

GIVE GOD HIS RIGHTFUL PLACE!

Psalm 132: 1-18 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

I have been captivated this week by the words of Psalm 132: 3-5. Let me read it to you from the New Living Translation. The Psalmist says, “I will not go home; I will not let myself rest. I will not let my eyes sleep nor close my eyelids in slumber until I find a place to build a house for the Lord, a sanctuary for the Mighty One of Israel.” The paraphrase in the Living Bible is also helpful for verses 1-5. I read, “Lord, do you remember that time when my heart was so filled with turmoil? I couldn’t rest, I couldn’t sleep, thinking how I ought to build a permanent home for the Ark of the Lord, a Temple for the Mighty One of Israel. Then I vowed that I would do it; I made a solemn promise to the Lord.”

Whoever this psalmist was, and I believe it was King Hezekiah who wrote 10 of these 15 Psalms of Ascent or Degrees, this king is praying to God in verse 1, saying, “Remember, O Lord, in David’s favor all the hardships he endured, how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob.” This vow Hezekiah is referring to was a vow David made to build a temple for the Lord in Jerusalem and make a permanent spot to place the Ark of the Covenant, the earthly representation in his day of the very presence of the Lord of Hosts.

Have any of us here today ever made a kind of vow or promise to give God first place in our hearts or in our lives? Did we promise this because we found inside us the idol of a false religion? Any false faith that promotes salvation apart from the substitution of Christ on the cross and the shedding of His blood for our sin, is a non-Christian faith. Have any of us found we believe in a faith that is based on our works—our good being greater than our bad? Have any of us found we have a distorted faith? Have any of us actually put our faith in our own faith! Have we believed we can muster enough faith to earn God's gifts? We must remember that we are not saved by the Lord not because of what we do or because we said a sinner’s prayer, walked an aisle during an invitation, have spoken in tongues, etc. We can truly be saved by the Lord when we pray as a sinner to receive Him. But we must never forget we are saved because of what God did for us through Christ in His death for us on the cross. We are saved because Jesus took our place at Calvary, paying for our rebellion. Have any of us found inside us an idol of material possessions? Instead of placing all our confidence in the Lord, have we been trusting in our personal appearance, our education, our savings account or our beautiful home. To give God His rightful place means we must give up every idol.

Have any of us begun to worship and put our faith in the idol of our American citizenship, in the idol of nationalism? Sometimes we distort our beliefs based on our nationalism. Have we been trusting in the American dream, and not trusting

Christ in a born-again life? Certainly our theology should affect our politics, but if it goes the other way, if our politics controls our theology, we become idol worshippers. Have we found ourselves bowing down to an idol of me-ism? “I have to do what is right for me.” “I have to look out for #1. Have you found yourself worshipping your appetites? When we cut back on what we give to the Lord because of our hobbies, we are bowing to our appetites.

John ended his first epistle—in I John 5:21 saying, “Little children, keep yourselves from idols.” The Living Bible states, “Dear Children, keep away from anything that might take God's place in your hearts. Amen.” Is there anything in my life or yours that comes before God? Anything that might—are we walking near the edge—living like Lot was living in Sodom and Gomorrah? Are any of us taking time to gaze back at the world like Lot’s wife did, at something that has taken God off the throne of our hearts? Does something else have first place in our hearts? It’s not a question if God has a place in our hearts as believers. He is to have first place. If you are a believer, make sure you are giving God the throne in your heart. If you are not a Christian then why not right now, ask God to take His rightful place. Receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and then stay away from anything that might take Him off the throne of your heart.

Now the psalmist in Psalm 132 speaks of David enduring hardships for the Lord and about David swearing and vowing to the Mighty One of Jacob to build Him a rightful house to put the Ark of His presence in. David thus was known as a man after God’s own heart as Luke called David in Acts 13: 22. What five lessons do each of us need to learn from David in giving God His rightful place in our lives?

GOD WANTS US TO VIEW ANY DISHONOR OF HIM AS A GRIEF AND DISHONOR TO US. (I.) Psalm 132: 1-5. “Remember, O LORD, in David's favor,

all the hardships he endured, how he swore to the LORD and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, “I will not enter my house or get into my bed, I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.” God has been known before to remember the life of a man or woman of God, and in their behalf to deliver others. Remember God remembered Noah and not only saved him, but on account of him, he remembered Noah’s wife, his sons and their wives—8 in all. God also remembered Abraham and for his sake, he spared Lot and his two daughters. Now, the psalmist whom I believe is King Hezekiah, is praying to God and reminding God of a time when the Ark of God was gone from the Jews and reminding God that David’s vow was that he would not rest until the Ark was finally home in Jerusalem. Hezekiah is praying in remembrance of the dedication of King David to the Lord.

How could Luke in Acts 13: 22 call David “a man after God’s own heart?” First of all, we must know that when God forgave David for his awful sin of adultery with

Bathsheba and killing her husband, Uriah the Hittite, God forgave David and remembered his sin no more. So what did God see in David that we should want God to see in us. David gave God His rightful place by seeing God's dishonor, of having the Ark of the Covenant gone from Israel, as a mighty distress to him as king. How few of us feel this way! How many of us see how God is disgraced in our country and we are broken-hearted and weep for the Lord? It should also be an affliction to us when our Lord is dishonored. David not only grieved God's dishonor, but he earnestly sought to remove God's dishonor. Though David could be called a man of many faults, and though he never was granted permission to build God's temple, the Lord said to him in I Kings 8: 18, "Whereas it was in your heart to build a house for My Name, you did well that it was in your heart." Beloved, this is a call to us all to cherish a holy zeal for the honor of God and His Name. Beloved, I want to take this moment to apply this lesson two ways. First, for those of you who are grieved when God's church house here at 125 Firestone Road is not kept up in any way—for those of you who pick up papers and scraps after a worship service, I honor you as God does for keeping up this dedicated house of prayer. Then, for those of you who know that your bodies are the temple of God, for those of you who weep over sin in your life, who are quick to repent of sin against God and against other believers, for those of you who weep when you repent of saying angry words to your spouse, or of bitter feelings toward others, I honor you for you are grieved at what dishonors the Lord. There's a second lesson.

GOD WANTS US TO SEEK FOR HIS PRESENCE AS WE WORSHIP AT HIS FOOTSTOOL. (II.) Psalm 132: 6-7. "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!" David had two great life ambitions—(1) to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem and then (2) to build a glorious temple to house it. He vowed to the Lord. The Lord permitted David to fulfill his first desire, but not the second desire. This was being remembered by Hezekiah that on one of David's trips to Bethlehem Ephrata, that was where he first heard about the fact that the Ark of God was almost forgotten—at first the Ark was taken to the land of the Philistines during Eli's day. The ark moved around with no permanent resting place as the Philistines suffered awful physical plagues while the Ark was in their possession. Finally, the ark was so lethal killing the Philistines, they put the Ark on a cart and tied two milk cows to pull the cart away—and the milk cows did so against their nature leaving behind their bawling calves that must have put up a huge fuss. The milk cows got to Bethshemesh, at the time of the wheat harvest. The Levites offered sacrifices to the Lord, but many people looked into the ark and God struck dead 50,070 of them. (Around 1140 BC) There was a mighty lament, as the remainder of the population of Beth-Shemesh cried out in I Samuel 6: 20, "Who is able to stand before this holy Lord God, and to whom shall He go up from us?" So they sent messengers to the inhabitants of Kirjath-jearim, modern day Abugosh,

and asked them to come and fetch it. The folk there came and brought it to the house of Abinadab in the hill country and they sanctified Eleazar his son to the keep the Ark of the Lord. The ark was on the move—no permanent resting place, but it remained 20 years in Kirjath-jearim. (I Samuel 7: 2) (Around 1120 BC) All the house of Israel lamented after the Lord, for the Ark was the earthly sign of God's presence. So back to our text of Psalm 132:6—"Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah and they went hunting and seeking to find it. In Beth-shemesh, the Ark was 18 miles southwest of Jerusalem but the seekers found the Ark in Jaar—the short name for Kirjath-jearim, only 8 miles northwest of Jerusalem. It is interesting that the inhabitants of Ephrata (Bethlehem) got the ball rolling to encourage the king to bring the Ark home to Jerusalem. First, David tried to bring the Ark home on a new cart and Uzzah died, trying to steady the ark at Nachon's threshing floor. This was David's first try to restore the Ark was in 1042 BC. (II Samuel 6-7) The ark then stayed at the house of Obed-edom the Gittite for 3 months, until David decided to bring the Ark home as God directed, upon poles on the backs of the priests. Finally, the Ark made it home as David danced before the Lord, and all Israel now began the pilgrimages to come and worship first at the tabernacle, and then, under Solomon, at the temple, at God's footstool. The pilgrims ascending to Jerusalem must have cried thinking of all the deaths involved in getting the Ark back and then they must have danced like David as they got close to Jerusalem. I ask you—Do we weep when we realize we have neglected God's house or not spent time alone with Him? Do we rejoice as we head for God's house to worship? Do we ever dance before the Lord, or clap hands or lift hands? 3rdly,

GOD WANTS US TO FIND A RESTING PLACE FOR HIM IN OUR LIVES WHERE HE ABIDES AND NEVER TURNS HIS FACE FROM US. (III.)

Psalm 132: 8-10. "Arise, O LORD, and go to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your might. Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Your saints shout for joy. For the sake of Your servant David, do not turn away the face of Your anointed one." When the Ark rested finally in Jerusalem, and it was moved finally from the Tabernacle under David's reign to the Temple Solomon built as David had desired, God sent His Shekinah glory down to settle on the Ark, the sign of His presence. I Kings 8: 10-11 tells about the priests dressed in clothes of righteousness at the dedication of the temple when the Ark made its last move to the Temple. We read, "And when the priests came out of the Holy Place, a cloud—God's Shekinah glory, filled the house of the Lord, so that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud, for the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. Beloved, I long always for the glory of the Lord to come down upon this place. I also pray that God would find a resting place in my life, His temple, and in each of your lives, in each of your temples, so that the knowledge and sense of His presence would be too glorious for any of us to go back to fleshly ways. When we practice and experience the presence of the Lord and His glory, it ought to clip our

wings from flying away to the world, to be intoxicated by the Babylon around us. We ought to be so fond of our temple being the resting place for God's Spirit that we could never take God's name in vain, so that we could never criticize others and be embittered against them, so we could not speak angry words and think lustful thoughts. I pray that our lives can so much be God's resting place that we can pray often and always sense God's Shekinah glory in our lives.

As I was preparing these words on Friday, Rob Klein came to church and took the attache case and the box of financial materials needed to become our new IWD Treasurer. He picked it up from Pastor Larry. He stopped to tell me—"Don't hesitate to talk to me about any concerns you have as I do this Treasurer job for the District." There he stood at the doorway of my office, with the attache case over his shoulder and the bin of other materials in his hand. I could tell he was sensing the heaviness of this new responsibility for the Lord. Thanks, Rob. No matter what we do, if our lives are God's resting place, it is a heavy matter to consider how we speak to our spouse, or to our children or to our parents or to our employer. Beloved, it ought to make us feel like we are stripped of the whole armor of God, like a policeman without his bulletproof vest, like a man running naked, streaking through the mall, to forget our need for the presence—the glory and the Shekinah of the Lord. May God never turn His face away—v. 12 from any of us because we are failing as His kingdom of priests to be clothed in His righteousness so we can shout for joy, and never rant, rave, cut others down, gossip, slander, talk behind another's back, throw a temper tantrum or sulk in self-pity. God help us all live as God's temple where His glory and anointing rest. Look at this 4th lesson.

GOD WANTS US TO REMIND HIM OF HIS COVENANT PROMISES AND THEN FOR US TO KEEP HIS COVENANT AND TESTIMONIES.

(IV.) Psalm 132: 11-12. "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. If your sons keep My covenant and My testimonies that I shall teach them, their sons also forever shall sit on your throne." Hezekiah knew it was for David's sake, not Solomon's that God had His blessing on him and the people of Judah as God delivered Hezekiah from Assyria and King Sennacherib and his vulgar general Rabshekah. Here the king is reminding God of His covenant promises—that in the end, are all Messianic—pointing to the coming of Jesus—the Lord of the covenant. All these promised to David are called a sure oath that God will never revoke—saying One of the sons of your body, David, I will set on your throne. Jesus is the One the psalmist is pointing to—the King of the Davidic dynasty. This promise the psalmist is claiming was fulfilled in Jesus Christ the Lord, Messiah, the Son of David, whose throne and kingdom is forever. This is what the angel Gabriel told Mary as a virgin before Jesus was conceived in her by the Holy Spirit. Gabriel quoted II Samuel 7: 13 in Luke 1: 30-33. Then the psalmist added the caveat that speaks of keeping and obedience. The word is—in vs. 12—If David's successors

want the blessing of God, they must obey the Word and law of God, though many of them did not. Believers today, we are united with the Lord in a new covenant that we celebrate at the Lord's Supper, a new covenant Jesus made in His own blood—Matthew 26: 26-30 and Hebrew 12: 24. Jesus will never break His new covenant. Beloved, the Father is faithful to His beloved Son and the Son of God is faithful to the covenant He made with us, in His own blood. God help us all to be true to the Lord Jesus, the One seated on God's throne. And let me warn us from Hebrews 10: 29, "How much worse punishment do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace. 5thly,

GOD WANTS US, AS DAVID VOWED TO BRING THE ARK TO THE TEMPLE, TO KNOW HE WILL BRING DAVID'S HORN AND LAMP TO DWELL ON HIS HEAVENLY THRONE FOREVER. (V.) Psalm 132: 13-18.

"For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place: "This is My resting place forever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread. Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. There I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for My anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame, but on Him His crown will shine." David's successors deserved radical punishment, but for David's sake, the Lord allowed them to reign from David's throne. There in Zion, the psalmist says "I will make a horn to sprout for David." A horn is a symbol of power and strength, and the sprouting of the horn of David is a picture of the coming of the promised Messiah. The Hebrew word for sprout or bud is **tsamach** or **tsemach**. As a verb, tsamach means to spring forth, to sprout, to bud, to flourish, or to shine, and as a noun, tsemach means the Branch who is Messiah. Just as the blossoming of Aaron's rod that budded which was a Messianic type of Jesus Christ, the Branch whose horn is in heaven forever—in heavenly Zion. The Lamp being prepared speaks of the light of David never going out. Never. Thursday morning at 5:16 AM, our lights went off until seven minutes later at 5: 23 AM. There is no lack of God's light shining in glory. John adds in Revelation 22: 5, "And there shall be no night there; and they need not candle, neither light of the sun, for the Lord God has given them light: and they shall reign forever and ever. The Lamb of God is the Lamp prepared forever as the light of heaven. No more darkness, no more evil, no more stabbings, no more meth, no more cursing, no more sickness, no more cancer, no more heart attacks, no more pain, no more crying, no more temptation to sin, no more sin, no more shame, no more sadness, no more night for the Lamb is the Lamp of Heaven—Beloved, prepare to meet the Lord. Live for Him. Give God His rightful place today. Amen.