

Your Hand and Your Heart – Reaching Out to God

Psalm 134

Pastor Guy Gray

Psalms for the Spiritual Journey

Psalm 134 is one of the “Songs of Ascents” in the book of Psalms. There are 15 of these Psalms. They begin with Psalm 120 and end with Psalm 134. These Psalms are called “Songs of Ascents,” implying movement, progress and a journey. It is thought that these Psalms were sung by the Israelites each year when they journeyed to Jerusalem to keep the great feasts of Israel. In that case they were literally “going up” to Jerusalem to worship the Lord. However, there is a deeper sense to these Psalms as well. These are the Psalms for all of God’s people throughout the ages who are traveling on a spiritual journey of drawing closer to the Lord in their lives. These are Songs of Ascents for our lives as well. Every believer in Christ should view their life as a journey. It is a journey of faith in which we grow closer to the Lord. It is a journey of transformation in which we become more like Jesus. It is a journey home in which we look forward to our ultimate goal of standing before the Lord—face to face in heaven. These are songs for the “road!” These Psalms give us a way of thinking, believing and worshipping—a way that will always keep us moving forward in our journey.

The Hand is a Symbol of the Heart

There is a simple and beautiful picture given in this Psalm. It is a picture of worship and praise. It is a picture of hands lifted up to the Lord. The picture points beyond itself to something deeper. The hand is a symbol of the heart. The hand lifted up—opened up—reaching out. It is a picture of desire, openness, surrender and offering. The hand is more than just a symbol of the heart though, it represents a whole life. This is the endpoint of all worship. This is the goal. This is the giving of ourselves to God. It is also the posture of receiving from the Lord. We “bless” God by giving ourselves to God in worship, praise and surrender. God blesses us by giving us His presence, His protection, His power and His good gifts. What a great trade!

It’s a Hard Road

The Songs of Ascents begin with trouble. Psalm 120 begins with distress. The act of worship is something we do in faith. We focus our hearts and minds on our ultimate goal—represented by the house of the Lord, the city of God, the sanctuary of God’s presence. In actuality we are still on the road somewhere, still living our lives in the midst of a troubled world. The Psalms of Ascents are songs sung in the midst of trouble, in the midst of the journey. These Psalms help us move forward in our journey with our eyes fixed in hope on the Lord at all times.

So Lift up Your Hands and Lift up Your Heart

Worship is active. Worship involves all that you are—body, soul, spirit, mind and heart. The lifting of hands is a physical act in which your physical body agrees with your words and your thoughts. It is a way of giving yourself to God fully. Kneeling in prayer is the same principle. Sometimes we need to step it up. We need to be more fully engaged. Mind, soul, spirit, heart and congregational worship. We can do this in our personal worship and prayer. We need to do this. Put this into practice this week. Lift up your hands and your heart to the Lord. Wherever you are in your journey, no matter how distressed you may find your life just now or how joyful! Be a worshiper of the Lord. As you do, you will find that God will cause you to move forward in your spiritual journey.

Ideas for Reflection & Discussion

The Physical Side to Prayer

Last week we looked at giving our hearts fully to God as David did at the end of Psalm 139. This week we see that God want us to also raise our hands and offer our hearts and our lives. Sometimes changing our prayer posture or place can help illustrate this more in our time with God. So try something new this week. Use Psalm 139 to begin your prayer time

and then pray with your arms lifted high, kneel down and bow before our great God or go on a prayer walk and devote the entire time to prayer. Try anything that helps you link your prayers with your physical, daily life. Let us know what you experience in this exercise.

The Journey Has Many Turns

Trouble & joy are both a part of life. And our responses to life's ups and downs are the great opportunities to really live out our faith and trust in God. The Psalms give us a place to read about the realities of life while placing all under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. Read a psalm of ascent every day this week and see how the Lord speaks to you through the words of these psalms. Try Psalms 120, 123, 126, 128, 130 or 133.

Coming Up

FRIDAY 8/17

A Night Out...Movie on the Lawn, Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory
8pm-10pm @
RWLG, No Childcare.
Contact Mary Halvorson for details.

SATURDAY 8/18

Ministry Prayer Time
8-9:15am @ RWLG

SUNDAY 8/19 & 8/26

All Church Service. 10am
@ Lakeridge
High School Performing
Arts Center

FRIDAY 8/24

1st Annual Golf Tournament @ Chehalem
Glenn Golf Course
Contact Dave Olson @
678.5444 or
dolson@hawksoftinc.com

SATURDAY 8/25

Jr. High & High School
River Day @ The
Hamiltons. Contact Josh
@ 522.8571 or
Josh@riverwest.org

UPCOMING!

Financial Peace University

A new class is starting in
September! Sign-ups in
the lobby today
For more details,
see Julie Messenger or
call her at 699.2226.

