

Psalms of Ascent Series Overview Handout

Psalms 120

1 In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. 2 Deliver me, O LORD, from lying lips, from a deceitful tongue. 3 What shall be given to you, and what more shall be done to you, you deceitful tongue? 4 A warrior's sharp arrows, with glowing coals of the broom tree! 5 Woe to me, that I sojourn in Meshech, that I dwell among the tents of Kedar! 6 Too long have I had my dwelling among those who hate peace. 7 I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war!

Focal point

Personal Holiness

Specifically, moving toward personal holiness by recognizing and separating ourselves from the unholy influences that inhabit our hearts

Psalms 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills. From where does my help come? 2 My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. 3 He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber. 4 Behold, he who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. 5 The LORD is your keeper; the LORD is your shade on your right hand. 6 The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night. 7 The LORD will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. 8 The LORD will keep your going out and your coming in from this time forth and forevermore.

Focal Point

Divine protection for God's faithful people

Psalms 122

1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!" 2 Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem! 3 Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together, 4 to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD. 5 There thrones for judgment were set, the thrones of the house of David. 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! "May they be secure who love you! 7 Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!" 8 For my brothers and companions' sake I will say, "Peace be within you!" 9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good.

Focal Point

Unity (peace) among God's people

Psalms 123

1 To you I lift up my eyes, O you who are enthroned in the heavens! 2 Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maid servant to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he has mercy upon us. 3 Have mercy upon us, O LORD, have mercy upon us, for we have had more than enough of contempt. 4 Our soul has had more than enough of the scorn of those who are at ease, of the contempt of the proud.

Focal point

The heavenward and eternal perspective of the true believer

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With patient and hopeful faith, in God who is trustworthy and steadfast.

Psalms 124

1 If it had not been the LORD who was on our side—let Israel now say—2 if it had not been the LORD who was on our side when people rose up against us, 3 then they would have swallowed us up alive, when their anger was kindled against us; 4 then the flood would have swept us away, the torrent would have gone over us; 5 then over us would have gone the raging waters. 6 Blessed be the LORD, who has not given us as prey to their teeth! 7 We have escaped like a bird from the snare of the fowlers; the snare is broken, and we have escaped! 8 Our help is in the name of the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

Focal Point

The Lord is our champion in battle

He is the ultimate power in all of existence

We know this to be true because He created all that exists

Psalms 125

1 Those who trust in the LORD are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever. 2 As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the LORD surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore. 3 For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest on the land allotted to the righteous, lest the righteous stretch out their hands to do wrong. 4 Do good, O LORD, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts! 5 But those who turn aside to their crooked ways the LORD will lead away with evildoers! Peace be upon Israel!

Focal Point

The omnipotence of God.

Psalms 126

1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. 2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then they said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” 3 The LORD has done great things for us; we are glad. 4 Restore our fortunes, O LORD, like streams in the Negeb! 5 Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! 6 He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

Focal Point

Restoration—of that which was lost

In two general categories of situations

Being unfaithful to the Lord and then turning away from that unfaithfulness back into right relationship with the Lord

Remaining faithful through times of temptation to turn away

Psalms 127

1 Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. 2 It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep. 3 Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward.

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4 Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one's youth. 5 Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them! He shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate.

Focal Point

The Lord is the architect of our lives
The creator, maker, and designer

Psalms 128

1 Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! 2 You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. 3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. 4 Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD. 5 The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life! 6 May you see your children's children! Peace be upon Israel!

Focal Point

The fear of the Lord (Godly living) leads to divine blessing

Psalms 129

1 "Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth"—let Israel now say—2 "Greatly have they afflicted me from my youth, yet they have not prevailed against me. 3 The plowers plowed upon my back; they made long their furrows." 4 The LORD is righteous; he has cut the cords of the wicked. 5 May all who hate Zion be put to shame and turned backward! 6 Let them be like the grass on the housetops, which withers before it grows up, 7 with which the reaper does not fill his hand nor the binder of sheaves his arms, 8 nor do those who pass by say, "The blessing of the LORD be upon you! We bless you in the name of the LORD!"

Focal Point

Prevailing in the Lord
Encouragement and exhortation in the midst of affliction

Psalms 130

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD! 2 O Lord, hear my voice! Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy! 3 If you, O LORD, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? 4 But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared. 5 I wait for the LORD, my soul waits, and in his word I hope; 6 my soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen for the morning, more than watchmen for the morning. 7 O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption. 8 And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Focal Point

Waiting for the Lord with full assurance He will deliver you

Psalms 131

1 O LORD, my heart is not lifted up; my eyes are not raised too high; I do not occupy myself with things too great and too marvelous for me. 2 But I have calmed and quieted my soul, like a weaned child with its mother; like a weaned child is my soul within me. 3 O Israel, hope in the LORD from this time forth and forevermore.

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Focal Point

Our posture, and our perception of it, toward the Lord

Psalms 132

1 Remember, O LORD, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured, 2 how he swore to the LORD and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, 3 "I will not enter my house or get into my bed, 4 I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, 5 until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob." 6 Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of Jaar.

7 "Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool!" 8 Arise, O LORD, and go to your resting place, you and the ark of your might. 9 Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let your saints shout for joy. 10 For the sake of your servant David, do not turn away the face of your anointed one.

11 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. 12 If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne." 13 For the LORD has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his dwelling place: 14 "This is my resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. 15 I will abundantly bless her provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread. 16 Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. 17 There I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. 18 His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on him his crown will shine."

Focal Point

The House of the Lord—that is, the place in the Earth where God most closely dwells with His people

Psalms 133

1 Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! 2 It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! 3 It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the LORD has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

Focal Point

God's people dwelling in unity

Psalms 134

1 Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, who stand by night in the house of the LORD! 2 Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the LORD! 3 May the LORD bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth!

Focal Point

True and accurate worshipping of the Lord is the highest point of our walk and a critical goal of our sanctification