

# **“Stepping Stones to God’s Heart”**

## **The Psalms of Ascent (120-134)**

### **Series Outlines**



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You can access full text copies of all fifteen messages in the series at the following web address: <http://www.rayfowler.org/sermons/psalms-of-ascent/>

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## **“Praying in Times of Trouble” (Psalm 120)**

*“I call on the Lord in my distress.” (Psalm 120:1)*

### **I. Call on the Lord in times of trouble (1-2)**

A. God hears you when you pray

- John 16:23-24; James 5:13

B. Cry out for him to save you (ex. lies and deceit)

- John 4:24

### **II. Know that God will judge the wicked (3-4)**

A. God's judgment is appropriate and just

- Proverbs 26:27; Jeremiah 9:8; James 3:6

B. God's judgment is certain and severe

- Exodus 34:7; Psalm 64:3-8; 140:9-10; Romans 12:19

### **III. Know that you do not belong to the world (5-7)**

A. The Christian is uncomfortable living in the world

- John 15:19, 17:14-16

B. The Christian gets tired of living in the world

- Psalm 42:2; Philippians 3:20

C. The Christian longs for peace in the midst of a hostile world

- Matthew 5:9; John 14:27, 16:33; Romans 12:18

## **“Trusting in God’s Providential Care” (Psalm 121)**

*“My help comes from the Lord.” (Psalm 121:2)*

### **I. The Creator is your helper (1-2)**

- A. Look beyond the mountains to the God who created them  
- Psalm 46:1, 90:2
  
- B. Your help comes from the Maker of heaven and earth  
- Genesis 1:1; Jeremiah 10:12

### **II. The God of Israel is your protector (3-6)**

- A. He protects you from accidents  
- Psalm 37:23-24
  
- B. He never slumbers nor sleeps  
- contrast 1 Kings 18:27
  
- C. He is close beside you  
- Genesis 28:15; Psalm 16:8
  
- D. He protects you at all times  
- Psalm 91:5-6

### **III. God will keep you from all harm (7-8)**

- A. He watches over every aspect of your life  
- Matthew 6:13; Luke 21:16-19; Romans 8:28,31,37-39
  
- B. He watches over every transition in your life  
- Deuteronomy 28:6; Psalm 139:2-3
  
- C. He watches over you both now and forevermore  
- Matthew 28:20; Hebrews 13:8

## **“Gathering with God’s People” (Psalm 122)**

*“Let us go to the house of the Lord.” (Psalm 122:1)*

### **I. Look forward to gathered worship each week (1-2)**

- A. Look forward to worshipping with God’s people  
- Hebrews 10:25
  
- B. Enter gathered worship with anticipation and joy  
- Psalm 100:4

### **II. Reap the benefits of gathered worship each week (3-5)**

- A. Enjoy the closeness of Christian fellowship  
- Psalm 133:1
  
- B. Experience the unity that comes from praising God together  
- Romans 12:4-5
  
- C. Receive direction from God’s word  
- Colossians 3:16; Revelation 20:11-15

### **III. Pray for God’s people regularly (6-9)**

- A. Pray for the peace of Jerusalem  
- Genesis 12:3; Luke 19:41-42
  
- B. Pray for the peace of the church  
- Acts 2:42-47; Ephesians 4:3-6
  
- C. Pray for your brothers and sisters in Christ  
- Ephesians 6:18
  
- D. Seek the well-being of your church  
- Philippians 1:23-25; Revelation 21:2-4

## **“Looking to the Lord for Mercy” (Psalm 123)**

*“I lift up my eyes to you.” (Psalm 123:1)*

### **I. Look to the Lord as the king on his throne (1)**

- A. Consider his sovereignty  
- Psalm 115:3; Matthew 6:9
  
- B. Worship his majesty  
- 1 Chronicles 29:10-12

### **II. Look to the Lord as a servant looks to his master (2)**

- A. Take the attitude of a servant towards God (1 Samuel 3:10)
  - 1) Be attentive to his will
  - 2) Wait patiently for his timing
  - 3) Be responsive to his commands
  
- B. Know that you are dependent on God for all things  
- 2 Chronicles 20:12; Psalm 104:24-28
  
- C. Know that God will help you in your time of need  
- Psalm 145:15-16; Philippians 4:19

### **III. Look to the Lord as your merciful Savior (3-4)**

- A. He sees your suffering  
- Exodus 3:7
  
- B. He cares about your suffering  
- Hebrews 4:15-16
  
- C. He knows your limits  
- Psalm 103:13-14; 1 Corinthians 10:13
  
- D. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble  
- Isaiah 13:11; James 4:6

## **“Depending on God” (Psalm 124)**

*“If the Lord had not been on our side ... ” (Psalm 124:1)*

### **I. Affirm the difference God makes in your life (1-5)**

- A. Where would you be without God?  
- John 15:5; Galatians 6:3
  
- B. If God is for us, who can be against us?  
- Psalm 118:6; Romans 8:31-32

### **II. Praise God for his protection and deliverance in your life (6-7)**

- A. He protects you when you are in danger  
- Psalm 121:7-8; Isaiah 43:2
  
- B. He rescues you when you are trapped  
- 1 Corinthians 10:13; 2 Timothy 2:26

### **III. Tell others how God has helped you (8)**

(compare Psalm 121:1-2)

- A. Give God the glory for what he has done  
- Psalm 115:1; Mark 5:19
  
- B. Encourage others to depend on God too  
- Psalm 20:7; Acts 4:12

## **“Safe and Secure” (Psalm 125)**

*“The LORD surrounds his people.” (Psalm 125:2)*

### **I. Those who trust in the Lord are safe and secure (1-2)**

- A. You are like Mount Zion which cannot be shaken but endures forever.  
- Psalm 16:8; John 10:28; 1 Peter 2:6
  
- B. The Lord surrounds you on every side.  
- 2 Kings 6:17; Psalm 34:7

### **II. Those who trust in the Lord have a secure inheritance (3)**

- A. Your inheritance is kept safe from the wicked  
- Psalm 16:5
  
- B. You are kept safe to receive it  
- Matthew 24:22; 1 Peter 1:4-5

### **III. Those who trust in the Lord have a secure future (4-5)**

- A. God will do good to those who are good  
- Matthew 12:33; Romans 2:6-8
  
- B. God will banish those who do evil  
- Matthew 7:21-23; Revelation 21:27
  
- C. God will answer his people's prayer for peace  
- Isaiah 2:2-3

## **“From Tears to Joy” (Psalm 126)**

*“The LORD has done great things for us!” (Psalm 126:3)*

### **I. Marvel at how God has helped you in the past (1-3)**

A. Pinch me, I must be dreaming!

- Ezra 1:1-4; Job 42:10; Acts 12:9-11

B. Laughter and songs of joy

- Genesis 21:6-7; Job 8:21; Psalm 137:1-4

C. Glory to God and joy for us

- Isaiah 25:9, 52:10; Luke 1:49

### **II. Trust God to do it again! (4-6)**

- Lamentations 3:22-23

A. Pray for God's full restoration and blessing

- Isaiah 35:6; Joel 2:25

B. Know that God will turn your sorrow into joy

- Ruth 1:20-21, 4:16-17; Psalm 30:5; Isaiah 51:11, 61:1-3

C. Commit yourself to the Lord and continue to do good

- Psalm 56:8; Galatians 6:9; 1 Peter 4:19; Revelation 21:4

*“Let us fix our eyes on Jesus ... who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame.” (Hebrews 12:2)*



## **“Resting in God’s Blessing” (Psalm 127)**

*“He grants sleep to those he loves.” (Psalm 127:2)*

### **I. God’s blessing and provision in your work (1-2)**

A. Without God your work is in vain

- Psalm 90:17; Proverbs 16:3; John 15:5; Hebrews 3:4; James 4:13-17

B. God grants sleep to those he loves

- Psalm 3:5-6, 4:8, 104:19-23; Proverbs 10:22; Mark 4:38

### **II. God’s blessing and provision in your home (3-5)**

A. Children are a gift from the Lord

- Genesis 33:5; 1 Samuel 1:27; James 1:17

B. Children support and protect us in our old age

- Deuteronomy 5:16; Proverbs 23:22; 1 Timothy 5:4,8

C. God will provide for all your needs

- Psalm 55:22; Matthew 6:33; Philippians 4:19

## **“Fearing the Lord” (Psalm 128)**

*“Blessed are all who fear the LORD.” (Psalm 128:1)*

### **I. Blessed are all who fear the Lord (1-4)**

- Psalm 1:1-3, 119:1-2; John 14:21

A. God will bless your work.

- Genesis 2:15; Ecclesiastes 2:24-25; Haggai 1:5-6

B. God will bless your marriage.

- Genesis 1:28; Proverbs 7:11, 18:22

C. God will bless your family.

- Psalm 144:12; Proverbs 22:6; Isaiah 52:8

### **II. A prayer of blessing for those who fear the Lord (5-6a)**

A. May God bless you all the days of your life.

- Psalm 23:6, 48:1, 134:3; John 14:16-17

B. May God bless you within the community of his people.

- Psalm 122:6-9

C. May God bless you with a long and fulfilling life.

- Proverbs 10:27, 17:6, 22:4; 2 Timothy 1:5

### **III. A prayer of peace for Israel (6b)**

Note: This is the third prayer for the peace of Israel

- cf. Psalm 122:6, 125:5

## **“Persevering through Pain” (Psalm 129)**

*“They have not gained the victory over me.”* (Psalm 129:2)

### **I. Persevering through the pain (1-4)**

- A. You can suffer pain without suffering defeat  
- Psalm 124:1-2; 2 Corinthians 4:8-10
  
- B. God has set a limit for your suffering  
- Psalm 124:7, 125:3; Isaiah 50:6, 53:5; 1 Corinthians 10:13
  
- C. In Christ your victory is assured  
- Jeremiah 1:19; Matthew 16:18; 2 Thessalonians 1:8-10

### **II. Praying through the pain (5-8)**

- A. Pray for persecutors to be turned back in shame  
- Genesis 12:3; Psalm 35:4
  
- B. Pray for the wicked to be stopped in their tracks  
- Psalm 92:7
  
- C. Pray for discernment and recognition of evil  
- cf. Ruth 2:4; Isaiah 5:20; Matthew 7:6; Ephesians 5:11
  
- D. Love and pray for your enemies  
- Matthew 5:44; Romans 12:14; Ephesians 6:12

## **“Waiting in Hope” (Psalm 130)**

*“My soul waits for the Lord.” (Psalm 130:6)*

### **I. Cry to the Lord for mercy (1-4)**

A. Crying from out of the depths

- Psalm 69:1-3; Psalm 124:4-5; Jonah 2:2; Lamentations 3:5

B. If God kept a record of sins

- Luke 18:13; Romans 3:19, 23; Revelation 20:12-13

C. Forgiveness and fear ó 1 Kings 8:39-40; Psalm 103:8-12;

Mark 2:7; Hebrews 10:17; 1 John 2:1

### **II. Wait for the Lord expectantly (5-6)**

A. Our hope is in God’s word

- Psalm 5:3; Jeremiah 29:11; 1 John 1:9

B. öMore than watchmen wait for the morningö

- Psalm 30:5, 126:5

### **III. Put your hope in the Lord (7-8)**

A. With the Lord is unfailing love

- Psalm 86:15; 1 Corinthians 13:8

B. With the Lord is full redemption

- Romans 3:23-24, 5:20; Ephesians 1:7

C. The Lord will redeem his people from all their sins

- Psalm 103:2-4; Matthew 1:21

## **“Humbled and Content” (Psalm 131)**

*“I have stilled and quieted my soul.” (Psalm 131:2)*

### **I. Practice humility (1)**

- A. Do not be proud in your heart  
- Proverbs 16:5, 18:12
  
- B. Do not be proud in your attitude towards others  
- Proverbs 30:13; Romans 12:16
  
- C. Do not feel that you have to know or understand it all  
- Deut 29:29; Job 42:3; Psalm 139:1-6; Jeremiah 45:5

### **II. Learn contentment (2)**

- A. Be still before the Lord  
- Psalm 46:10
  
- B. Quiet your soul  
- Psalm 62:1; Matthew 11:28-30
  
- C. Rest like a weaned child with its mother  
- Isaiah 57:20-21; Matthew 18:3-4

### **III. Live in hope (3)**

- A. Put your hope in the Lord  
- Psalm 130:7
  
- B. Both now and forevermore  
- Psalm 121:7-8, 125:2

## **“Believing God’s Promise” (Psalm 132)**

*“The Lord swore an oath to David.” (Psalm 132:11)*

### **I. David’s promise to God (1-9)**

A. David’s hardships (1)

- 2 Samuel 6:1-11; Hebrew 6:10

B. David’s promise to find a dwelling place for the Lord (2-5)

- Genesis 28:16-22; 2 Samuel 7:1-2

C. David’s fulfillment of his promise to God ó the temple! (6-9)

- Numbers 10:35-36; 2 Chronicles 6:41-42

### **II. God’s promise to David (10-12)**

A. God’s promise of the Messiah (10)

- 2 Chronicles 6:42

B. God’s promise to establish David’s throne (11-12)

- 2 Samuel 7:11-13

C. God’s fulfillment of his promise to David ó Jesus!

- Ephesians 3:20

### **III. God’s promise to us (13-18)**

A. God’s promise to dwell with his people (13-14)

- Isaiah 66:1; Matthew 1:22-23; John 1:14

B. God’s promise to bless us with his salvation (15-16)

- 1 Peter 2:9-10

C. God’s fulfillment of his promise to us ó Christ’s reign in heaven! (17-18)

- Revelation 21:1-4, 22-27

## **“Living Together in Unity” (Psalm 133)**

*“How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1)*

### **I. The goodness of living together in unity (1)**

A. Unity is both good and pleasant  
- Acts 2:42-47; James 1:17

B. We are brothers and sisters together in Christ  
- Hebrews 13:1

### **II. The source of living together in unity (2-3a)**

A. It is like oil poured on Aaron's head  
- Exodus 30:22-33; Psalm 23:5; Ephesians 5:23,30

B. It is like the dew of Hermon falling on Mount Zion  
- Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 4:2-3; James 1:9-10

### **III. The blessing of living together in unity (3b)**

A. God gives his blessing where believers live together in unity  
- Romans 15:5-6

B. Living together in unity is a foretaste of heaven  
- 2 Corinthians 1:21-22

## **PALM SUNDAY**

### **“Blessing and Blessed” (Psalm 134)**

*“Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord!” (Psalm 134:2)*

#### **I. May you bless the Lord! (1-2)**

A. Praise the Lord all you servants of the Lord

- 1 Chronicles 9:33, 23:30

1) All God’s people should praise him

- 1 Peter 2:9

2) All God’s people should praise him at all times

- Psalm 30:5, 126:5

B. Lift up your hands in worship and prayer

- Psalm 24:3-4; 1 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 10:19-22

#### **II. May the Lord bless you! (3)**

A. Remember who God is: the Maker of heaven and earth

- Psalm 121:2; 124:8

B. Remember where God’s blessing is found: Zion

- Hebrews 7:25-26, 12:22-23

Note: Zion = where God meets with his people

*“Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes  
in the name of the Lord!” (Matthew 21:9)*