

Worship on the Journey

{the songs of ascent}

God's Faithfulness on the Journey (Psalm 132)

Overview

When we are on a journey, we tend to look forward and anticipate what's ahead. But sometimes, we need to take a look back and remember where we've been. Psalm 132 invites us to look back into Israel's history, so we can move forward with confidence in God's faithfulness. Even when it seems like God's plans might fail, we can always look forward in hope because God never turns back on his promises.

Outline

Introduction

At first glance, this psalm doesn't come across as particularly inspiring or encouraging. In fact, it seems a bit odd. But the historical context of this psalm reminds us that God is always faithful, even when it looks like his plans have failed.

Structure

The key to this psalm is the prayer located right in the middle of it (vv. 8-10). The psalmist makes three requests: he asks God to inhabit his “resting place,” to bless his “priests” and “saints,” and to preserve his “anointed one.” The rest of the psalm gives two reasons why God should answer this prayer: David’s devotion to God (vv. 1-7) and God’s covenant with David (vv. 11-18).

Setting

David wanted to build a house for God, but instead, God promised to build a house for David. One of David’s sons would succeed him as king, and that son would build the temple. And that’s exactly what happened! But then the story gets messy. What do you do when it seems like God’s plans have failed?

Scope

Psalm 132 is not a religious relic of wistful pilgrims in ancient Israel. It is a proclamation that God will fulfill his promises, no matter what the cost. It is a declaration that God's plan is never in jeopardy, because his King is on the throne. Psalm 132 is a call to rejoice in Jesus Christ as the King over all creation.

Significance

As we “worship on the journey,” we do so in the long line of faithful pilgrim-disciples from across the centuries. As they looked forward in faith, we look back on God's faithfulness—and we also look forward to the day when God's Anointed One returns and establishes his kingdom forever.

1. How does reviewing Old Testament history strengthen our hope in God? Consider 1 Corinthians 10:11 and Hebrews 11:39-12:2.
2. How do you respond when God's answer to your prayer is *not yet*? How does Psalm 132 encourage you to pray with hope?
3. What "big, bold prayers for the sake of Jesus" do you need to keep praying, even if it looks like God is not doing anything?
4. Finish this sentence: Believing that God is always faithful to his promises changes the way I...
5. Psalm 132 is a corporate prayer for God to be faithful to his covenant and fulfill his promises. Together with your family or care group, list reasons you can praise God for his faithfulness and promises you can ask God to fulfill because of Jesus.