

CP – 6/16/24

Psalm 123

“Faith is the sight of the inward eye.” - Alexander MacLaren

Psalm 120: looking around at my circumstances

Psalm 121: looking to the hills

Psalm 122: looking to the house of the LORD

Psalm 123: looking to the LORD Himself

1. **The Highest Gaze of Dependence (123:1–2)**

*The tough times God allows do not diminish His character or threaten His rule. (Psalm 120)

*“I lift my eyes” - personal look; “our eyes” - corporate look

*Who do I look to? Who do we look to? Are we confident in our own eyes? Are we wise in our own eyes? Are we strong in our eyes? Are we in control in our eyes?

*I lift my eyes to You because You are on the throne!

- You reign over my troubles (120)
- You reign over the hills (121)
- You reign over Jerusalem (122)
- You reign over the temple (122)
- You reign over heaven and all things! (123)

*The good things God provides are gifts of grace but are no substitute for Him.

(Psalm 121–122)

*God provides us with all things to enjoy (1 Tim 6:17) - our hope not in them though!

*Our hope is not in a building, budget, crowd, committee, man, no one but Him!

*He is the ONE (the only one) enthroned in the Heavens? - “the LORD our God”:

- God specific
- God of revelation
- God of righteousness
- God of judgment
- God of redemption
- God of mercy
- There is no substitute for him!

*Dependence demands us constantly looking to Him above in awe and love.

*Our gaze reveals our dependence.

*“Our father in Heaven” - Kidner: God in the heavens means He is sovereign (Ps 115:3); His faithfulness and ways are high above us (Ps 36:5; Isa 55:9).

*God reigns in the heavens, but He reigns in our hearts! We can go up to Him by faith, but He has already descended to us in Christ and by the Spirit!

2. **The Deepest Prayer for Mercy (123:3–4)** - Our prayers show our dependence.

*We ask because we know our need.

*Prayer arising out of our need; he senses his need for mercy; he senses the need of those around him: mercy - *chanan* - “to be gracious, to have mercy, to take pity, be kind” - lifting up implies humility, that I don’t have it together, that I don’t know it all; that I am in grave need! - like a child looking up and requesting

*We ask because we must be honest.

*Prayer filled with intensity - he feels the depth of his need - fervent - unless God comes through, I (we) am done!

*Are we honest with God? do we try to hide our deepest frustrations and feelings from Him? HE ALREADY KNOWS! (Psalm 62:8; Matthew 6:8)

*“contempt” - deliver us from contempt - “scorn, disdain, disrespect, deprecation, disparagement, denigration, derision, mockery, ridicule; disgust, hatred”

*“Overwhelmed” is from the root “*śāba*,” which means, literally, “eat one’s full, be sated, have enough”

*We ask because we believe He will answer!

- Ps 4:3: “the LORD hears when I call to him”

- 34:17: “When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears and delivers them out of all their troubles”

- 55:17: “Evening and morning and at noon I utter my complaint and moan, and he hears my voice”

- 69:33: “For the LORD hears the needy and does not despise His own people who are prisoners”

- 145:19: “He fulfills the desire of those who fear him; he also hears their cry and saves them.”

- 116:1–2: “I love the LORD, because he has heard my voice and pleas for mercy Because he inclined his ear to me, therefore I will call on him as long as I live.”

***For the unbeliever, there is a great warning! - “ease” - “complacent, secure; insolent, proud.” God sees the unbeliever’s arrogance, observes their self-dependence and self-righteousness, and will ultimately send judgment!

***For the believer, there is a great hope! - Our God sees our trouble, hears our prayer, and sends mercy!

*Acts 5:41 - The early church rejoiced when they experienced contempt.

*Christ can give us mercy! He knows what contempt is. He is the man of sorrows, who is acquainted with grief - His adopted dad passed away. He was betrayed by friends. He was forsaken by the Father on the cross for our salvation. Jesus emphasizes with us! Call on Him!