

# Psalm 132

## I. INTRODUCTION

- A. This fall we are in a unique season in the life of our church. God is calling us in this season in a particular and specific way to pursue his presence and power as the foundational reality of our church's life together.
- B. As we enter into this season of building and pursuing such things, I believe the portrait of David (the man after God's own heart) found in Psalm 132 is a remarkable model and example for us.
- C. God is stirring the hearts of people to embody this heart cry. In our moment, this begins with a "holy discontent" that does not want business as usual or the *status quo* of Western Christianity.

<sup>14</sup>And the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubbabel... and the spirit of Joshua... and the spirit of all the remnant of the people. And they came and worked on the house of the Lord of hosts, their God (Hag 1.14)

- D. Psalm 132 is a poetic retelling (in song form) of the heart cry of David to build a resting place for God (2 Sam 7), the way that David's desire moved God's heart, and the things that God promised to David in response to his vow.
- E. This psalm provides a dynamic portrait of a heart gripped with God's purposes. As we step into this season in our church, I am asking that the Lord would stir up our hearts to respond to what he is doing in a manner like David's — as **individuals** (life in God, prayer, worship, transformation, obedience), **families** (time and energy, relational investment, discipleship), in our **vocations** (stewardship of labor, efforts, work), and as a **church** (what we build, pursue, orient our labors toward).

## II. DAVID'S VOW TO BUILD GOD'S DWELLING PLACE (PS 132.1-10)

<sup>1</sup>Remember, O Lord, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured, <sup>2</sup>how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, <sup>3</sup>"I will not enter my house or get into my bed, <sup>4</sup>I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, <sup>5</sup>until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob. <sup>6</sup>Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of Jaar. 'Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool!' <sup>8</sup>Arise, O Lord, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might..." (Ps 132.1-8)

- A. The situation of this Psalm seems to be a song of King Solomon written in relation to the building and consecration of the temple (cf. 2 Chr 6.41-42).
- B. **Remember:** The psalmist begins by pleading with God to remember something about David's life, his hardships, and his heart desire. This is one of the few places where God is called upon to remember an individual (cf. Exod 32.13). This shows us that there are movements of our hearts (expressed in our obedience) that matter to God and will be remembered by him.

<sup>8</sup>You have kept count of my tossings; put my tears in your bottle. Are they not in your book? (Ps 56.8)

<sup>5</sup>[the Lord] will bring to light the things now hidden in darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive his commendation from God. (1 Cor 4.5)

- C. **Hardships:** Commitment to God's purposes in his generation was extremely costly to David. He experienced great affliction and disdain from others as he sought to pursue obedience to God's ways in his life.

<sup>7</sup>For it is for your sake that I have borne reproach, that dishonor has covered my face. <sup>8</sup>I have become a stranger to my brothers, and alien to my mother's sons. <sup>9</sup>For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. (Ps 69.7-9)

- D. ***Mighty One of Jacob***: This is the only song in the whole of the psalter to use this title (elsewhere only Gen 49.29; Isa 49.26; 60.16). To highlight Jacob in this context is intended to highlight the two highpoints of Jacob's life.
1. ***God's encounter with Jacob at Bethel*** (Gen 29.10-21): God is the one who desires to come and dwell with his people. He longs to manifest his glory, power, and purposes on the earth.
  2. ***Jacob's wrestling with God at Peniel*** (Gen 32.22-32): God is also the one who desires that his people "wrestle" with him to experience his blessing. God longs for his people to seek his face continually.
- E. ***Dwelling place (resting place)***: David understood that God desired to be at rest among his people. The "dwelling/resting place" of God speaks of a place where he is not striving against mankind (Gen 6.3). This happens more when his people are in agreement with his ***nature*** (worship) and his ***purposes*** (prayer).
- F. ***I will not... until***: The content of the vow gives voice to David's heart cry to seek a resting place for God among his people.
1. David vowed to live with an extravagant devotion to seek the Lord with all of his resources. This vow included ***spending time in God's house*** (Ps 27.4), ***spiritual disciplines*** (Ps 69.7-12), and ***giving with extravagance*** toward this end (1 Chr 22.14).
 

<sup>4</sup>One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple. (Ps 27.4)

<sup>9</sup>For zeal for your house has consumed me... <sup>10</sup>When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach. <sup>11</sup>When I made sackcloth my clothing, I became a byword to them. (Ps 69.9-11)

<sup>14</sup>With great pains I have provided for the house of the Lord 100,000 talents of gold, a million talents of silver, and bronze and iron beyond weighing, for these is so much of it; timber and stone, too, I have provided. To these you must add. (1 Chr 22.14)
  2. David was unsatisfied with the comforts of this world and the cares of this life. He recognized the futility of wealth, ease, and pleasure that was disconnected from the manifestation of God's kingdom in this world.
 

<sup>2</sup>the king said to Nathan the prophet, "See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent." (2 Sam 7.2)
- G. ***We heard of it...***: David heard stories of the ark of the covenant growing up in Ephrathah (another name for Bethlehem — cf. Mic 5.2) and found it in the fields of Jaar (likely another name for Kiriath-jerim — 1 Sam 7.1-2) where it had been located for years after being lost in battle to the Philistines.
1. After David became king, the first thing he did was capture Jerusalem (2 Sam 5.3-10). Immediately after this, he set himself to set up a tabernacle for worship at the heart of his government (2 Sam 6). He brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem and established a house for perpetual worship.
  2. David set Levites before the ark in order to worship God. This included 4,000 full-time musicians, 288 singers, and 4,000 gatekeepers. In other words, at the center of David's expression of government were nearly 9,000 people who were employed to facilitate perpetual worship before the Lord.
 

<sup>7</sup>The number of them along with their brothers, who were trained in singing to the Lord, all who were skillful, was 288 (1 Chr 25.7)

<sup>4</sup>Twenty-four thousand of these," David said, "shall have charge of the work in the house of the Lord, 6,000 shall be officers and judges, <sup>5</sup>4,000 gatekeepers, and 4,000 shall offer praise to the Lord with the instruments that I have made for praise." (1 Chr 23.4-5)

H. **Arise:** The portion recounting David's vow ends with a petition for God to arise and come to the place of his rest. This prayer is asking God to take up his position of authority and establish his kingdom among his people. Throughout the Scripture, worship and prayer are the precise means through which God establishes his kingdom on the earth.

<sup>3</sup>Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel (Ps 22.3)

I. David possessed a unique revelation in all of the OT history: he understood that God desired the praises of his people as the sacrifices that would arise to him. Until Solomon built the temple, there was a separation between the sacrifices for atonement (Mosaic Tabernacle at Gibeon) and the sacrifices of worship (David's Tabernacle at Zion).

### III. GOD'S OATH TO DAVID (PS 132.II-18)

<sup>11</sup>The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne. <sup>12</sup>If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne." <sup>13</sup>For the Lord has chosen Zion; he has desired it for a dwelling place: <sup>14</sup>This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. <sup>15</sup>I will abundantly bless her provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread. <sup>16</sup>Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. <sup>17</sup>There I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. <sup>18</sup>His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine." (Ps 132.II-18)

A. After David was forbidden by God to build the temple, he was given a promise of a son who would sit upon his throne forever.

B. **The Son of David:** The New Testament is unequivocally clear that Jesus of Nazareth is the son of David whom God has chosen to sit on his throne for all eternity.

<sup>29</sup>Brothers, I may say to you with confidence about the patriarch David that he both died and was buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. <sup>30</sup>Being therefore a prophet, and knowing that God has sworn with an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants on his throne, <sup>31</sup>he foresaw and spoke about the resurrection of the Christ, that he was not abandoned to Hades, nor did his flesh see corruption. <sup>32</sup>This Jesus God raised up, and of that we are all witnesses. <sup>33</sup>Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he has poured out this that you yourselves are seeing and hearing. <sup>34</sup>For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he himself says, 'The Lord said to my Lord, Sit at my right hand, <sup>35</sup>until I make your enemies your footstool.'" <sup>36</sup>Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified. (Acts 2.29-36)

C. **Chosen Zion:** This Psalm is clear that God, in his promise to David, has chosen Zion as a dwelling/resting place forever. In the new covenant we see that this does not speak of a geographic locale, but rather of the type and order of worship that happened on Mount Zion at the time of David.

1. Several hundred years after David's life (while the temple was still standing), the prophet Amos spoke of the day when God would fulfill his promises by declaring that he would rebuild the tabernacle of David.

<sup>11</sup>In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins (Amos 9.11)

2. James understands that in Christ, the building of the church is the fulfillment of this promise given by God through Amos.

<sup>12</sup>And all the assembly fell silent, and they listened to Barnabas and Paul as they related what signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles. <sup>13</sup>After they finished speaking, James replied, "Brothers, listen to me. <sup>14</sup>Simeon has related how God first visited the Gentiles, to take from them a people for his name. <sup>15</sup>And with this the words of the prophets agree, just as it is written, <sup>16</sup>"After this I will return, and I will rebuild the tent of David that has fallen; I will rebuild its ruins, and I will restore it, <sup>17</sup>that the remnant of mankind may seek the Lord, and all the Gentiles who are called by my name, says the Lord (Acts 15.12-17)

3. This means that in the new covenant, the people of God are the Temple of God (the tabernacle of David). The people are meant to be the dwelling/resting place of God Almighty.
4. In the New Testament, the priesthood of believers no longer deals with facilitating the sacrificial system related to purity and stewarding the Lord's presence among his people. This aspect of the priestly ministry has been fulfilled once and for all in Christ Jesus — the great high priest.

<sup>11</sup>But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup>he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing eternal redemption. <sup>13</sup>For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup>how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God (Heb 9.11-14)

5. This means that the *primary* place that the people of God (the New Temple) fulfill their priestly role is through *ministry to the Lord in worship and prayer* — invoking (calling upon) his name, thanking, and praising him as God. This is like incense offered on the altar of the temple.

<sup>8</sup>each holding... golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints (Rev 5.8)

#### IV. RESPONDING WITH THE HEART OF DAVID

- A. God desires to manifest his presence and his purposes among his people. He has, in Christ Jesus, provided the gift of salvation, the access to his presence, placated his own wrath, and poured out his Spirit upon his church.
- B. Still, God desires that his people would live in *agreement with him* as his dwelling/resting place on the earth. The God of Jacob longs for his people to “wrestle” with him to see his kingdom manifested in specific places.
- C. God declares that he *waits* to be gracious to his people. He promises that a posture of *repentance* (turning to him in agreement) will move him to respond in seasons of refreshing and renewal. He promises that he will *dwell* with those who are lowly in heart and who tremble at his word.

<sup>18</sup>Therefore the Lord waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you... <sup>19</sup>He will surely be gracious to you at the sound of your cry. As soon as he hears it, he answers you. (Isa 30.18-19)

<sup>14</sup>If my people who are called by my name humble themselves, pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land. <sup>15</sup>Now my eyes will be open and my ears attentive to the prayer that is made in this place. (2 Chr 7.14-15)

<sup>19</sup>Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, <sup>20</sup>that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord (Acts 3.19-20)

<sup>1</sup>Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool; what is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? ...<sup>2</sup>this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word (Isa 66.1-2)

- D. There is a call to reorient our lives around pursuing the presence of God and partnering with his purposes in our city. This will look costly (and foolish).
- E. Paul considered it pure joy to count the things of this world as loss and press forward in Christ.

<sup>8</sup>I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord... <sup>10</sup>that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, and may share in his sufferings... <sup>13</sup>But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, <sup>14</sup>I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus (Phil 3.8-14)