



CALVARY BAPTIST CHURCH
NINILCHIK

WEDNESDAY PRAYER MEETING

Mid-Week Devotional

SERIES:

“Christ in the Psalms”

June 22nd, 2022

“The Seventh Song of Ascent”

Psalm 126

THE SONGS OF DEGREES AS A WHOLE

This little psalter within the psalter consists of fifteen brief songs. Why they are grouped together and what is meant by their generic name it would be hard to tell. The conjectures are very many, but they are mere suppositions. Out of them all the conjecture by Dr. Jebb best commends itself to my own mind, though it would be quite consistent with this suggestion to believe that the series of songs are arranged by David became the Pilgrim Psalms of after ages, and were chanted by the Lord's people as they went up to the temple. They are "Songs of the Goings Up;" so some read the word. Those who delight to spiritualize everything find here Ascents of the Soul, or language fitted to describe the rising of the heart from the deepest grief to the highest delight....

—C.H.S.

PSALM 126

TITLE. —*A Song of degrees.* This is the seventh step, and we may therefore expect to meet with some special perfection of joy in it; nor shall we look in vain. We see here not only that Zion abides, but that her joy returns after sorrow. Abiding is not enough, fruitfulness is added. The pilgrims went from blessing to blessing in their psalmody as they proceeded on their holy way. Happy people to whom every ascent was a song, every halt a hymn. Here the truster becomes a sower: faith works by love, obtains a present bliss, and secures a harvest of delight.

There is nothing in this psalm by which we can decide its date, further than this, —that it is a song after a great deliverance from oppression. "Turning captivity" by no means requires an actual removal into banishment to fill out the idea; rescue from any dire affliction or crushing tyranny would be fitly described as "captivity turned." Indeed, the passage is not applicable to captives in Babylon, for it is Zion itself which is in captivity, and not a part of her citizens: the holy city was in sorrow and distress; though it could not be removed, the prosperity could be diminished. Some dark cloud lowered over the beloved capital, and its citizens prayed "Turn again our captivity, O Lord."

This psalm is in its right place and most fitting it follows its predecessor, for as in Psalm cxxv. we read that the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, we here see it removed from them to their great joy. The word "turn" would seem to be the key-note of the song; it is a psalm of conversion—conversion from captivity; and it may well be used to set forth the rapture of a pardoned soul when the anger of the Lord is turned away from it. We will call it, "Leading captivity captive."

The Psalm divides itself into a narrative (1, 2), a song (3), a prayer (4), and a promise (5 and 6).

Devotional Thoughts from Psalm 126

REFLECTION. When the Lord Jesus Christ hung upon Calvary's tree, being sleep deprived, awake and conscious for at least 32 hours, and possibly as much as 34 hours, when He should have been asleep and dreaming, the joy set before Him while He suffered God's relentless wrath must have seemed a dream; yet, as captive to His mission, Jesus endured the cross for the joy set before Him (vv1-3; Heb 12:2). The Lord Jesus prayed to be restored to the glory He knew with the Father before the world was (v4; John 17:5), and having wept tears over Jerusalem's unbelief (Luke 19:41-42), the angels of heaven witness His joy over each sinner who comes to repentance (vv5-6; Luke 15:10).

APPLICATION. The atoning death of Christ crucified is so foreign to us as depraved sinners, unless the Holy Spirit awakens us to its truth, salvation through Christ is nothing more than a dream, a fantasy (v1); yet, when grace touches our hearts and lifts our souls, we cry out joyfully, "*The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad*" (vv2-3). The essential prayer of the lost is that the poor in spirit become rich in faith; that the southern-most desert of our souls becomes alive with living water (v4); and thus, godly sorrow truly produces repentance unto salvation without regret, to rejoice always in Christ with shouts of joy (vv5-6; 2 Cor 7:10; Phil 4:4).

Devotional Challenge from Psalm 126

REFLECT upon the "*fortunes*" of Zion in verse 1 and 4. Mr. Spurgeon mentions "captivity" as it was translated from the Hebrew term אַתְּשִׁיבָה (*et sheey-VAT*), in the KJV and the NKJV. Consider how our "fortune" is restored through salvation in Christ; and likewise, how our "captivity" is returned through Christ. Which translation do you think is better? Explain why you think so.

READ 2 CORINTHIANS 8:9. How does this verse relate to the Lord Jesus restoring our fortunes in verses 1 and 4? How does it relate to turning us from our captivity to sin? How does this truth help you to trust the Lord Jesus more thoroughly and love Him more deeply?

RESPOND to the first and fourth verses of Psalm 126 with this devotional challenge: remember what your life was like before Christ saved you, then consider the riches and freedom you have in Christ now. How does today's psalm reflect your heart?

If you are not yet saved, does the cross of Christ seem like a dream to you? Would you like it to be a reality? Consider that eternal condemnation is worse than the lowest poverty and worse than the most desolate captivity.

What to Pray for This Week:

1. May the blessed truth of Your Word minister to us as we pray.
2. May our prayers begin sounding like those prayed in Scripture because You're conforming our lives to Christ.
3. May our focus in prayer be upon You, and not for the ears of man.
4. Pour out Your Spirit upon Christ's church, and upon the world.
5. Purify Your children, and unite us to worship You in Christ, with one heart, one mind and one accord.
6. Raise up godly ministers unto Your harvest, and bless those who are already laboring in Your field.
7. Be merciful unto us by bringing saving faith to our unsaved family, friends, neighbors, the village of Ninilchik, and all the residents of the Kenai Peninsula.
8. Remove from us all pride, haughtiness and arrogance, and make us ever watchful against the flesh and every temptation from the enemy.
9. Humble us as we commune with You in prayer, and keep us from lip-service, from deedless word religion and heartless works religion.
10. Teach us to abide in Christ each time we pray; that our hearts may be knit to His so we may glorify You.

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