

Longing for Home

Psalm 61

Studies in the Psalms #62

PEOPLE are so interesting. One of the things I've learned about people is what drives them to live where they live. This includes myself! As a native I'm a SoCaler through and through. This morning before we prayed I said it was cold; Chris said I'm such a native and that I need the temp between 73 and 73.5 to be happy! I used to think, "Why would anyone want to live where it's freezing cold?" But I've learned that people live where they're from, where their families are, where their friends are, where the cozy feeling of home is. People just want to be where it feels like "home." One commentator called Psalm 61, "one of the simplest and easiest prayers of the entire psalter."¹ The simple message here is David's prayer of LONGING FOR HOME.

THE PROMISE OF JESUS

Our Lord prayed through David as a prophecy of his future coming.

Let's think first of how this prayer proclaims THE PROMISE OF JESUS.

While humbled here earth in human flesh our Lord was far from his home in glory. We feel his heart-felt prayer here. We can be so tempted to think of Jesus as God and therefore that he didn't have the feelings that you and I have. Never forget the Son took to himself a true human nature like ours in every way except for sin (Heb. 4). He experienced joy, he experienced

sorrow; exuberance and loneliness. Feel Jesus' heart: **Hear my cry, O God, listen to my prayer** (v. 1). He felt this way because he was praying **from the end of the earth** (v. 2). Children, if your mom or dad are away and someone says they're at "the other end of the earth" what does that mean? They're really far away. Jesus felt distant from his Father as the incarnate Son. We read in Hebrews that "in the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence" (5:7). In that distance he cried out: **I call to you when my heart is faint** (v. 2). We get a sense here of what Jesus felt in his High Priestly Prayer when he longed for the "Father [to] glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you...glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed" (John 17:1, 5). In his feeling distant from his Father while his enemies plotted his death he prayed, **lead me to the rock that is higher than I** (v. 2). Maybe you've seen the blue tsunami evacuation signs along Coast Highway; where are they directing people to go? High ground. Jesus was praying to be above the fray. In 60:9 David prayed, "Who will *bring* me to the *fortified city*?" "Bring" in Psalm 60 is the same verb as **lead** here. The "fortified city" (*matsor*) in Psalm 60 is a homonym of **rock** (*tsur*) here. Thankfully for us, though, he ultimately prayed, "Not my will, but yours, be done" (Luke 22:42). In his

earthly communion with his Father, Jesus prayed **for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy** (v. 3).

He longed for glory so he prayed to dwell close to his Father in his glorification: **let me dwell in your tent forever! Let me take refuge under the shelter of your wings!** (v. 4) The tent in the time of David was the tabernacle. What was it? God's house, yes. But what was it a type and picture of? God's house in heaven, not merely on earth: "Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it" (Ex. 25:9). He's praying to reenter glory via resurrection and ascension. Look at how he's praying this before it even happened as if it had already happened: **for you, O God, have heard my vows; you have given me the heritage of those who fear your name** (v. 5). Such was his confidence as the Son but also as the sinless Son. God hear him in resurrection and ascension and session at the right hand of God: **prolong the life of the king; may his years endure to all generations!** (v. 6) This is a prophetic type of the resurrection. **May he be enthroned forever before God; appoint steadfast love and faithfulness to watch over him!** (v. 7) This is a prophetic type of the ascension. And now in heaven he leads the choirs in singing: **so will I ever sing praises to your name, as I perform my vows day after day** (v. 8).

THE PATTERN FOR US

We've been learning recently in our morning sermons in John 15 that we are to abide in Jesus because he abides in us. There's a mutual indwelling and union with our Lord. Because we are "in him," as Paul typically says, by faith we can live out of him by faith, in hope, and with love. Let's look for a moment at THE PATTERN FOR US in Jesus' prophetic prayer.

One big thing to note is that we, too, can feel distant from God as if we're praying **from the end of the earth** with **heart[s]** that are **faint**. If the Master felt this way let's not think we as his servants are exempt.

The big question we all ask when we feel this way is, "where is God?" The answer according to verse 5 is that he's only a prayer away: **you, O God, have heard my vows**. God hasn't actually abandoned us and we're not actually on the other side of the earth, lost from him. We feel that way. Children, when the clouds cover up the sun and you can't see the sun or feel its warmth, is the sun still there? It feels like it's not; but it's right where it's always been. So it is with God!

The bigger question is how is it true for us that God hasn't abandoned us but is only a prayer away? We once *were* far from him in a spiritual and relational since in our sinful state: "you who once were far off." But now "we've been brought near by the blood of Christ" (Eph. 2:13). You and I can

pray this Psalm when we feel distant because Jesus has already drawn us near to God. Having been brought near, we can draw ever nearer to him in prayer and fellowship (Heb. 10:19).

David's longing for home which was prophetic of Jesus' longing is our experience too. Turn with me to 2 Corinthians 5 as we close and see how this Psalm describes our experience:

For we know that if the *tent* that is our earthly home [he's describing our bodies] is destroyed, we have a *building* from God, a *house* not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. [he's contrasting a temporary tent with an eternal home] For in this tent [of our bodies] we groan, longing to put on our heavenly dwelling, if indeed by putting it on we may not be found naked. For while we are still in this tent, we groan, being burdened—not that we would be unclothed [he's not speaking as a Greek who thought the body was the prison of the soul], but that we would be further clothed, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life. He who has prepared us for this very thing is God, who has given us the Spirit as a guarantee. So we are always of good courage. We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight. Yes, we are of good courage, and we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

Notes

¹ Reardon, 119.