

Blessed Jerusalem

By Don Green

sermonaudio.com

Bible Verse: Psalm 122
Preached on: Tuesday, August 10, 2021

Truth Community Church
4183 Mt. Carmel Tobasco Road
Cincinnati, OH 45255

Website: truthcommunitychurch.org
Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/tcomm

Well, we are delighted to come back to the Psalms here this evening. Psalm 122 is our Psalm for this evening as we continue on a journey that we started many years ago, going through the Psalms. The goalposts are in sight but we still have many good things ahead of us. Tonight, it's Psalm 122 and I'd like to read it as we begin.

1 A Song of Ascents, of David. I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD." 2 Our feet are standing Within your gates, O Jerusalem, 3 Jerusalem, that is built As a city that is compact together; 4 To which the tribes go up, even the tribes of the LORD An ordinance for Israel To give thanks to the name of the LORD. 5 For there thrones were set for judgment, The thrones of the house of David. 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. 7 May peace be within your walls, And prosperity within your palaces." 8 For the sake of my brothers and my friends, I will now say, "May peace be within you." 9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good.

And you'll recall that the Songs of Ascent, Psalms 120-134, are a collection of 15 Psalms that were sung as the Israelites were going up to Jerusalem to celebrate the national feasts, and so it is fitting that there would be a song, a Psalm about Jerusalem early in the context to kind of set their affections. Jerusalem was more to the Jews than just a city and a place of residence or a place of worship, it represented the very presence of God and their spiritual affections were wrapped up in the well-being of the city of Jerusalem because that's where God made his presence known. So here in this Psalm we see those on their way to Jerusalem singing and praying for the peace and the well-being of Jerusalem. It's with a sense of anticipation that they were going there. They desired the well-being of their spiritual home. And without getting too far off track too soon here, there will be time for getting off track later, I guess, but this is the same attitude that Christians today should have toward the church, toward the church universal, toward the people of God, as well as their own home local church, the church that they attend, the place where we gather around with one another in the same spirit by the same faith, worshipping the same Christ according to the same word, and the commonality of affection should draw us together and desire the well-being of the place where we worship and where we fellowship together. Spiritual growth, sanctification, the work of God is always marked by something that transcends the individual. It puts within us

sometimes only in seed forms that need to grow, but it places within us a well-being for the people of God beyond us and that's one of the marks of spiritual growth that you can see as people become concerned not only about what's happening to themselves but they desire the well-being of the people of God generally and it occupies their affections and we see that demonstrated for us so clearly in Psalm 122.

Now just to kind of remind you of a little bit of context, in Psalm 120 we saw the Psalmist being homesick among liars. He was longing for Jerusalem and he was far removed from it, and so he says in Psalm 120:5, "Woe is me, for I sojourn in Meshech, For I dwell among the tents of Kedar!" He was far removed from Jerusalem and he found himself among those who were the enemies of his soul. Verse 2 he says, "Deliver my soul, O LORD, from lying lips, From a deceitful tongue." And so there's this spiritual thirst that opens the Psalms of Ascent and what follows in Psalm 121 and 122, what follows in this is God beginning to give water to satisfy that thirst. So in Psalm 121 we saw the Lord was the keeper of his people. Six times in the final six verses the word "keep" is used to emphasize how the Lord protects and guards and keeps his people. We can rest in him. We do not need to be afraid of what's happening around us if we are in Christ, if we know the Lord. We can rest in him because – this is worth spending some time on – we can rest in him because we know that whatever comes to us, the Lord is going to cause it all to work together for good. Whether that's in this life or whether we only see the outworking of that in eternity, we know that everything that the Lord orchestrates to come into our life whether it's joyful or painful, adversity or prosperity, whatever the case may be, the Lord has a purpose in it all and he intends for us to rest in him and not be afraid. The Psalms are filled with admonitions and promises like that. I often refer to Psalm 23:4 where the Psalmist says, "I fear no evil, for You are with me." And Psalm 121 is just expressing the same principle in a different way, "Things are fine with me because the Lord is my keeper. Psalm 121:2, "My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth. He will not allow your foot to slip; He who keeps you will not slumber. Behold, He who keeps Israel Will neither slumber nor sleep."

Now there is both a great encouragement for us there as we read these things in Christ and we say, "This is true." And this blows away some of the fog that fills our mind and refocuses on the fact that God has saved us, God is good to us, God will keep us, and therefore I fear no evil even if there are unsettled or uncertain things in my life right now. That is so important for us to understand and grasp, and we are intended to live by faith in that spirit of trust and confidence, not in fear of what might happen to us in the future. That is a preeminent theme throughout all of the Psalms and it is important for us to grasp that and that's one of the reasons why I'm glad that we've had these past eight years to go through the Psalms over a period of time, coming to this particular point here this evening. It is my hope, my prayer that as we've done this together over the many years, that God is building in us brick by brick, step by step, God is building us up to be people who live in this spiritual realm and not in the realm of being captivated by earthly fears and troubles and letting our minds succumb to fear and anxiety over that. Christ commanded us not to be anxious. In Matthew 6:25-34, "Do not be anxious about what you'll eat or what you'll drink or about what you shall put on." And his point is, if God

clothed the lilies of the field with beauty, if he feeds the sparrows of the air, will he not certainly do much more for you?

And so there's an element of reassurance that Christ gives us when he speaks to us that way, and also a command, even a little bit of a rebuke that that anxious spirit is not to be the place where believers are dwelling and where our minds are resting in. At some point, beloved, at some point we have to come to grips with this and say, "Yes, that is true, that is right, and I am going to commit myself to living in that realm and fighting the good fight of faith rather than being afraid of what comes along." And so the Psalms encourage us and call us in this way, and one of the ways, one of the preeminent ways, especially in the uncertain times in which we live, you know, if we're here in Christ and, you know, our goal is to glorify God, well, my friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, one of the preeminent ways that we glorify our God in times like this is that we trust him and we rest in him rather than caving into the anxiety that we're so easily tempted into. This is spiritual life. This is having no gods before him. And if he is our God, then we should trust him. In Romans 8 talking about all the glories that he's given to us in salvation, it asks this question, in light of all of these things that God has given us, he's justified us, he's sanctifying us, he will glorify us. We are in Christ, we have the indwelling Spirit, it's obvious that God has set his sovereign affection upon us and so the question then simply becomes: if God is for us like that, then who can be against us? And he goes on at the end of Romans 8:38-39 and says, "I'm convinced that neither life nor death, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor any other created thing can separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." All of those things, all of those principles, my beloved friends, should be somewhere preeminent, elevated, right at the front of the forefront of your mind so that you're able to rehearse those things to yourself when trouble and difficulty comes. We are meant to live differently and that's not simply a matter of outward morality, it's a matter of inward principle of the soul, that, "I will trust the Lord who keeps me," and that will govern the way that I look toward the future.

So these things are basic, these things are very fundamental and important for us to grasp, and here in Psalm 122, we find David wanting the blessing to be upon all of the people of God. We've seen the individual trust and promise given in Psalm 121, now collectively it expands out to the people of God in Psalm 122. So as we've said, the focus of this Psalm is preeminently on the city of Jerusalem. You see it there in verse 2 as he says, "O Jerusalem." Verse 3, "Jerusalem." Verse 6, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem." And then the pronouns that are around that show us the emphasis on the city of Jerusalem.

Now David would have had a particular affection for Jerusalem. He settled the city when he defeated the Jebusites in 2 Samuel 5. He reigned as king in Jerusalem for 33 years. It was to Jerusalem that David brought the ark of the Lord to the city in 2 Samuel 6. So he had conquest there, he had a reign there, the ark of the Lord was there and the presence of God was manifested there, right there in the city of Jerusalem. So Jerusalem was the city in which David reigned, it was the city in which the Lord manifested his presence, and David, as a man after God's own heart, found himself and found his affections wrapped up in the place where God manifested his presence.

Now in a far lesser way, I can identify with that and I hope that many of you can identify with that in the sense that, you know, there's something special about this room. You know, that we come here, we hear the word of God together here, we fellowship in this room. For me to stand in this pulpit, this becomes a very very special place. You know, this is so much of my life is devoted for the hour that we spend here like this, and so it becomes precious to me because my affections are wrapped up with you and with what we do here and with the Lord who blesses us as we come together. So the affections that David are expressing for the city of Jerusalem is something that we can understand in a parallel sense even if it is lesser because the direct presence of the Lord is not manifested in the same way that it was in Jerusalem.

So David writes in love for the city of Jerusalem. He writes in love and affection for the true house of the Lord, the place where the Lord was particularly manifested. And one resource, I wanted to read this to you to just give you a little bit of a summary sense of the significance of this city. One resource says this, "Jerusalem is the most important city on earth in the history of God's revelation and redemption. It was the royal city, the capital of the only kingdom God has established on earth. Here the temple was erected and here sacrifices were legitimately offered. This was the city of the prophets as well as the kings of David's line. Here in Jerusalem occurred the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, David's son. The Holy Spirit descended at Pentecost on an assembled group in this city, giving birth to the Christian church. Here the first great church council was held." All of these things just being the biblical themes that are wrapped up around Jerusalem. Then as you remember that the Songs of Ascent are written for pilgrims that are going up to Jerusalem three times a year for the unity and the sake of the tribes of Israel, and to celebrate and to thank the Lord, you can see how much their affections would be wrapped up in that geographic location. But it was more than the hill upon which Jerusalem sat, it was more than the buildings that were there, it was everything that Jerusalem represented. It represented the manifest presence of the Lord with his people, the joy and love and worship that came from being there, and godly affections were drawn to everything that that city represented. And if we study this Psalm with that in mind, we'll go a long way to understanding what David is expressing here.

So we're going to look at it in three sections here. The first section and I've titled this message as a result, "Blessed Jerusalem," blessed Jerusalem, and what we're going to find is there is a wonderful climax of spiritual fireworks that are coming for New Testament saints at the end of our examination of Scripture here tonight. So this is a Psalm that should refresh you, should encourage you, should strengthen your aspirations of spiritual love for Christ in all that we see from this Psalm that was written some 3,000 years ago. Let that sink in on you. This is the word of God and he has preserved it over the course of three millennia and has preserved it in such a way that we are able to read and study it with understanding here this evening. What a privilege for us, what a privilege for us to know this God who gives us peace. What a privilege for us to be able to read his word. What a privilege to be on the receiving end of the efforts of countless men throughout the millennia in order to deliver it so that we would have it in our hands to be able to read it in our own language.

I had lunch recently with someone who works in Bible translation and he was just telling me about the languages that still don't have, people that still do not have the word of God in their original, you know, in their native tongue, in their heart language, and here you and I are with a multiplicity of translations, many of us with multiple copies of Scripture in our homes and, you know, there are hundreds of copies of Scripture sitting under the pews waiting for someone to take them and use them. And so what a blessing we have to have this God, to have his word, and to be able to study it together. My heart is very grateful to the Lord as we turn to his word now.

I've titled this first section: the passion of David. We see the passion of David in the first two verses. He opens up the Psalm by recalling an invitation that someone had given him to go with them to worship the Lord. Look at it there in verse 1. He says,

1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

It was time for worship and David was glad to hear that. His heart resonated with that. His heart was drawn to that and so the Psalm is opening up on a note of corporate worship. Corporate worship, "'Let us,'" plural, "'go to the house of the LORD.' They said to me, 'Let's go here and join in worship.'"

Now in David's day, the house of the Lord would have referred to that temporary tabernacle that held the ark of the covenant. Later on, the temple would have come in Solomon's time. And so that gives us an indication that this Psalm originally written by David would have been added to this collection by a compiler later on after David was gone, had gone to heaven, but this Psalm was added because its theme fit so perfectly. So thinking about the Jews dispersed in many directions away from the temple and away from Jerusalem and they're going up three times a year, I'll show you that in just a moment where Scripture speaks about that, but the Jews removed, the Jews sometimes living among their enemies and someone says it's time to get ready to go up to Jerusalem for another feast. "Ah, yes! This is why we live. This gives purpose to our life, to gather together corporately with other Yahweh worshipers, and it's time to make that pilgrimage to be there for the worship, the fellowship, the joy to be in the presence of the Lord and to be in obedience to him." What David said in his day was applicable for the pilgrims that followed. "I'm glad that this day has come."

So as you read in verse 2, it pictures them being inside the city. Verse 2,

2 Our feet are standing Within your gates, O Jerusalem,

Now when David wrote this, he's likely referring to the time where the ark of the covenant arrived in the city. In fact, let's just take a moment to look at that in 2 Samuel 6 just to get a sense of the exuberant joy that David had in the presence of the Lord. This narrative passage from 2 Samuel 6 can give us a sense of what David meant by the gladness that he felt as he was writing Psalm 122.

2 Samuel 6:12, "Now it was told King David, saying, 'The LORD has blessed the house of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, on account of the ark of God.' David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom into the city of David with gladness." Do you see the parallel terms? He's bringing the ark of God into Jerusalem and he's doing so with gladness. "And so it was," verse 13, "that when the bearers of the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling. And David," verse 14, "was dancing before the LORD with all his might, and David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouting and the sound of the trumpet." Verse 18, "When David had finished offering the burnt offering and the peace offering, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts." There's corporate worship in the presence of God in Jerusalem and David is filled with this exuberant joy, with this overwhelming gladness at the magnificence of the occasion. So David is filled with passion about the presence of God and the ability to engage in corporate worship.

So that's kind of the original setting of the Psalm, at least as I understand it, and so for the later pilgrim using this as part of the singing that goes on going up to Jerusalem for the feast, this Psalm indicates for the later pilgrim that he had arrived at his destination. After a long sometimes dangerous journey, they're now within the walls of Jerusalem and the glory of that is very great for them.

Now I'm guessing that most of us haven't been to Jerusalem, some of you I know have been but most of us haven't. I certainly haven't been. This points us in a spiritual direction and a spiritual understanding that we need to have. First of all, we understand that God in his faithfulness as we are walking with him, God is going to lead us to the destination that he has for us. Just as the Jews set out for their destination of Jerusalem and God blessed them and they arrived there, so in the same way as we are going through life following a plan that is unfolding before our eyes, we have the certain confidence that the invisible hand of God's providence is moving us and moving those that we love and care about, moving us in the direction that he intends for us to go. We rest in confidence that the guiding hand, the keeping hand of God is upon us, and so that fills us with joy on the journey. But more than that, more than that we think beyond this earthly life, and we'll see this more toward the end of the Psalm, but ultimately what we are anticipating transcends this world, doesn't it? We anticipate God bringing us to glory where we will see Christ face-to-face, those of us that know Christ. God has said in 1 John 3:2, we will see him face-to-face. Now this is just remarkable to contemplate that we who have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, that we who were separated from God, enemies of God, dead in sin, that God would have so sovereignly worked in us to give us new life, to bless us with his salvation, all with the point that the final destination of that would be that we would be in the presence of our Savior and we would see him face-to-face. It speaks of that in Revelation also, chapter 21, they will see his face.

So our destination is greater than an earthly city, our destination is nothing less than the visible manifest presence of Christ in glory with him, all of our sins forgiven, all of the sins and stains on our life fully removed and just wrapped in robes of righteousness before him with the inestimable privilege of grabbing crowns and hurling them at his feet

in magnificent worship and giving him glory for all that he has done for us, and all that he is. That's our destination and one day soon enough, beloved, again I just emphasize this is for those of us that are in Christ, one day we'll be standing, as it were, within the gates of heaven and the glory of which David spoke of the earthly city, when we are in the heavenly city it will be all of that exuberant joy that David had multiplied by infinity because we will be there without sin and we will be there forever in the manifest presence of the one who died and rose again on our behalf. We will see his wounds and we will know. We will see the visible evidence that he loved us and it's breathtaking to contemplate. That is what God has given to us in Christ. One day we'll be standing within the gates of heaven and do you know what? When that time comes, it's the understatement of the century, but we're going to be glad. We're going to be glad and joyful to be there with nothing of this earth to diminish the experience of that great joy. Can't wait. Can't wait. That's what I'm living for. What about you? That's the sum aspiration of everything. Everything else is subordinate to that, is to be with Christ, in his presence, and be able to give him glory undiminished and unrestrained by the things of this earth.

So that's the passion of David there in the first two verses and we see a foretaste of our own passions reflected in it. Now secondly, second section. As a result of this passion, you come to the praise of David. The passion of David. The praise of David. And now you see it here in verses 3 to 5. His rejoicing spreads and goes vertically now. He'd been speaking horizontally, "They said to me. Our feet are standing within your gates." There's a horizontal dimension to it, but that brings his eyes up vertically and he begins to bring worship to God. Verses 3 through 5,

3 Jerusalem, that is built As a city that is compact together; 4 To which the tribes go up, even the tribes of the LORD An ordinance for Israel [here it is] To give thanks to the name of the LORD.

"We are here," David says, "in order to give thanks to the name of the Lord." This is more than simply human fellowship, this is about a vertical ascription of praise to the Lord. Verse 5,

5 For there [in Jerusalem] thrones were set for judgment, The thrones of the house of David.

And so what's going on here in these three verses? What can we glean from this? Well, the geographic area of Jerusalem proper, the city itself, was small and so it was a city that was compact in the words of verse 3. And from what those who have studied this say, the buildings were joined together in a way that formed attractive symmetrical sight lines and the builders in their wisdom used a unified plan in order to maximize that small space that they had in order to develop the city.

So David here is in the city and he's reflecting on it, he's looking on it, he sees it's design, he sees the symmetry, and he's describing Jerusalem from a physical standpoint, and then he describes it in verse 4 as its function as a spiritual destination. Verse 4, "To which the

tribes go up, even the tribes of the LORD An ordinance for Israel," You'll remember that there were 12 tribes in Israel and God commanded in the Old Testament, he commanded Jewish males to go to Jerusalem three times a year for the appointed feasts, and I just want to show you this in Scripture. Turn to Exodus 23 in verse 14 it says, "Three times a year you shall celebrate a feast to Me. You shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread; for seven days you are to eat unleavened bread, as I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month Abib, for in it you came out of Egypt. And none shall appear before Me empty-handed." Feast number 1. Feast number 2, verse 16, "Also you shall observe the Feast of the Harvest of the first fruits of your labors from what you sow in the field; also," number 3, "the Feast of the Ingathering at the end of the year when you gather in the fruit of your labors from the field." Verse 17, "Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord GOD."

So these feasts had the function, they had the spiritual impact of promoting national unity among the faithful in the 12 tribes, and what you see here is really vital, is that the focus on Jerusalem that opens and kind of contains this Psalm, you see that it's more than the physical city because David is rejoicing in the fact that the tribes were going up in unison in order to give thanks to the name of the Lord. It was in Jerusalem, verse 5, where thrones were set for judgment, referring to the seats of authority, in other words. So they were meeting for more than human reasons. This was more than just about the feasts, this was for the purpose of worship and for the purpose of cultivating national unity among the people of Israel.

So David is passionate for this place because he is passionate for the praise that goes on there and for the fact that it represents the city where God gets a portion of the glory that is due to his name. You know, and one of the things about New Testament worship and being with the people of God, it's more than just what we get out of it. I trust that that's true of you. I trust that your affections are higher than simply the personal things that you get out of it. There's a reason why we're not a seeker-sensitive church just trying to make everyone happy that attends on a horizontal level. No, we want more. We want far more than that. What we want is for God to receive honor when we gather together. We want our Christ to be magnified. We want our Christ to be pleased with however imperfect and flawed our worship is, there is at least a sincerity of heart that we really want to give him honor and I trust that that's a reflection of what's in your heart somehow, somewhere every time we come together. We enjoy it, sure. Personally we get satisfaction and edification and love and fellowship out of it, but it's more than that human impact. We gather preeminently and first of all for the glory of God and that's what David is expressing. He's glad to go to the house of the Lord, verse 1, because in verse 4, this is where we're going to give thanks to his name.

So we go from the passion to the praise and now, thirdly, we go to David's prayer. We go to David's prayer in verses 6 through 9 and he says this,

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: "May they prosper who love you. 7
May peace be within your walls, And prosperity within your palaces." 8
For the sake of my brothers and my friends, I will now say, "May peace be

within you." 9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good.

So David having expressed this praise of thanksgiving to the Lord now turns to prayer. He's reflected on the purpose of Jerusalem, reflected on the worship that takes place there, reflected on the unity of the people of God that this cultivates. It motivates his heart, his heart turns to prayer in response to these surpassing realities.

So he's expressing, first of all, a desire for the prosperity of Jerusalem and the people who live there. Look at verses 6 and 7 with me. He says, "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: 'May they prosper who love you.'" In other words, he wants to see Jerusalem protected. He wants to see the hand of God on this place. It is so special to him that he wants God to pour out his blessing on it, to protect the city, and more importantly, to protect everything that that city represents, and that that blessing would spill over within the people. Verse 7, "May peace be within your walls, And prosperity within your palaces."

So think about this and, again, let's think about how this works out in New Testament terms as well. His love for what the city represents leads him into a love for the people of the city that dwell there. For the Christian coming together with the people of God and in our place of worship, our love for the word of God, our love for the praise of God that takes place, that vertical dimension that is our preeminent affection, that becomes, that spills over into a desire of the well-being for the people that gather here together. And so we seek out the well-being of one another. When we are separated and apart, I trust that somewhere in your life there is a place of praying for the well-being, especially the spiritual well-being of the people that gather together here. And I'm just trying so hard, trusting so much in the help of the Holy Spirit as I do this, that the Lord would sanctify us away from that selfish mindset that some of us were conditioned long ago to think about Christianity and the Bible of being a book that's just written directly to me, and what does the Bible have in it for me, to realize that the word of God teaches us to have a corporate dimension to our affections that it spreads beyond that, and part of the reason we gather together is to seek the well-being of one another as we do.

So David's love for Jerusalem leads to a love for the people that are there, and you see this expressed more explicitly in verse 8 when he says, "For the sake of my brothers and my friends, I will now say, 'May peace be within you.' For the sake of my spiritual brothers, for the sake of my friends, I am seeking the well-being of this place," David says. "I am committed to the well-being of Jerusalem for the sake of those who live there and also for the sake of the manifest presence of God. For the sake of the house of the LORD our God," verse 9, "I will seek your good." There is a spiritual commitment that follows on his passion and his praise for the Lord in this.

So he commits to seek their good, he commits to pray for them and, beloved, what the Psalm leads to is a selflessness toward God and toward the brothers and sisters in the faith. Now what would the New Testament perspective on these things be in this sense of Jerusalem? Because we're not anchored to Jerusalem like the Jews were. You know, that's not our thing. We're not about the feasts anymore. Jesus when he's speaking of

Communion, by the way, we're having Communion this Sunday. I hope that as many of you as are able will make the effort to be here with us because Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of Me," speaking of the Lord's Table. We don't remember him through the feasts, the Jewish feasts anymore. Jesus gave us a new remembrance, a new ordinance in Communion in the Lord's Table and he said, "You do this in remembrance of Me," as he held up the cup and held up the blood representing his sacrifice for us at Calvary. So we do this, we do Communion, we do this in remembrance of him and so our focus is a little bit different than it was in David's time before Christ and before the cross.

So what can we draw out from this for ourselves? Well, first of all, let's get something in our minds that is easy to overlook. When David said, "For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good," God answered that prayer. God has answered David's prayer for the people of Jerusalem, and get this, he answered the prayer in the seed of David. The greater David, his greater son, the Lord Jesus Christ, becomes the one who brought good and blessing to Israel through his work of redemption at the cross, through his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension. He has secured the well-being of the people of God. And so God answered David's prayer preeminently in Christ and Christ becomes the answer to David's own prayer.

That said, Jerusalem in the New Testament becomes a symbol for other realities and we've alluded to those already in the message but we'll look at the texts now that support that. In the New Testament, the church is pictured as a type of Jerusalem. Jerusalem is used to speak as a metaphor for the blessings that are found in the church. Look at the book of Hebrews with me. Hebrews 12. In this book of Hebrews, the writer of Hebrews has established the superiority of Christ to everything related to the Old Testament. He's superior to angels. He's superior to Moses. He's superior to the priests. His sacrifice of himself was superior to the Old Testament sacrifices. So everything about Christ was superior to that which was in the Old Testament and now as he begins to wrap up his message, he says in verse 22, he says, "you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to myriads of angels, to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the Judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect," and here's his climax, "and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood, which speaks better than the blood of Abel." What the Old Testament saw only in shadows and in figures, you and I, we now have the fullness of it. We have the full manifestation of it all in Christ, and so he's reminding us of the spiritual realities, lifting us away from Old Testament shadows, lifting us away from Old Testament ceremonies to the reality that they were designed to point to. That's the key thing to understand. These passing shadows were meant to point us to a reality and when the reality comes, the shadows fade away, the shadows are done away and we recognize the fullness of what we have in Christ. We don't have a literal city on a literal hill, we have something better, we have the city of the living God. We have the heavenly Jerusalem. We have myriads of angels that are on our side. We have Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, the one who shed his blood in order to initiate the new covenant. That's what we remember every time we celebrate Communion. "This cup is the new covenant in My blood." God now works in us through Christ and not through

those Old Testament shadows, and in Christ and in the heavenly Jerusalem we have our ultimate home.

Verse 28 and 29 of Hebrews 12, "Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken," we've received something that cannot be moved, this is the work of God, it cannot be changed. God has given us a salvation that cannot be lost and we have that collectively together with the other people of Christ, well then, what are we to do with that? Verse 28, "let us show gratitude." Do you remember what the middle verse of Psalm 122 was? "We came to give thanks to the Lord." Let's go back to that. Just keep your finger there in Hebrews for just a second. Psalm 122:4, "We're going up to Jerusalem to give thanks to the name of the LORD." For us, we see from Scripture, we know from the Spirit working within us that God has so greatly blessed us and so our response to that is the same, the principle is the same, in response to the greatness of our Jerusalem, we give thanks to the Lord.

Verse 28, "by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe; for our God is a consuming fire."

Beloved, as special as it may be to go to Israel and I'm told it's wonderful, I hope some of you can go there someday if that's in your heart to do, but as special as the literal city is, the spiritual dwelling surpasses it in glory and in magnificence. We are in Christ. We belong to him. We are in union with him. All of his righteousness has been, we are clothed in it. All of the richness of the forgiveness of our sins, all of the rich fellowship in spirit with him, now all of that and so much more belongs to us. He who made us his people at the cross, that is worth giving thanks for. That is worth remembering. We realize that we have been brought into even greater realities than David knew in his day. And so, of course, we give even deeper thanks based on greater realities that belong to us now, here. And yet there's more. Our eternal home, our eternal home, our forever dwellingplace, our neverending place of safety and rest and home is called a heavenly Jerusalem.

Look at Revelation 21 and the Apostle John says there in verse 10,

10 ... he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the holy city, Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, 11 having the glory of God. Her brilliance was like a very costly stone, as a stone of crystal-clear jasper. 12 It had a great and high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels; and names were written on them, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel. 13 There were three gates on the east and three gates on the north and three gates on the south and three gates on the west. 14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundation stones, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

Look over at verse 22,

22 I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 And the city [talking about this heavenly Jerusalem] the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb. 24 The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their glory into it. 25 In the daytime (for there will be no night there) its gates will never be closed; 26 and they will bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it; 27 and nothing unclean, and no one who practices abomination and lying, shall ever come into it, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

In other words, beloved, my feeble human tongue can't do justice to the magnificence of the theme that we are seeing here. In the Old Testament they were pilgrims going up to an earthly city, our reality as Christians is that we are pilgrims going up to a heavenly Jerusalem and Scripture has described something of its glory to us. That is our destination and what I would say to those of you who are not in Christ today, I give you the invitation that was given to David at the start of Psalm 122, let's you go with us. Let's you go with us up to this heavenly Jerusalem. Let's you come to Christ. Let's you repent of your sin, put your faith and confidence in Christ alone and join us on this marvelous journey that ends up in the heavenly Jerusalem. Oh, I want you to be there! Oh, I want everyone here and under the sound of my voice to be there in that heavenly Jerusalem! And Christ through his word is pleading with you, "Come now to join the journey." Christ calls you to this greater Jerusalem. He shed his blood on the cross to open up the way and on his behalf, on behalf of the people of God, my friend, I invite you to come with us. And for those of you that are in Christ, let us go and give thanks, let us go and give thanks to the one who keeps us, honor him with our commitment to him and to his people, and to honor him with the innermost recesses of our hearts, giving him the praise and the trust that he deserves.

Let's pray together.

Father, we thank You for the greatness of the blessings that are ours in Christ. We thank You for the earthly Jerusalem. Oh, the wonders of Your revelation that took place there. Father, we thank You for the heavenly Jerusalem. How we long to see the glory of that place. How quickly, Father, how immediately the things of this earth will grow strangely dim and be forgotten by the glory that surpasses it all when we see the glory of God, when we see the glory of Christ, when we see Him face-to-face. O God, that is the moment for which we live. That is the time that will make it all worthwhile. And we thank You that it is already an accomplished reality in the eternal purpose and plan of God. So we just ask for the fulfillment of what You have already determined to do, and we pray urgently and earnestly for those souls that are lingering outside the gates, content to live in sin, content to be dead to these great realities. O God, I pray that Your Spirit would come upon them like a thunderclap of glory to confront them with sin, to humble them, to give them new life and to bring them to saving faith in Christ. Father, it takes a supernatural act on Your part for that to happen and we ask for nothing less than that for everyone under the sound of our voice who is still outside of Christ. Bless this, Your

church. Bless these, Your people. Bless Your great and majestic name. For the sake of Jesus, we pray. Amen.

Thanks for listening to Pastor Don Green from Truth Community Church in Cincinnati, Ohio. You can find church information, Don's complete sermon library and other helpful materials at thetruthpulpit.com. This message is copyrighted by Don Green. All rights reserved.