

Psalms 133-134

1. Introduction

Friend – did the Santiago de Compostelo pilgrimage

Came back a changed man

Friends he met

Opportunity to stop, reflect, consider... even worship.

He is not a Christian – but tapped into something deep in the way we are made – the pilgrimage of life is immensely deepened if it is reflected on.

Immense value for the Israelites

The process of going to Jerusalem was a part of the festival

Reflected on the challenges and lessons of life

Sang together on the road

The Songs of Ascents – a wonderful resource for us.

This series – an introduction to the songs

Finally produced booklet!

Hoping that the summer will be a time of reflection

Life is a pilgrimage

2. Lessons already

☞ *Setting out lessons – Psalms 120-122*

☞ *The narrow road – Psalms 123-125*

☞ *Will we achieve anything? – Psalms 126-128*

☞ *The problem of sin – Psalms 129-131*

☞ *Completing the journey – Psalms 132-134*

Psalm 132 –

David persevered – he swore an oath v2

And we should imitate him – v7

God “persevered” – he swore an oath – v11

- You will reach your destination because God is faithful.

3. Psalm 133 - The blessing of community

Imagine the first night of the festival

Pilgrims gathered from far and wide

Old friends, distant family, shared interests and delights

It is “good and pleasant” v1

Objective goodness

Subjective pleasantness

“melodious” of music.

More: it is a kind of anointing v2

Anointing – setting apart for God, setting apart for a purpose

Note the emphasis on excess – “running down on the beard”

More: it is an anointing for a specific task – priesthood v2b

The privilege of being in the presence of God

The duty of mediating God’s blessing to others

Israel to be a kingdom of priests: their unity anointed them for that purpose.

More: their unity brings fruitfulness and life v3

Dew of mount Hermon – high mountain, flowing streams

The life of Hermon has come to Jerusalem.

- This is our present privilege
 - Fragmented society –
 - John Waite increasing problem of people dying utterly alone
 - “good and pleasant” – to be a community together.
 - Confirms our status as God’s people
 - NT has no concept of the lone Christian
 - Sets us apart as priests

By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (John 13:35)

See, they say, how they love one another, for themselves are animated by mutual hatred; how they are ready even to die for one another. Tertullian Apology

- Makes us a source of life
 - 1 Peter 1 – a list of virtues, culminating in love

For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:8)

- This is why the NT warns so severely about divisiveness
- For me unbelievably good to be a part of this community
- This is our future destiny
 - Innumerable throng – every tribe and nation – united, singing one song! In Rev.
 - Goodness becomes absolute perfection
 - Pleasantness becomes total rapture
 - Anointing becomes overwhelming reality
 - Priesthood – no longer any need to mediate, simply enjoy presence of God
 - Fruitfulness – enjoy resurrection life.

(Isaiah 26:19)

But your dead will live; their bodies will rise.

You who dwell in the dust, wake up and shout for joy.

Your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead.

4. Psalm 134 – The blessing of worship

Preparations for the festival finished

If Passover – lambs slaughtered

Night has fallen – the festival has begun

Pilgrims linger at the temple before going home for their Passover meal, and then to bed

The festival has just begun – but it is night v1

Psalm 134 – pregnant with what is about to happen

They praise – everything is done, now stand in worship v1, v2

They pray – “lift up your hands” – v2

“lift up holy hands in prayer 1 Tim 2:8

They wait for God’s blessing v3

- He will bless you
 - It may be tough – there are many trials on the pilgrim path
 - It may require us to be humbled
 - Jacob – Israel – Jabbok, “I won’t let go until you bless me” Gen 32
 - It may be delayed – “after you have suffered for a little while”

And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. (1 Peter 5:10)

- But he will bless you
 - Eternal day will come – rev 21-22

the darkness is passing and the true light is already shining. (1 John 2:8)

- Resurrection life
- New heaven and new earth
- Perfected community
- ENJOYING THE PRESENCE OF GOD – in the sanctuary.
 - The cubic new Jerusalem