

During this next week, join us in reading through Psalm 122:

¹I was glad when they said to me,
“Let us go to the house of the LORD!”
²Our feet have been standing
within your gates, O Jerusalem!
³Jerusalem—built as a city
that is bound firmly together,
⁴to which the tribes go up,
the tribes of the LORD,
as was decreed for Israel,
to give thanks to the name of the LORD.
⁵There thrones for judgment were set,
the thrones of the house of David.
⁶Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!
“May they be secure who love you!
⁷Peace be within your walls
and security within your towers!”
⁸For my brothers and companions' sake
I will say, “Peace be within you!”
⁹For the sake of the house of the LORD our God,
I will seek your good.

(1) In praying through the psalm, begin by reading the text slowly and silently, looking for natural units (what goes together) and where breaks occur (a previous thought stops and a new thought begins). Mark breaks in pencil.

(2) Read the psalm a second time out loud (but softly), waiting for a few seconds after each unit before you continue reading:

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(3) Read the Psalm a third time silently, looking for a key verse which contains a key word (or keywords) or a word-picture that

- also occurs in other verses and
- seems to sum up what the psalm is about.

For example, perhaps in reading through the psalm you stop at v. 6

"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem!

May they be secure who love you!"

and notice that the words in v. 6 "peace" and "secure" are repeated in the verses that follow .

(Verse 7: "peace," "security"; verse 8: "peace").

You also notice that the earlier verses of the psalm lead up to this theme of peace (which is the main theme of the psalm).

- In verses 1-2, the psalmist wants to go up to Jerusalem and wishes he were already there.
- The next verses show why the psalmist wants to be there:
 - It is where God is present to his people and meets them through worship (vv. 3-4)
 - It is where God protects his people through the ruler he has set over them (v.5).
Through this ruler, God makes his people secure and brings them peace.

(4) Read the psalm a fourth time out loud, reading the key verse (v. 6) before each unit. (This keeps the main point of the psalm in front of our minds as we read through the psalm and sometimes creates unexpected connections that we did not notice before.)

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! May they be secure who love you!

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Meditating on Psalm 122

Asking God for peace is an important theme in the Bible.

So is wishing the blessing of peace on others.

- 1 Sam. 25:6: "Peace be to you, and peace be to your house, and peace be to all that you have."
- Psalm 85:8: "Let me hear what God Lord will speak,
for he will speak peace to his people, to his saints;
let them not turn back to foolishness."
- Many of the letters written by the apostles speak peace to the hearers and ask God's blessing upon them (Rom. 15:13; Gal. 6:16; Phil. 4:7; 1 Thess. 1:1; 1 Pet. 1:2; 2 Pet. 1:2).

In the Bible, speaking peace to other people is closely tied to seeking their good (their well-being)--wanting them to be well.

- Esther 10:3: "he sought the well-being of his people and spoke peace to all people."

Questions:

- (1) What does it mean to "speak peace" to other people?
- (2) What is essential to "speak peace"?
 - a. Are there certain things (qualities? standards?) that must be present in our minds and words if we are to "speak peace" in the way that God desires?
 - b. What can make it hard to truly "speak peace" to others?
- (3) If the church has replaced Jerusalem as the place where God's people are gathered, what would it mean to seek the good of the church (see v. 9) by speaking peace to others?

As you think about these questions, be open to what God wants to show you and write this down below.

When you are finished, say this closing prayer:

Lord, you have taught us that whatever we do without love is worth nothing;
Send your Holy Spirit and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of love,
the true bond of peace and of all virtues,
without which whoever lives is counted as dead before you;
Grant this for your only Son, Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.