

“Blessing and Being Blessed”  
Psalm 134  
(Preached at Trinity, October 6, 2012)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

**Disclaimer:** These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Psalm 134** is the final psalm in the series of 15 psalms designated by the title, “Psalms of Ascent.” They were sung by the pilgrims as they made their ascent to Jerusalem during the annual pilgrimages to the various ceremonial feasts. As they progressed toward the holy city they contemplated and rejoiced in the abiding presence of God as He has blessed them with every provision.
2. In this final brief psalm we find the Pilgrims leaving to return home. We find an exchange between the worshippers as they are about to depart from the temple in the evening, and the Levites who continually labored day and night in the temple.
  - A. They called upon the Levites to continue the praise of God even as they departed.  
**Psalm 134:2** - "Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary, and bless the LORD."  
The emphasis is upon worship. The Pilgrims had traveled from a great distance to worship God. Now as they were returning to their homes they were zealous that His worship continue.
  - B. The Levites in turn pronounced God’s blessings upon the worshippers:  
**Psalm 134:3 KJV** - "The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion."
3. It is only fitting that the final psalm of ascent would have an emphasis on worship. It is also a fitting beginning to the concluding psalms of the Psalter – Psalms 135-150 also have a great emphasis on worship.
4. This simple psalm sets forth two simple truths. Spurgeon describes it:  
“The Psalm teaches us to pray for those who are continually ministering before the Lord, and it invites all ministers to pronounce benedictions upon their loving and prayerful people.”
  - I. God has ordained that He would always be worshipped.
    - A. All of creation is charged to worship Him
      1. Every molecule declares the glory of God
        - a. David declared this truth  
**Psalm 19:1 KJV** - "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork."
        - b. Jesus declared that if man refuses to worship Him even the rocks would cry out.  
**Luke 19:40 KJV** - "I tell you that, if these should hold their peace, the stones would immediately cry out."

2. He created heavenly hosts whose chief duty is to worship God  
**Isaiah 6:1-3 KJV** - "In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. <sup>2</sup> Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. <sup>3</sup> And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, *is* the LORD of hosts: the whole earth *is* full of his glory."
  3. The very purpose of our being is to glorify God
- B. The temple was an expression of the presence of God and was designed to point to Christ
1. It was the place where God met with His people  
**Exodus 25:8** – "And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them."
  2. It was built to very exacting specifications
    - a. The tabernacle of Moses' day was constructed of gold and silver, brass, blue, purple and scarlet cloth, fine white linen, white goat's hair, ram skins that they dyed red, either badger or dolphin skins, and acacia wood. It has been estimated that today it would cost over a billion dollars to build.
    - b. It was the center of Israel's worship for over 500 years until replaced by Solomon's temple, also an amazing structure, beautiful to behold – an expression of the glory and holiness of God.
  3. The Levites had very exacting duties. They labored night and day.  
**1 Chronicles 23:28-32 KJV** - "their office *was* to wait on the sons of Aaron for the service of the house of the LORD, in the courts, and in the chambers, and in the purifying of all holy things, and the work of the service of the house of God; <sup>29</sup> Both for the shewbread, and for the fine flour for meat offering, and for the unleavened cakes, and for *that which is baked in* the pan, and for that which is fried, and for all manner of measure and size; <sup>30</sup> And to stand every morning to thank and praise the LORD, and likewise at even; <sup>31</sup> And to offer all burnt sacrifices unto the LORD in the sabbaths, in the new moons, and on the set feasts, by number, according to the order commanded unto them, continually before the LORD: <sup>32</sup> And that they should keep the charge of the tabernacle of the congregation, and the charge of the holy *place*, and the charge of the sons of Aaron their brethren, in the service of the house of the LORD."
- C. There is no temple today
1. The Holy Spirit dwells with all of God's people.
  2. But just as it was true of the Levites, God has given pastors a high charge. They are to labor hard in the work of ministering to God's people.
  3. It takes many hours to adequately care for God's people
    - a. I know Pastor Chad spends many hours in order to prepare to teach and preach. All of your pastors pray for you.
    - b. He and Pastor Rob labor bi-vocationally so that Trinity can enjoy the blessing of a plurality of elders

4. There should be at least one elder who is set apart to labor in the Word vocationally. It will be a wonderful blessing if we are eventually able to support more than one elder full-time.
  5. Those who labor vocationally must be provided for by the congregation  
**1 Corinthians 9:13-14 KJV** - "Do ye not know that they which minister about holy things live *of the things* of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? <sup>14</sup> Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the gospel should live of the gospel."  
**1 Timothy 5:17-18 NAU** - "The elders who rule well are to be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who work hard at preaching and teaching. <sup>18</sup> For the Scripture says, "YOU SHALL NOT MUZZLE THE OX WHILE HE IS THRESHING," and "The laborer is worthy of his wages.""
- D. All of those set apart by God for His service should be appreciated for their work's sake
1. As they departed the Pilgrims turned to encourage the Levites.
    - a. In essence they charged them, "Keep on lifting up the glorious name of God in praise!"  
**Psalm 134:2 KJV** - "Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary, and bless the LORD."
    - b. They were appreciated for their work's sake. Their labor was ministering in holy things. They were being exhorted "Bless the Lord."
  2. Your pastors should be appreciated for their work's sake  
**1 Thessalonians 5:12-13 KJV** - "And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; <sup>13</sup> And to esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake. *And* be at peace among yourselves."  
**Hebrews 13:7 NAU** - "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the result of their conduct, imitate their faith."  
**Galatians 6:6 NAU** - "The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches *him*."
- II. We cannot fail to observe the Pilgrims
- A. They had a zeal for the worship of God  
**Psalm 134:2 KJV** - "Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary, and bless the LORD."
    1. In their zeal for God's worship they made the pilgrimage, singing psalms as they went.
    2. Now in their departure they were exhorting the Levites – keep on praising God.
  - B. The worship of God today has lost this sense of priority
    1. The church today is plagued by consumerism
      - a. There is an eye on self – people are self absorbed, self-centered. What does the church have to offer me and my family?

- b. There is the assumption that worship is about me—what I get out of it. People search out churches that have their kind of preaching and their kind of music.
  2. James Montgomery Boice said that one of the problems with the modern church is people who are oblivious to God.  
“The tragedy is not that Christians in our time deny basic Bible doctrines, such as the nature and existence of God. They are not heretics. The problem is that although they acknowledge Bible truth, it fails to make a difference” (*Boice Expository Commentary, Psalms vol.3, p.1169*)
  3. Notice the Pilgrims were concerned about God’s worship after they left.
- C. The Levites returned God’s blessings upon them  
**Psalm 134:3 KJV** - "The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion."  
  1. It was a privilege for the Levites to labor in the things of God
  2. It was a blessing that God’s people cared for them.
  3. It was a privilege to pronounce a benediction upon God’s people.  
**Verse 2** is both a call to praise and a call to prayer. Lifting up the hands was a posture of prayer.
- D. Pastors are blessed by God with the flock He has given them to care for  
  1. Paul often demonstrated his heart towards those entrusted to his care  
**2 Corinthians 11:2 KJV** - "For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy: for I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present *you* as a chaste virgin to Christ."  
    - a. It was a hard work that weighed heavily upon him  
**2 Corinthians 11:27-28 KJV** - "In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness. <sup>28</sup> Beside those things that are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches."  
      - b. But it was a glorious work  
**Philippians 1:3-5 KJV** - "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy, <sup>5</sup> For your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now"
  2. Paul prayed for them continually  
**Philippians 1:3-5 KJV** - "I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, <sup>4</sup> Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy  
**Ephesians 3:14-16 KJV** - "For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, <sup>15</sup> Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, <sup>16</sup> That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man"  
**Romans 1:9 KJV** - "For God is my witness, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers"

**Ephesians 1:15-16 KJV** - "Wherefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus, and love unto all the saints, <sup>16</sup> Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers"

**2 Timothy 1:3 KJV** - "I thank God, whom I serve from *my* forefathers with pure conscience, that without ceasing I have remembrance of thee in my prayers night and day;"

E. Your pastors have been given care of your souls

**Hebrews 13:17 NAU** - "Obey your leaders and submit *to them*, for they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with grief, for this would be unprofitable for you."

1. Our labors in the Word are that you might be built up in Christ

**Ephesians 4:12-13 NAU** - "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; <sup>13</sup> until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ."

2. Part of our prayers are in calling for God's blessings upon you.

**Psalms 134:3 KJV** - "The LORD that made heaven and earth bless thee out of Zion."

#### Conclusion:

1. The highest focus of this psalm is the worship of God. It was the highest focus of the pilgrims. There is no higher focus for our life. There is no greater activity.

**Psalms 134:1 KJV** - "bless ye the LORD, all ye servants of the LORD"

**Psalms 134:2 KJV** - "Lift up your hands *in* the sanctuary, and bless the LORD."

2. The word for "bless" literally means to kneel or bow the knee. It carries the idea of praise which is how the NIV translates it. The Geneva Bible also translated it this way.

Literally it is to ascribe to God all of the praise and glory He is due.

3. There is no higher priority.

You must pray for your pastors as they seek to minister to you leading you to higher dimensions of worship.

Your pastors must pray for you that God would bless you from His throne.

**Numbers 6:24-26 KJV** - "The LORD bless thee, and keep thee: <sup>25</sup> The LORD make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: <sup>26</sup> The LORD lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace."