



GROWING UP IN GOD  
A JOURNEY THROUGH THE PSALMS OF ASCENT

**Session 3**  
**March 2011**

**Psalm 122 The Message**

*<sup>1-2</sup> When they said, "Let's go to the house of God," my heart leaped for joy.*

*And now we're here, O Jerusalem,  
inside Jerusalem's walls!*

*<sup>3-5</sup> Jerusalem, well-built city,  
built as a place for worship!*

*The city to which the tribes ascend,  
all God's tribes go up to worship,  
To give thanks to the name of God—  
this is what it means to be Israel.*

*Thrones for righteous judgment  
are set there, famous David-thrones.*

*<sup>6-9</sup> Pray for Jerusalem's peace!  
Prosperity to all you Jerusalem-lovers!  
Friendly insiders, get along!*

*Hostile outsiders, keep your distance!  
For the sake of my family and friends,  
I say it again: live in peace!*

*For the sake of the house of our God, God,  
I'll do my very best for you.*

Psalm 122 is a pause – a time for reflection.

It's a 'breather' a short break to enable us to reflect on our journey; to look up and refocus on our reason for going up: it is a time too to look up and worship, it is a time for us to '*lift up our eyes unto the hills from whence cometh our help...*'

From finding himself wandering among the tents of Kedar, which signifies spiritual darkness, David continues to look up to God.

David was a son of Isaac, not a son of Ishmael; those who camped in Kedar were the sons of Ishmael, who was a man at war with his brethren. Ishmael was born of Abraham, but he did not receive the spiritual heritage which belonged to Isaac and thus to David. He was born of a bondwoman, not a free...Isaac was not only a son, but an heir to a heavenly kingdom. Those who belong to Isaac must still live for a time among the tents of those who belong to Ishmael...

On his journey upward, David pauses now taking a trip in his imagination, and there he already stands on the threshing floor of Araunah – viewing in his mind's eye, the Temple which he so desired to build to the glory of his God...though it would not be him, but his son who would complete it...or just maybe, he was looking towards the Heavenly Jerusalem, the Celestial City of God...looking towards his eternal reward...

It behoves us to pause in our busy round to stop for a few moments and take time too to reflect , take stock, on our journey with God –

Michel Quoist put it this way -

#### **Lord, I have time...**

*'I went out Lord, men were coming out, they were coming and going, Lord, walking and running, everything was rushing, cars, lorries, the street, the whole town. Men were rushing not to waste time; they were rushing after time, to catch up with time, to gain time.*

*"Goodbye sir" "Excuse me, I'll come back", "I can't wait, haven't time" "Must end this letter, but I haven't time" "I'd love to help you but I haven't time", "Can't accept, having no time"...can't think, can't read, I'm swamped, haven't time, "I'd like to pray but I haven't time"...*

*You understand Lord, they simply haven't the time.*

*The child is playing; he hasn't the time right now, later on...*

*The school boy has his homework to do; he hasn't the time, later on...*

*The student has his courses and so much work; he hasn't time, later on...*

*The young married man has his new house, he has to fix it up, he hasn't time, later on...*

*The grandparents have their grandchildren; they haven't time, later on...*

*They are ill, they have their treatments, they haven't time, later on...*

*They are dying...they have no...too late, they have no more time...*

*And so all men run after time Lord, they pass through life running, hurried, jostled overburdened, frantic - and they never get there, in spite of all their efforts, they still are – short of time.*

*Lord, you must have made a mistake in your calculations, there's a big mistake somewhere, the hours are too short, our lives are too short. You who are beyond time Lord, you smile to see us*

*fighting it, You know what You are doing. You make no mistakes in Your distribution of time to man, you give each one time to do what You want him to do, but we mustn't lose time, waste time, kill time, pass time, for time is a gift that you give us, but a perishable gift that doesn't keep Lord.*

*Lord, I have time, I have plenty of time, all the time you give me, the years of my life, the days of my years, the hours of my days, they are all mine, mine to fill, quietly, calmly, but to fill completely up to the brim, to offer them to You that out of their insipid water You may make a rich wine, such as You once made in Cana of Galilee.*

*I'm not asking You today Lord for time to do this and then that, but Your grace to do conscientiously, in the time that You give me, what You want me to do.'*

Question: are you a worshipper who works or a worker who worships?

David was a worshipper he always had time for his communion with God and he says – *'I rejoiced when I heard them say, let's go up to God's house today...'* David's heart never wavered in its love and appreciation of God...*'blessed are those whose strength is in You, who have set their hearts on pilgrimage...'* Psalm 84:5

Spiritually our mountain is God...immovable and unfailing.

He calls us to climb, come, ascend by His Spirit above all earthly care and limitation to live a life in Him...John of the Cross puts it this way –

*'On a dark night, kindled in love with yearnings – oh happy chance – I went forth without being observed, my house now being at rest...'*

John discovered the secret of living beyond his life's circumstances, which were often extreme; he lived in a place in the Spirit above his natural senses, escaping from the imprisonment of his fallen flesh. He was free within; he walked continuously in the love and Presence of God...

Geographically, on Mount Moriah today stands the Dome of the Rock, a Muslim Mosque...one day the Temple of our God will again stand shining and resplendent, gleaming in the sun, and we will again 'go up' to worship, but now in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a usurper takes its place...

And Mount Zion which lies on the lower elevations is a ploughed field, as the prophet said it would be...

The significance of Jerusalem, Mount Moriah and Mount Zion is recorded time and again throughout the scriptures and thousands of years after David sang this psalm, observant Jews pray three times a day for Jerusalem – it is a sacred place -

It is a high place...an elevated place, surrounded on three sides by valleys...and it is the world's **centre** so far as God is concerned; it isn't London, it isn't New York, it is Jerusalem, the City of God...

**Psalm 48: 1 – 2 KJV**

<sup>4</sup>*Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.  
<sup>2</sup>Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.'*

The city of the Great King...

As a city Jerusalem has tremendous significance for us it is first mentioned in –

#### **Genesis 14:18 – 20 NASB**

<sup>18</sup>*And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High.*

<sup>19</sup>*He blessed him and said,*

*"Blessed be Abram of God Most High,  
Possessor of heaven and earth;*

<sup>20</sup>*And blessed be God Most High,*

*Who has delivered your enemies into your hand."  
He gave him a tenth of all.'*

This mysterious king of Salem, or Jerusalem, brings out bread and wine and *'he was a priest of God Most High'* – El Elyon, the Possessor of Heaven and Earth and Melchizedek, described elsewhere as *'having no beginning and no end'* - a forerunner of our Great High Priest? (Hebrews 5:6)

Jerusalem is variously described in the psalms as being beautiful, a place of peace, righteousness, truth and the *'joy of the whole earth'*.

And we are all familiar with Abraham's offering of his son Isaac on Mount Moriah the place where the Lord will provide a substitute – Jehovah Jireh – *'the Lord Himself will provide the sacrifice my son...'*

#### **Genesis 22: 2 NASB**

<sup>2</sup>*He said, "Take now your son, your only son, whom you love, Isaac, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains of which I will tell you."*

Why is Jerusalem so special and indeed this particular spot?

Jerusalem is the Royal City, it is the City of the King, and it is the place where Jesus will reign and rule when He comes in all His glorious Majesty to receive the Kingdom.

Jerusalem is the City of our God.

And Mount Moriah is the site where the Temple will again stand...

So David, mindful of all these, things stands on the threshing floor of Araunah which is Mount Moriah and is lost in adoration of his King as he worships and contemplates the glorious future which is his for eternity... No time in contemplation and meditation such as this is lost time.

Our world, full of rush and hurry often precludes the quiet simplicity of thinking deeply about the One whom our heart desires above all else...*Jesus, the very thought of You...*

*'Jesus, the very thought of Thee  
With sweetness fills my breast,  
But sweeter far Thy face to see  
And in Thy presence rest.'*  
Bernard of Clairvaux

If we do not pause and rest like David, to think deeply, our lives are nothing but a struggle – we will be happy when - the situation changes, or this or that happens - until that time, we can't be happy...do you identify with that mind set? *'I'll be glad when this is over or happy when that comes about...but I won't be glad or happy until then'* we are saying.

We live our lives waiting for something better to happen...never enjoying today.

But God is 'in the moment' with us...as we continue to raise our God consciousness, we become 'in the moment' with Him, recognising that He is in us, with us, and surrounds us.

Our soul, which is eternal, must stop trying to find its resting place and security in earthly loves and worldly joys – nothing in this life can offer the secure hope, the limitless love, our soul needs, for the earth and everything in it is passing away...can you not hear Him calling you to -

*'Rise up My love, and begin to walk with Me to a new place'*

We rest, in His Presence...

And David asks for the *'peace of Jerusalem'* and it is the word *'shalvah'* the Hebrew for *'prosperity, peace abundance and quietness'* that he uses, not *'shalom'*.

*Shalvah* has nothing to do with financial security and money in the bank – its root meaning is that of relaxation, the attitude of one who knows everything is under control, everything is all right, because God is over us, in us, around us, with us and for us, and He is in complete control of all things. All the plans of the enemy are locked up in the hand of our Friend...

It is the **internal** rest of the one who knows that every moment of our existence is at the disposal of God and who lives in the grace, mercy, kindness and love of God, and has God for their shade and shadow -

### **Song of Solomon 2:3 AMP**

*<sup>a</sup>Like an apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved [shepherd] among the sons [cried the girl]! Under his shadow I delighted to sit, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.'*

Under whose shadow are you living right now?

All of us live under someone's shade, who exactly is the shade you sit under and is it sweet to your taste?

Worship, contemplation, meditation – a lost art in our world of rush and hurry.

Consider this thought, a quote from C H Spurgeon –

*'Look at the mower in the summer's day, with so much to cut down ere the sun sets. He pauses in his labour – is he a sluggard? He looks for his stone and begins to draw it up and down his scythe, with rink-atink, rink-atink, rink-atink.*

*Is that idle music – is he wasting precious moments?*

*How much he might have mowed while he has been ringing out those notes on his scythe!*

*But he is sharpening his tool, and he will do far more when once again he gives his strength to those long sweeps which lay the grass prostrate in rows before him'.*

We are reluctant aren't we to do anything unless we can see a demonstration of what will be achieved, what will be accomplished we are 'doers' and just 'being' is hard...

If we were to sit deep in thought we would be considered idle...But time spent in contemplation, silent worship, thanksgiving and praise is necessary – if we do not stop and sharpen our blade we will lose our edge, literally, of delight in Him through our life's pilgrimage and we will find ourselves anxious and fretting to reach the destination, instead of enjoying the journey in His company.

So as he climbs, David pauses to rest, reflect and to worship...and look up...

If you study his life you will see the level of God consciousness in the man which developed from a young boy guarding and shepherding his father's flock, to a King shepherding the very nation of Israel – God's flock. Any leader of the sheep is a shepherd under the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls.

The Hebrews were in touch with the reality of life, sheep represented not only their wealth but their inheritance – so when the Father says *'I am your inheritance and you are Mine'*, He is saying you are My wealth, you are My sheep and My inheritance and I am yours.

### **Song of Solomon 7:10 The Message**

*'I am my lover's. I'm all he wants. I'm all the world to him!'*

### **Psalm 16:5 AMP**

*<sup>5</sup>The Lord is my chosen and assigned portion, my cup; You hold and maintain my lot.*

Why not pause right there and think about that – you are His, and He is yours...for ever - trust Him, admire Him, worship Him, follow Him...selah – pause and think about that – deeply...

*'Only to sit and think of God*

*Oh what joy it is  
To think the thought, to breathe the name  
Earth has no higher bliss  
Father of Jesus, love's reward!  
What rapture it will be  
Prostrate before Thy throne to lie  
And gaze and gaze on Thee!*

That was a hymn by Frederick Faber<sup>1</sup>, the man was consumed by his love of God, and in one of his sermons he says this:

*'Wherever we turn in the church of God there is Jesus. He is the beginning and the middle and the end of everything to us...there is nothing good, nothing holy, nothing beautiful, nothing joyous which He is not to His servants*

*. No-one needs to be poor, because, if he chooses, he can have Jesus for his own property and possession. No-one need be downcast, for Jesus is the joy of heaven, and it is His joy to enter into sorrowful hearts. We can exaggerate about many things; but we can never exaggerate our obligation to Jesus, or the compassionate abundance of the love of Jesus to us. All our lives long we might talk of Jesus, and yet we should never come to an end of the sweet things that might be said of Him. Eternity will not be long enough to learn all He is or to praise Him for all He has done, but then, that matters not; for we shall be always with Him, and we desire nothing more'*

And addressing the Lord, he says –

*'I love Thee so I know not how  
My transports to control  
Thy love is like a burning fire  
Within my very soul'*

Methinks we have lost something somewhere.

Could it be that in our restless searching of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we have yet to find true solace for our souls deep in the Person of Jesus Christ – it is not that we are not born again; it is that we have such a shallow and low understanding of this Great God Whom we serve and claim we know

*'If I but knew Thee as Thou art  
O loveliness unknown'  
With what desire, O Lord my heart  
Would claim Thee for its own'  
I.MacPherson*

Milton said *'The hungry sheep look up and are not fed'* it is a solemn thing to see God's children at His table – starving. The bible says it thus –

Hosea 4:5 NKJV

<sup>6</sup> *My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge.'*

They perish because they lack knowledge and experience of Him.

So, David pauses on his journey to reflect on the Majesty of his King.

When we come to Jesus, He accepts us just as we are: problems, sins and all. As our needs are met, however, we gradually discover that God is seeking something from our lives. What He seeks is our worship. But true worship is the consequence, the result, of seeing God as He is.

It springs naturally from a soul purified by love; it rises like incense from a heart without idols.

You may feel you are not worshiping any idols. You do not stand, morning by morning, before a statue of Baal and praise it as your god. Indeed, we do not worship the idols of the ancient heathen. Like everything in our modern world, man has sophisticated idolatry as well.

Christ does not personally destroy the idols of sin and self within us. Rather, He points to them and tells **us** to destroy them.

Why not ask Him to reveal what your idols are as you stand before Him now? The God Whose Name is Jealous.

<sup>1</sup>You set my spirit free' John of the Cross by David Hazard, a 40 day journey

<sup>2</sup>Quoted by A W Tozer in his book 'The Pursuit of God' pp 41 – 42