

III. A Testimony of the Maturity of Life—Caring for the Building Up of God’s Dwelling Place (the Church)

Psalm 132: Song of Ascents

¹ LORD, remember David And all his afflictions; ² How he swore to the Lord, And vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob: ³ “Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, Or go up to the comfort of 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 the woods. ⁷ Let us go into His tabernacle; Let us worship at His footstool. ⁸ Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength. ⁹ Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, And let Your saints shout for joy. ¹⁰ For Your servant David’s sake, Do not turn away the face of Your Anointed. ¹¹ The LORD has sworn in truth to David; He will not turn from it: “I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body. ¹² If your sons will keep My covenant And My testimony which I shall teach them, Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore.” 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 provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. ¹⁶ I will also clothe her priests with salvation, And her saints shall shout aloud for joy. ¹⁷ There I will make the horn of David grow; I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed. ¹⁸ His enemies I will clothe with shame, But upon Himself His crown shall flourish.”

A. Concerned about the ark of God (the testimony), and the house of God (the church)

On the one hand, this psalm talks about the will of a man who is mature in life, whose desire is to satisfy God’s heart’s desire, and who expects to build a dwelling place for God. On the other hand, we see that God is also concerned about this person, concerned about his family and concerned about his kingdom; God wants to satisfy this person and perfect him.

This proves that the psalmist has been in total union with God and that he has grown to maturity. At this time, all his thoughts

are uniquely God, what he wants to fulfill and what he has to satisfy God are God's will and God Himself.

1. To find a resting place for God: David had a desire before God, which was to find a place for God's ark, and he wanted to build a dwelling place for the ark of God. David had this desire since his childhood. In this psalm he tells us, "Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah" (Psalm 132:6). Ephrathah is Bethlehem (Micah 5:2).
2. David was guarding the flock when he was young. At that time, he might have already begun to care about the ark of God. He had heard how the ark of God had led the people of God through the great wilderness, how it had led the people of God over the river Jordan, and how it had led the people to fight. He had also heard how the ark of the covenant had been taken away by the Philistines, but God had been protecting His glory all the while, and how the Philistines had been compelled to return the ark. Lastly, he had heard how the ark remained in "the fields of the woods."
3. David's heart could not wait to reach the place of the ark, and bow down to God. He could not wait to see the priests put on righteousness and the people of God shout for joy. This was David's heartfelt longing.
4. David's heart desired the ark, and he was very willing to find a resting place for the ark, and to build a temple for the ark. He knew that God was willing to live in His people, but he also knew that God had no rest in His people. Thus David's only wish was to fulfill the desire of God, in order that God might live in His people.

B. Suffering for God. "LORD, remember David and all his afflictions."

1. This is the prayer at the beginning of the psalm. The sufferings here are not the sufferings of men on earth, but specific sufferings, that is the sufferings for God, the sufferings for building up God's dwelling place, the sufferings for fulfilling God's heart's desire. These kinds of sufferings are similar to those of Paul who said, "I now

rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church” (Colossians 1:24).

2. This type of suffering is neither because we committed sin nor because of the indulgence of the flesh. It is because we love God and we understand His desire for us to satisfy Him and fulfill His will that we endure many sufferings.
3. When David fled, he was in a truly hard situation and he experienced real suffering. David was out there by himself when he realized that the ark of God did not have a dwelling place. He felt that God’s satisfaction was much more important than his own satisfaction.

C. He disregarded his own rest, and only cared for the ark of God and its dwelling place

1. After he became king of the house of Israel, the first thing he did was to attack Jerusalem. He attacked Jerusalem to find a resting place for the ark of God.
2. In Deuteronomy, God said to His people many times, “the place where the LORD your God chooses to put His name.” That place is the place where the ark of God rests. The Israelites had to come to this place to make sacrifices. All the men among them were required to come to God’s chosen place to worship God three times a year. But they went through the days of the judges, the days of Samuel, and the days of Saul without anyone paying any attention to this matter. When David became king, his first move was to attack Jerusalem in order to prepare the place for the ark of God there.
3. Because David shed much blood, God did not allow him to build the temple. God, however, revealed the blueprint of the temple to David. When David was in battle by himself, through all the hardships that he experienced, he prepared many materials for the God he loved.
4. How he swore to the LORD (Jehovah) and made a promise to the Mighty One of Jacob: “Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, Or go up to the comfort of 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.”

His desire for the building of God’s temple so that God could find rest among His people was intense. His desire was fully for God, as if he were saying, “Lord! You can deprive me, You can give me sufferings, but in the midst of suffering, I will gather the material to build Your temple.”

5. The purpose of our ministry today should also be for the building of the house of God, in order to satisfy God’s heart and to fulfill the will of God so that God may have a place of rest among His children and receive worship, praise and service from His children.

D. Man’s desire is in tune with God’s desire

“Let us go into His tabernacle; Let us worship at His footstool. Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength.”

1. The ark (Christ) is the center of God’s dwelling place. Here “His footstool” refers to the ark (because in God’s tabernacle, only Christ, typified by the ark, can be worshipped by man). The psalmist found the ark—Christ, and brought the ark into God’s tabernacle—the church (1 Chronicles 15:1). The ark has become the center and reality of the church life.
2. There is nothing else in the church but Christ; there is no one but Christ. Christ is the ark of testimony in God’s tabernacle.
 - a. In this ark, the tablets of the Ten Commandments show us His being;
 - b. Aaron’s staff that budded shows us the operation of His resurrection power in the church;
 - c. The hidden manna shows us Himself as our life supply.
 - d. In the tabernacle (in the church life), everything disappears but Christ; we see no man but Christ. When the Lord was on the Mount of Transfiguration, the Bible says, “When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only” (Matthew 17:8). This needs to be the final stage of the church’s growth and building up. Only in this

way can God be satisfied, and only in this way can God look at the church and say, “This is My testimony, and this is My dwelling place.”

- e. We hope that we can all have the same prayer as this mature psalmist and say, “Oh Lord, I do not go up into my bed, nor do I give slumber to mine eyelids. I will fight to see Christ as the only center and aim in order to bring in the reality of the church life. Therefore, there is nothing else in the church but this resurrected Christ.”
3. Verse 3 says, “Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house.” Verse 7 says, “Let us go into His tabernacle; Let us worship at His footstool.” Verse 8 says, “Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength.” Now God rests and God is satisfied. Now God can say, “I have My dwelling place and My testimony, and now I am satisfied.”
4. Now God rests. “Arise, O LORD, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength.” Now the ark is the strength of the church. It is in His will and by His resurrection power and life supply that the church has authority. The church life is under the ruling of the ark, which is Christ Himself.
5. “Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, And let Your saints shout for joy.” When God has His dwelling place and the church is built up, the priests and serving ones in the church can be clothed with salvation and serve God in the right position. When they serve the saints, they do not play politics, neither do they sacrifice the saints for their own benefit, nor do they compromise with the course of this world. They insist on doing everything for the benefit of the church and the saints. At that time, the saints will shout aloud for joy (v. 9 b). Under the nourishing of these serving ones, the saints become those who are full of enjoyment and shout aloud for joy.

E. God made a covenant with David and established his throne forever

“For Your servant David’s sake, Do not turn away the face of Your Anointed. The Lord has sworn in truth to David; He will not

turn from it: ‘I will set upon your throne the fruit of your body. If your sons will keep My covenant And My testimony which I shall teach them, Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore.’”

1. Because David was concerned with God’s dwelling place and His testimony before His people, God promised a covenant that his throne would be established forever. This was God’s response to David. David took God’s interests to heart for God’s sake (He gave supreme importance to God’s interests). God, in turn, for David’s sake, also gave him the kingdom and authority forever.
2. At the end, Christ, the descendant of David, will come and sit on the throne (verse 11), and the kingdom on the earth shall be the kingdom of the Lord, and He shall reign for ever and ever. Also, many of the servants of the Lord fight for the rights and the interests of God and for all the saints in the church. The result of this battle is to raise up overcomers. The overcomers will sit on the throne with the Lord when He comes back again, and partake of His reign and authority: “Their sons also shall sit upon your throne forevermore” (verse 12).

F. Only Christ, Forever Christ

“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 provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation, And her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There I will make the horn of David grow; I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame, But upon Himself His crown shall flourish’” (Psalm 132:13-18).

1. Verse 13: “For the LORD has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His dwelling place.” Zion is where God wields power, and God has chosen Zion as His dwelling place, according to His desire. God said, “This is My resting place forever; Here I will dwell, for I have desired it” (v. 14). How joyful! Who is

living in the church today? The Lord. Who is in power? The Lord. Who is reality? The Lord. Who is powerful? The Lord. In the church life, we cannot see anything else, but Christ, and always Christ.

2. From verses 15 through 18: “I will abundantly bless her provision; I will satisfy her poor with bread. I will also clothe her priests with salvation, And her saints shall shout aloud for joy. There I will make the horn of David grow; I will prepare a lamp for My Anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame, But upon Himself His crown shall flourish.” We should rejoice and be happy! When the Lord has gained His dwelling place and His testimony according to His power, His blessing will be abundant. At this time, the spiritual provisions in the church life will be abundant (v. 15). Those who are fighting for the Lord and who are servants of the Lord, or who are responsible for the brethren, are now covered with salvation—oh, what a salvation! This is the blessing they have gained by standing firm for the testimony of the Lord (v. 16). At the same time, it is no longer, “And let Your saints shout for joy” (v. 9), but, “And her saints shall shout aloud for joy” (v. 16). The Lord’s victory is to be manifested in the testimony of the church, and the Lord himself is to be manifested by the church (v. 17). The enemies of the Lord shall be humiliated and feel ashamed, and the crown of the Lord’s head shall shine brightly to illuminate and enlighten all, and the Lord’s power shall radiate brilliantly on the surface of the entire earth (v. 18).