundant redemption” (130:7). Indeed, God did provide wonderful redemption from sin for all those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ.

Psalm 131 is a beautiful expression of humility and trust in the Lord. David does not consider himself great in his own eyes, nor does he profess to be a wise scholar (Rom. 12:3, 16; Prov. 16:18; James 4:6,10). In fact, he admits his own limitations. He has come to the point where he does not have to depend on the things of this world for his contentment, just like a weaned child no longer has to depend upon being nursed by his mother to receive comfort and contentment (Eph. 4:14; Heb. 5:12-14). David, therefore has grown spiritually. He finds contentment in the Lord. Because of his inner peace he longs for others to have the same. Therefore he calls upon Israel to hope in the Lord. All believers in Jesus (spiritual Israel) need to likewise continually grow in their faith and become detached from the temporal things of this world.

Psalm 132 commemorates the bringing of the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem by David. It reiterates God’s promise concerning the eternal establishment of the throne of David. David sought to honour the Lord by finding a suitable place for the Ark. The Ark symbolized the presence of the Almighty God. After the Philistines returned the captured Ark, it rested in Kirjath Jearim, meaning “town of the woods” (1 Sam. 6:21-7:1,2). The pilgrim singers may have re-enacted the event when David, from Bethlehem Ephrathah, went to find the Ark in the woods. With great rejoicing he took it to Jerusalem to worship God at His tabernacle. The resting place of His sacred Ark is called God’s footstool and strength (132:6-8). Along with the prayer for a permanent Tabernacle for the Ark, the pilgrims prayed that it would be accompanied by a righteous priesthood (132:9). When the Ark had been captured, there had been a corrupted priesthood (1 Sam. 2:12-17, 22). A second prayer request was that the Lord would fulfill His promise to David concerning an everlasting dynasty (132:10-12; cf. 2 Sam.7). The Lord answered prophetically that He would indeed dwell in Zion, in His Temple (John 1:14; 2 Cor. 6:16; Heb. 9:11). He would have a righteous and saved priesthood (all believers in Jesus; 1 Pet. 2:5, 9), and that David’s line would not be cut off, but grow strong (“horn of salvation”, Luke

1:69) and have a “lamp” (glory revealed; 1 Kings 11:36). Jesus was that prepared and promised Lamp, the Light of the world who revealed God’s glory (132: 13-18).

Psalm 133 praises unity and brotherly harmony. Jesus Christ had prayed that His followers would be one, which not only brings glory to God, but which testifies of the truth to the world that God sent Him (John 17:20-22). Unity comes from the bond of love which is evidenced by sacrificially serving and admonishing others (Col. 3:14-16; Eph. 4:1-6). King David illustrates the pleasantness of unity in two ways. It is like the special abundant, precious oil of consecration that was poured over Aaron when he was dedicated as high priest (Ex. 29:7-9; 40:13-16; Lev. 8:12). It flowed down his face onto his priestly garments, over the breastplate upon which were the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. When unity spreads, it will have an influence on all the people, which is pleasing in the sight of the Lord. It shows their consecration to God. A second illustration is that brotherly harmony and unity among the people of God is like the fall of abundant dew on them. This is found on Mount Hermon. Unity gives rise to fertility, growth, and revival. In the seasons when there is no rain in Israel, the dew is essential for the fertility of the ground (cf. Haggai 1:10-11), just as unity is essential for believers that they may be fruitful for the Lord.

Psalm 134 is an appropriate conclusion for the songs of ascent, which was most likely sung as the benediction at the close of the evening worship. It may have been the final song of the pilgrims before they left for their respective towns. The psalm begins by addressing the Levitical priests and watchmen who stand in the House of the Lord throughout the night. Their job was not merely to be guards or gatekeepers, but to be worshippers as well (1 Chron. 9:26-27’, 33). On a rotating basis, there were always Levites continually standing before the Lord to minister (cf. Deut. 10:8; 1 Chron. 23:30) with uplifted hands representing their pure hearts lifted up to God in praise and worship (28:2; 141:2). This exhortation, however, is applicable to all servants (priests) of the Lord in every generation to continually bless the Lord and be faithful in carrying out their sacred duties. The priests whose primary duty is to bless the Lord, then turn to bless the worshippers of the Lord before they left the sanctuary after the evening time of worship.

Prayer

Thank You, Father, for the blessings You have promised Your children who dwell together in unity. We remember also Your new commandment: “love one another as I have loved you”. We purpose by Your grace to walk in that most precious divine love, which You have poured into our hearts through Your Holy Spirit (Romans 5:5b).