Guest Preacher - Mr Scott Macleod

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Date: 31 August 2025

Preacher: Mr Scott Macleod

[0:00] I'll turn back to that psalm that we read, Psalm 122. We'll consider the whole psalm.

! We'll read again at verse 1.! Now, I'm not a huge football or rugby fan, but I know when I see a huge amount of people gathering to go and watch a football game or a rugby game, they'll go to the stadium, they'll all be on their different buses, they'll come from all different places across the nation, even across the world sometimes people will gather.
To go and support their team, to go and watch this spectacle. And often as they go, they'll be singing this anthem that they have for their team.
People say it's amazing just to be in the place. And I can say, well, can you not just watch it on telly? Well, it's not the same as being there with the people in the atmosphere.
And we can picture that quite clearly, and maybe we know that from our own experience. Now, this psalm that we're going to look at here this evening, Psalm 122, it's a psalm of ascent, as it states there in the beginning.
[1:37] Now, these psalms of ascent, it goes from 120 to 134. And these psalms are the songs that the people would have sung as they went to Jerusalem, at festival times, at a special occasion, much like just a modern-day comparison of the people going to a football stadium, where they would all gather, coming together with the intention of being in one place, singing this anthem that they have.

And as they would ascend up into Jerusalem, it was elevated from the surrounding ground. It was a difficult climb.
And so they would be singing these songs to one another and with one another as they would go, longing to be there, longing to be with one another.
The shame is that people would rather go and watch football than come to the house of God.
It's the most important thing we can do in this world. It's the greatest thing anyone could do, to come and worship the living God.
[2:58] And to meet together as we are is our great privilege to do so. And it should fill us with joy, being able to come here together to praise God.

And this psalm is written with that excitement, with that desire, with that concern with one another about going to Jerusalem.
Going to the Lord's house. And going to the temple. Being in the surroundings of this city. It's like nowhere else to them.
The temple would be the dwelling place of God. Much like the tabernacle in the Old Testament, the tent that they built. The temple replaced that.
And the dwelling place of God was in his city in Jerusalem. And that's much of the Christian's desire, isn't it? To be near to God.
[4:13] To know God's presence. Even to be with God's people. And you think of Psalm 133 as well.

That's another psalm of ascent which David wrote. And he speaks there. And he says, Behold, he says, listen, how good and how pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity together.
He knows the special privilege that it is. That is his. To come together. To worship God. To know the joy of it in his heart.
That stirs all these emotions as he writes this psalm. It's all about coming to this place.
It's all about being in the Lord's house. That's how he begins. I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord.
[5:16] And he concludes the psalm. For the sake of the house of the Lord our God. It is all about being in the presence of God.

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This is something special and precious to him. So I want us to look at this psalm with that background. It's a song of ascent.
A song they would have all sung. And a song they would have all thought about as they climbed this hill. As they all exercised themselves in striving to get there with one another.
Thinking about the joy of what it will be like when we do. And that's what they had. They had joy in the journey in verse 1 and 2.
And secondly, in verses 3 to 5, we'll see the tribes that are gathered together there. The people of God. And then from verse 6 to 9, we have this prayer that is made for the peace of the people and this place.
[6:26] So you have joy in the journey. The tribes that are gathered together. And it's prayer for peace. Joy in the journey.

Verses 1 to 2. How did you feel getting ready for church this morning? Or even this evening? Did you think, well, I better go.
Are you dragging yourself to come out? Did you maybe feel like it was maybe just the right thing to do? Maybe you were asked to come. Maybe you would have preferred to sit in and watch the football game or the rugby game.
Or did you come with joy and excitement? Did you come with that desire in your heart? Were you thinking about the people that would be there with you as you prepared to come to worship God? Did you remember that it's a special place? That there's nowhere like this that compares with it? Where we intentionally draw near to God.
[7:40] To read his word. To pray together. To meditate upon a passage. It is there.

As Psalm 133 says again. When the people join together in unity. It is there the Lord has commanded this blessing.
Life forevermore. The Lord pours down his blessing on his people as they gather. And he's singing a song about it.
He's filled with joy and going back to that place once more. When he knew that great blessing being with the Lord's people. Remembering and recalling previous times.
When he heard God's word. When he learned about God maybe in a new way. That he had never heard before. And as we said. This emotions of joy.
[8:43] Are coming out in this psalm. But it wasn't just his own joy. It was the joy of those that were with him. That said to him.

Let us go to the house of the Lord. There's a communal gladness and joy in coming together. Let us go to the Lord's house.
Let us go and worship God. They have that communal desire to be there. And he wants.
And they want. Everyone else as it were to come with them. To be with them. Worshipping God. Let us go.
It's their call. And there was joy in those who heard that call. From like minded people. To experience.
[9:44] This precious moment together. You know when we experience something. What leaves an impression on us. We're keen to share it with other people.

It may just be as simple as tasting something new. Have you tasted these things before? Or if you've been somewhere. Or you've watched this event. Have you been there? You should have come with us.
You should have been there with us. You missed out. And we're so quick to say that. About all sorts of other different things. Other than coming to church. We're very hesitant.
To say to one another. Come with me. Let us go together. To the Lord's house. We're not like Philip and Nathaniel. When they found Jesus.
They said come and see. Come and see. When was the last time. You asked someone to come to church. And not just to ask them.
[10:44] To tick your box. As it were. To tick a box. And say I've asked them. It can be a hard place. To come to church. When you don't know what it's like.

And it can be a foreign thing. For a lot of people now. Who didn't grow up going to church. If you were to mark on the calendar. When was the last time.
You said to someone. Come with me to church. Which I think is the best way. To ask someone to come. It's not just to say. I'll see you there. But to tell them.

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Come with me. Let us go. Together. To the house. Of the Lord. People might not know.
What to expect. And often. As we do bring people. We can be. We can be consumed. With the worries. That we have. In our own minds. If we do take someone. And we think.
[11:40] Well. I wonder. Will they. Will they see. What I see. Will they understand. The Bible. As I have understood it. I heard this afternoon. Of someone. That was brought.

And encouraged. To come to church. And the words. Spoke to them. Their eyes. Were open to it. And it. Leaved. A huge impression.
On them. When was the last time. We asked someone. To come with us. And persuaded them. Because. Of the joy.
That was in your heart. Of knowing. What it was like. To be here. Previous experiences. Where the word of God. Has spoken.
And directly. To your circumstances. To the brokenness. Of your heart. Where you realized. For the first time. What it meant.
[12:35] That Jesus died. On the cross. And it changed. Your life. And yet. We're so hesitant. To say. To one another. Come with us.

With gladness. And with joy. As we progress. Through this psalm.
He thinks. About the joy. Not only. In the call. Of going together. But of standing. In the place. In verse 2.
Our feet. Have been standing. Within your gates. O Jerusalem. There's a bit of. Uncertainty. Of how to.
Translate. This verse. Here. We have. Let's say. Our feet. Have been standing. Past tense. NIV.
[13:31] Will translate it. Our feet. Are standing. Present. Present tense. It's happening. And the King James Version. Will translate it. Our feet. Shall stand.

Future tense. So even between. These three popular. Translations. We have. A bit of. Variation. Of how. This is understood. I was glad.
When they said. We let us go. To the house. Of the Lord. Our feet. Shall stand. Within your gates. O Jerusalem. Is the one. I would lean towards.
Because it's a song. Of ascent. It's a song. Of them. Recalling. The joy. Of what it was. To be there. In the presence. Of God. With the Lord's people. And they're singing.
As they're climbing. With the certainty. Of being there. We shall stand. At the gates. Of. Jerusalem. And we can imagine.
[14:28] These pilgrims. Coming to this place. Reaching. And ascending. This hill. Standing. At the gates. Of Jerusalem.

And looking in. And surveying. This beauty. This beauty. Of this city. The desire.
Of his heart. This is the place. Where he's longed to be. This is where his heart. Is filled with joy. And we think.
Well. How is it. That he is so joyful. How is it. That he is so joyful. To be here. What does the first catechism.
Tell us. Man is to defend. Is to glorify God. And to enjoy him forever. He has his joy. In glorifying God. In glorifying God.
[15:26] He has his joy. In coming to worship. His God. His Lord. And his Savior. Special for him. Coming to church.

It's not all about. Knowing about the Bible. It's not all about. Knowing. What the Bible teaches us. It's not all. Head knowledge. But it should.
Be something. That should stir our hearts. Stir our emotions. That we. Go out. And ask people. With great. Persuasion.
I love being there. I desire. To be there. This place. Is like nothing else. I have experienced. When I hear.
The Lord speak. When his word. Becomes alive. Come with me. To this place. That it stirs.
[16:24] That it stirs. Our hearts. And as we come. There's a sense here. That we go on together. We go on.

In our Christian walk. We go on. To the house. Of the Lord. In a greater sense. In a more eternal sense. That we are.
Continuing this great. Ascent. With the great desire. To be in the house. Of the Lord. In the great presence.

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Of our Savior. Come with us. Is that not our desire? For those who are not with us.
Come with us. Come with us. To this place. Come with us. To this secure. Place.
[17:22] This city. Like no other. That is a place. Prepared for us. The great home. Of the believer.

The great longing. And desire. Where they will enter. Into the joy. Of the Lord. In worshiping. And glorifying. His name. It is the heights.
Of our spiritual joy. To be in his presence. But from now. For now. It is as if we stand.
At the gates. We only. Peer. Into the greatness. Of these promises. That are ours. Look at what God.
Has prepared. For his people. To behold. And survey. And survey. These promises. In his word. To sift through them. And wonder at them.
[18:17] And be amazed. At what is being. Built up. And prepared. For his people. We should.

We should be full of joy. To be together. We should be full of joy. To worship God. And to survey. His work.
To survey. His beauty. Even if it is. From afar. One day. We will see it. Within.
The gates. Let us. Go together. Come with us. It's talking to the people. And then he goes on.
To talk about. This. City. And the people. There. Where the tribes. Gather. Together. It's as if.
[19:20] He's standing at the gates. From verse 2. He's looking. Into this city. And he sees. He describes. Almost what he sees.

A city. Built. Bound. Firmly. Together. Or. Compactly. Together. As we may be familiar. With singing. And cities.
In these days. They would have had the great walls. Surrounding them. That would have been their protection. That would have been their security. These walls. That would. Stop the enemy.
From attacking. Or conquering. The city. Enemies. Would have to. Breach the wall. Enemies. Would have to. Overcome the wall. And when it says.
That it is firmly. Built together. This city. It's. It's implying. It's strong. It's robust. It cannot be shaken.
[20:17] As it were. It implies. Even. A unity. Between the people. That are there. The tribes.

Go up. The tribes. Of the Lord. Go through. And again. We tie back. To Psalm 133. 133. Where the brothers. Dwell. In unity.
And he's surveying. In this city. The brothers. That are together. Firmly. And strongly. With the tribes.
Of the Lord. Gather. And it's a beautiful thing. For him to see. Where there's no separations.
Where there's no divisions. You know. The devil. Will do us utmost. To scatter the sheep. To divide.
[21:11] The church. To stop us. From being together. Is it not a beautiful thing.

When the Lord's people. Are together. When they can be. In one mind. And worship. Their God. In one spirit.
To encourage. One another. And to pray. For. One another. Because the truth is. I believe. If we are apart. We are weaker.
You imagine. The devil. As a prowling lion. As the Bible tells. And you picture. That lion. As he will prowl. And survey. The. The. The pack.
Of other animals. That he's prowling on. From a distance. He'll pick out. The one. At a time. He'll separate them. We'll run between them. And separate them.
[22:08] And divide them. And pick off the one. To. To separate them. And make them weaker. And weaker. It's a beautiful thing.

For us to be together. And we should. Desire. In our hearts. To maintain it. Where we can. The tribes of the Lord.
Gather here. It says in verse four. People. That have. The Lord's. Promises. Upon them. They are. Israel. And they gather. They are. As was. Decreed. For Israel. To give thanks. To the name. Of the Lord. And remember. This is festival time.
When they come. To gather. These are the festivals. That have been written. In their law. To remember. What the Lord. Has done for them. In years. Gone by. What the Lord. Did for Israel.
[23:06] In times. Gone past. Statutes. Or decrees. Of their written laws. And so. Their worship. As they come here.

Is. Told to them. And decided. For them. That you come here. And worship God. As decreed. For Israel. To gather together. At these times.

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To give thanks. For what God. Has done. For us. Deuteronomy. He tells us. That three times a year.
You shall. Appear. Before. Place. Where the Lord. Will choose. The feast. Of unleavened bread. Which is a Passover. The feast of wicks. And the feast of booths. They shall not.
Appear. Before the Lord. Empty handed. And every man. Shall give. As he is able. According to the blessing. Of the Lord. Your God.
[24:04] That he has. Given to you. These are the festivals. That they are ascending. To gather for. This is the time. That they come.

With thankfulness. In their hearts. The Lord. Has done this. For Israel. And the tribes. Of Israel. Give thanks. To the name. Of the Lord. They are remembering.
What has been done. For them. Generations. Past. They are remembering. The great work. Of God's salvation. Taking them from Egypt.
Taking them out. Providing for them. In the wilderness. Providing for them. A milk. A land flowing. With milk. And honey. They are remembering.
All this. And they are giving. Thanks to God. With joy. In their hearts. That this is. The king. And their king. King.
[25:01] King. King. He surveys. In this city. Thrones. Of judgment.

Thrones. Of the house. Of David. And I believe. From what I read. That. Temples. Would have. Thrones. Of judgment. Where priests.
Would sit. And people. Would come. To have. Difficult. Cases. Resolved. God. This was part. Of the temple. And the people.
Would be there. The priests. Would be there. And here. He says. He sees. These thrones. Of judgment. Thrones. Which.
Offer. Perfect. Justice. And judgment. And also. The throne. Of the house. Of David. Which.
[25:55] Points. To the kingship. Of Jesus. And his throne. The great. King. The promised. King. Their. King. The prince.

Of peace. That rules. They come. Before. These thrones. With thankfulness. And joy. For what. God. Has done. And do we. Not. Do the same. When we come. To worship. God. Is it not.
A joy. To come. To remember. What God. Has done. For us. His people. That we come. Together. And we recall.
Everything. That he has done. In our lives. Even. People. Who he has sent. To teach us. But we recall. And we go back.
[26:52] To. Not. Just. The great. Salvation. Of the people. Of Egypt. But we go back. To the greatest. Work. Of salvation. Where Jesus. Came. And died.

On the cross. For us. We recall. That. Great. Work. And we come. Every Sunday. Recalling. Not just.
The Jesus. That died. But the Jesus. That has risen. With thankfulness. In our hearts. And joy. Also. Should be. Bursting out of us. Knowing. That if this. Is our king. If this. Is our lord. If he.
Is over. This city. That he. Will give me. Life. That he. Will be my god.
[27:45] And we. Will be his people. That was a promise. That he made. In covenant. To them. That hearts.

Should be abounding. With thankfulness. To the name. Of the lord. For all. That we receive. Through. Christ. Jesus. Our saviour. Is your heart. Thankful. Tonight. Was your heart.
Full of joy. In coming. As you remembered. That Christ. And your king. That took.
Your sin. That paid the price. For them on the cross. That went through. That punishment.
[28:40] Of being nailed there. Of being ridiculed. Of being mocked. Of being spat upon. Clinging to the last breath. That he had.

The shame. Of that place. For you. Does that not instill. Thankfulness. In your heart. It should.
It should. And it should fill us with joy. That he was so willing to do it. For each of us. These are the tribes. That will gather together.
Those who believe. And trust. In the lord. Jesus Christ. And finally. We have this. Prayer of peace. That is made from verse 6. To verse 9. Praying for the peace. Of Jerusalem. May those. Who be there. Secure.
[29:41] May they be secure. Who love you. Peace within your walls. And security. Within your towers. For my brothers. And companions.

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Sake. Peace be within you. For the sake of the house of the lord. I will seek your good. We pray. That this place.
Would be a place. Of peace. When they have. The prince of peace. When peace is on the throne. There is peace in the land.
When there is peace in the land. The people. Have peace. Peace. Isaiah 26. It talks about. A city. That is built. With walls of salvation. Around it. And there he says. Those. I will give my people.
[30:38] Peace. Whose mind is stayed on thee. Perfect peace. Whose mind is stayed on thee. The people. Will have perfect peace. When their mind is stayed.

On their lord. And he sees that this place. Is a place of peace. Because their mind is stayed. On their king.
They behold the beauty. Of the king. Of this place. And they are secure. Within these walls. No breach can come.
And penetrate these walls. There is security. There is security. Within your towers. And he prays. For his brothers. And companions.
To be there with him. And have that same peace. And then it says. For the sake of the house.
[31:39] Of the lord our god. I seek. Your good. Not that good there. It can be translated.

Also as prosperity. I seek your prosperity. It can also be translated. As beautiful. Beautiful. And when you put beautiful in it. It seems to more.
To me. Echo the sentiment of the psalm. Where he is surveying. And desiring to be in this place. He is saying.
I will seek the beauty. Of the house. Of the lord. And it stills within him. That joy. To remember it.
I read a quote. Saying that. Nothing prepares the heart. More for worship. Of the lord. Than to contemplate. His beauty. And perfection. Nothing prepares the heart.
[32:37] More for worship. Of the lord. Than to contemplate. His beauty. And his perfection. And that's what the psalm is to say. He's contemplating.

The beauty. And perfection. Of what the lord. Has done. Recalling what the lord. Has done. Looking at the place. That is prepared. For his people. Oh Jerusalem. Fills his heart.
With worship. To his lord. Coming with joy. It's as if he comes. And it blows him away. With the beauty of the place.
It's wonder. And it's goodness. He wants to come back.
Again. And again. And again. It is his joy. This beauty. Edifies his soul. Every time he comes.
[33:40] Does it edify your soul? To join together. Like we are tonight. Is it a beautiful thing to you. To survey.

The works of God. To think about what he has prepared. For his people. To recall his works. In your life. To think about.
And recall. What Jesus Christ. What Jesus Christ. Has done for you. The greatest of loves. That we have ever seen.
Does it not edify your soul? And instill within you. That praise. To burst out of you.
This is the city. That the psalmist. Longsville. This is the house. That he desires.
[34:39] To be in. To be there. Near. To God. God. But does it not speak of.

As we touched on. The eternal hope. Of the believer. To the greater Jerusalem. The new Jerusalem. That is prepared.
For his people. A place. Where we shall. Surely. Stand. With great confidence. A place.
Where the enemy. Will never. Make us attack. On us. Or penetrate. The walls. Of our salvation. A place.
Where we will behold. Our king. And his beauty. On his throne. And the thrones. Of judgment. Which we will.
[35:40] Perfectly agree with. And it will be a place. Of peace. And security. Where the brothers. And companions.

Will join together. In the house. Of the Lord. And they will behold it. In its beauty. There is joy.
In the journey. There is the tribes. That are gathered together. And there is this prayer. For continued peace. With the people.
Is it your joy. To be here. To be here. Tonight. Is it your joy.
To ask someone. To come. With you. To be with. The people. To taste. And see. That God.

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[36:41] Is good. I suppose. In many ways. Tonight. We're only standing. At the gates. We're seen.

Through our glass. Dimly. We're surveying. These beauties. And precious. Promises. That we have. In Christ. Jesus.
But we long. For it. We long. For the day. Where our feet.
Shall surely. Stand. Within. The gates. Of the new. Jerusalem. There. We shall surely.
Have our. Joy. And our. Joy. Eternal. I pray. These thoughts. To be blessed. To us. Our Lord. And our God.
[37:37] Instill. Within us. A joy. At coming. To your house. At surveying. Your works. In your word. And may they.

Instill. Within us. And fire. Up. Our hearts. Edifying us. As we go. As we strive. On.
That we would know. Your hand. Your hand. Over us. And that we would. Encourage one another. As we do. Let us. Go together. Let us.
Go. To worship. God. And there. We will find. The joy. Of our hearts. Our purpose. In our life. The chief end. Of man. And still.
Within us. Lord. We pray. A rightful. Worship. Of your name. Amen. Amen. We will conclude by. Singing in that psalm.
[38:35] In the Scottish Psalter version of it. You will find it on page 416. 416 I suppose I'd like to say in the morning we consider the weight of the seriousness of hearing Jesus and responding to him and the concern that we should have in that but tonight we're almost taking a different angle and looking at the joy that the believer has in their heart as they trust in their God and they desire him I joyed when to the house of God go up they said to me Jerusalem within thy gates our feet shall stand in peace so we'll stand to sing these words the whole psalm to God's praise

I joyed when to the house of God go up they said to me Jerusalem within thy gates our feet shall stand in me Jerusalem as a city is compactly built together and to the place that drives so up the rights of God go thither to Israel's testimony to God's name to God's name thanks to pay for thrones of judgment in the throat of David's house their state pray the Jerusalem may have peace and felicity let them let them not love thee and thy peace have still prosperity therefore
I wish the peace may still within thy walls remain and ever may thy policies prosperity retain now for my friends and brethren say peace be in thee I'll save and for the hearts of God our Lord I'll seek good away
I'll just conclude with a word of prayer our Lord and our God as we make our journey through life we pray that we would know your joy and blessing in coming to your house that we would know the edifying of our souls that we would joy to be together looking out for one another praying for one another and caring for one another recalling the great works of your salvation may we go out from this place with joy in our hearts and thankfulness for the great blessings that we receive in Christ Jesus Amen Amen Thank you.

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