

Thought for Today: June 23, 2008

Psalm 122 (NASB)

**I was glad when they said to me,
"Let us go to the house of the LORD."
Our feet are standing
Within your gates, O Jerusalem,
Jerusalem, that is built
As a city that is compact together;
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.
For there thrones were set for judgment,
The thrones of the house of David.**

**Pray for the peace of Jerusalem:
"May they prosper who love you.
"May peace be within your walls,
And prosperity within your palaces."
For the sake of my brothers and my friends,
I will now say, "May peace be within you."
For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your good.**

I almost skipped this psalm. After a quick read, my first reaction was that Psalm 122 didn't have much to do with us. Most of us aren't Jewish. We don't have any special affinity for Jerusalem. The temple isn't there anymore. Why not move on and reflect on a psalm that is more meaningful for Christians? But then I read the psalm again and then a third time. Why don't you do the same, and then think about how the psalm speaks to Christians in the 21st century. Two things stand out to me.

In the first section of this psalm, we hear the psalmist's love for Jerusalem—the city of God and His temple. It was the place all good Jews would go for their major festivals each year so that they could sacrifice to God and worship at His temple. Amazingly, God no longer requires that we take pilgrimages to distant lands. Instead, God has brought His temple to us. He has made His dwelling place with us!

The second section of this psalm is a prayer for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem. After all, that was the location of the house of God. But what about today? Where does God reside? As we said, God resides in us—in His church! The church, like Jerusalem, is intended by God to be a shining city on a hill that lights the way for all the nations to return to Him. And so we find ourselves fully in the tradition of this psalmist as we praise God for having constant access to His dwelling place, and as we pray to God for the safety and prosperity of His church so that we can be God's pure house and God's faithful light.

To God be the glory for ever and ever, Amen.
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