

Psalm 132 (DHT)

¹ A song of steps. YHWH, remember all of David’s afflictions; ² how he swore an oath to YHWH; he made a vow to the Mighty One of Jacob. ³ I will neither go in the tent of my house, nor go to my bed, ⁴ nor will I give my eyes sleep, nor my eyelids slumber ⁵ until I find YHWH a place, a tabernacle for the Mighty One of Jacob. ⁶ Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of the forest. ⁷ Let us come into his tabernacle; let us bow in worship at his feet.

⁸ Rise YHWH to your permanent-resting-place, you and the ark of your strength. ⁹ Let your priests be clothed with righteousness; your saints sing with joy. ¹⁰ For David your servant’s sake, do not turn your face away from your Messiah.

¹¹ YHWH has sworn an oath to David, from which he will truly not turn, I will set the fruit of your body upon your throne. ¹² If your sons will keep my covenant and my testimony that I will teach to them, then their sons shall sit forever on your throne. ¹³ For YHWH has chosen Zion; he has desired it for his habitation. ¹⁴ This is my permanent-resting-place forever; forever I will settle there, for I desired it. ¹⁵ I will bless-her food; I will satisfy her poor with bread. ¹⁶ I will clothe her priests with salvation; her saints will sing-sing with joy. ¹⁷ I will make the horn of David grow there; I will prepare a lamp for my Messiah. ¹⁸ I will clothe his enemies with shame; but his crown will blossom.

Introduction

One of the most popular idioms through the ages says that “home is where your heart is.” This idiom has been historically traced back to the first century philosopher Pliny the Elder. Over a century ago, in a book defining popular epigrams of the day,¹ this idiom was said to mean that regardless of where one’s physical roof may be or who one’s biological family members may be, the location or possessors of our deepest affections—wherever that may be located or whomever may hold them—that is where and with whom we feel the security and acceptance of home.

Home is where the heart is. Physical structures can be home for some, but for most it is usually what or who is within the structure that makes a home. As Luther Vandross soulfully put it, “a house is not a home when there’s no one there to hold you tight and...kiss goodnight... a house is not a home when the two of us are far apart and one of us has a broken heart... Pretty little darling... I’m not meant to live alone, turn this house into a home when I climb the stairs and turn the key, oh, please be there... still in love with me.”² For Vandross, the chair is meaningless if not occupied by his love; the room is empty if not occupied by both him and his love; his house is meaningless if not occupied by both him and his love. Home is not where you happen to sleep; home is where your heart is. For Vandross, his heart was the one he loved and as such he found his purpose in being with his love; his whole life was prioritized around being with his love.

¹ *A Thousand and One Epigrams* by Elbert Hubbard, 1911.

² “A House is Not a Home” by Luther Vandross, 1981.

Your purpose and priorities in this life flow directly from whatever, whoever, or wherever the deepest affections of your heart are. When the deepest desires of our hearts are satisfied, our emotions are stirred to euphoric bliss and when the deepest desires of our hearts fall out of our grasps our emotions are stirred to misery and affliction, prompting us to strive perhaps in another way to satisfy that unsatisfied thing. After reflecting on Psalm 132, one of the things I believe the Holy Spirit confronts us with is the question I have titled this message: Is God’s Home Where Your Heart Is? It is my conviction that if God’s home is the place that has captured your deepest affections, then as you wander through this wayward world, you will find your purpose and prioritize your life upon God’s home.

Reconstructing Psalm 132:1-10

Psalm 132 begins by recounting the desires of David’s heart; desires relating to God’s dwelling place, namely the tabernacle. This isn’t an abstract place God theoretically dwells. The psalmist calls on God to remember David’s afflictions pertaining to the tabernacle, in which God’s glory dwelt among his people. David is heartbroken because God’s house was not among his people. The presence of God was not with God’s people; it was captured by the Philistines and not in Jerusalem where he belonged.³ Those with David joined him in seeking to bring God’s presence and God’s people back into communion with one another. Verse 7 says they wanted to do this to go to the tabernacle and worship at God’s footstool, the symbol of the messianic priest-king’s sovereign reign over all creation.

David, the man whose heart chased after God, didn’t want God’s presence restored among his people in a mere tent; David wanted to build YHWH a permanent-resting-place.⁴ God’s home was where David’s heart was. The psalmist describes in vss. 1-7 the intent of David and in vss. 8-10, the psalmist calls on YHWH to enter the permanent-resting-place David intended to build for him to clothe his priests with righteousness and to receive their songs of joy. The psalmist recalls the heart-desire of David to call on YHWH to enter his throne-home among his people.

³ I speak more about this in my message, “What Makes a Temple a Temple?”

⁴ For more on the phrase “permanent-resting-place,” see my message, “The Sanctity of God’s Rest.”

2 Samuel 7 and Psalm 132:11-12

To get a clearer picture of Psalm 132, it is helpful to consider 2 Sam. 7. “King [David] said to Nathan the prophet, ‘see now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.’ And Nathan said to the king, ‘Go, do all that is in your heart, for YHWH is with you.’ But that same night the word of YHWH came to Nathan, ‘Go and tell my servant David, ‘Thus says YHWH: Would you build me a house to dwell in?’ ... ‘I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep, that you should be prince over my people Israel and I have been with you wherever you went and have cut off all your enemies from before you... Moreover, YHWH declares to you that YHWH will make you a house. When your days are fulfilled and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son... but my covenant-faithfulness will not depart from him... Your throne shall be established forever’” (2 Sam. 7:2-5, 8-9, 11-16).

In 2 Sam. 7, God’s home is where David’s heart is, and this prompts David to find his purpose in and prioritize establishing God’s throne-home among his people. But while God’s home is where David’s heart is, David needs to align *how* those heart-desires are fleshed out in accord with God’s will. God does not rebuke David for his heart-desire to bring God’s presence among God’s people; God’s point to David is that he has always been with his people. God does not rebuke David for his heart-desire to bring God’s throne among God’s people. God affirms David’s desire for this very thing; but God redirects David’s heart-desire to assure him that his throne *will* in fact be among his people, just not *how* David imagined. David desired to build God a home that was permanent, and while the temple was built by Solomon, it was anything but permanent, for with the help of David’s *unfaithful* descendants, centuries later Babylon would cart away God’s people into exile and destroy this “permanent” resting-place. Meanwhile, Ezekiel tells us God’s glory was found *in* Babylon among his people; God desires to be at home with his faithful people no matter where they may be. A structure does not restrict God’s presence.

David desires to build God a throne-home among his people, and while God rejected David’s *how*, God did not reject the heart-desire of David. Rather, God swore an oath to David to achieve what David’s heart desired, but *how* God wanted to achieve it, not *how* David wanted. The psalmist reminds us in vs. 11 that it was not the oath that flowed from David’s heart that was binding upon God, but rather it was the oath that flowed from God’s heart that was binding upon

David. The psalmist reassures us that whatever God has promised, he will do. What David’s heart desired was for God to rule among his people, without any reference to himself or his line. What God wants is to rule his people *through* the line of David. David’s throne *is* God’s throne. And God promises David that one of his descendants from his own body, who would simultaneously be called Son of David yet also the Son of God, would rule on David’s throne *forever*. The Davidic king would come directly from David’s biology, God would set this Davidic descendant upon David’s throne, that this Davidic king would reign *forever*, and the one condition placed upon this descendant is *perfect faithfulness* to the covenant.⁵ God promised David he would have one *perfectly faithful* descendant who would reign forever as the Son of God. This is God’s throne converging with David’s throne.

When we don’t get our way, especially related to the things that have captured our hearts, it can be easy to get upset. But in 2 Sam. 7, David didn’t seem all that upset about this change. God’s home was where David’s heart was at, but when God revealed his plan to David, it did not cause David to change his mind about where his heart’s deepest affections were, rather God’s revelation to David drew David even deeper into this heart-desire. David was assured that his heart-desire was in alignment with God’s will, just not *how* he thought it would be. David knew that his son Solomon was not the *perfectly faithful* Messiah, for after hearing God’s promise, David declared, “Who am I, O Lord God, and what is my house that you have brought me thus far? And yet, this was a small thing in your eyes, O Lord GOD. You have spoken also of your servant’s house in the *far distant future*, and this is...*for all mankind*, O Lord God! ... Because of your promise, and according to *your own* heart, you have brought about all this greatness, to make your servant know it. Therefore, you are great, O LORD God... For you, O LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have made this revelation to your servant” (2 Sam. 7:18-19, 21-22, 27).

God’s home was where David’s heart was, and when God revealed to David what was in God’s own heart, the purpose and priorities of David shifted, for he then knew *how* God’s throne-home was intended to be among his people, namely by God’s Messiah in the far distant future. It’s not David’s heart-desire that shifted, but rather the *how* that shifted. The psalmist calls on God in vss. 8-10 to enter his throne-home for the sake of the Messiah who God promised David would sit on his throne forever, a Messiah who would come at the end of the age.

⁵ See Deuteronomy 17.

God’s Heart and God’s Home – Psalm 132:13-18

Verse 13 begins with the word *for*, meaning *vss.* 13-18 give us the reason *why* YHWH has made this promise to David. The psalmist gives us a peek into the heart of God. God has promised David a Messiah to reign forever on his throne because YHWH has chosen Zion as his dwelling place. While Zion sometimes refers to the old city of Jerusalem, it is another name for the end-times-related city of God, which Scripture calls the New Jerusalem. Unlike David’s initial plans and unlike Solomon’s temple, Zion, the city of our God actually *is* a permanent-resting-place; Zion is unable to be trampled by the enemies of God’s people or the enemies of God. Not even the gates of Hell will prevail against God’s permanent-resting-place, a place of great blessing and nourishment for the afflicted and oppressed of the world who have found their refuge in the Mighty One of Jacob.

And then in parallel to the psalmist’s call to YHWH in *vss.* 8-10, YHWH declares what he will do when he enters his home at Zion. The psalmist calls on YHWH to enter his permanent-resting-place in *vs.* 8, and in *vs.* 14 YHWH declares he desires Zion to be that permanent-resting-place. The psalmist calls on YHWH to clothe his priests with righteousness in *vs.* 9, and in *vs.* 16 YHWH declares the priests of Zion will be clothed with salvation. To be declared righteous by YHWH is to be saved by YHWH. The psalmist calls on YHWH to let the saints of Zion sing with joy in *vs.* 9, and in *vs.* 16 YHWH declares the saints of Zion will sing song upon song of the solid joys and lasting treasures that none but those who inhabit Zion know. The psalmist calls upon YHWH to not turn his face from the Messiah on account of David in *vs.* 10, and in *vs.* 17 YHWH declares he has prepared the light of the Messiah in fulfillment of his promise to David, using language from Isaiah 11 of the messiah sprouting from the family stump of David. YHWH continues in *vs.* 18 that it is not just his priests, the saints of Zion, who will be clothed, but also the enemies of God’s people—the enemies of God—will be clothed also but clothed with shame. To be clothed with shame is in direct contrast with being clothed with righteousness and salvation; to be clothed with shame is to be clothed with eternal condemnation, destined for the place of fiery-darkness that Isaiah describes as being outside the boundaries of Zion, forever separated from the presence of God. *But*, YHWH continues, *on him*, referring to the one *vs.* 17 calls “my anointed,” or who we would call the Messiah—*But on the Messiah*, will be a crown that...does what? This Hebrew word actually has a double-meaning. The word could mean to shine or to blossom. God’s Messiah is depicted as one sprouting for David...whose crown blossoms, and depicted as one who

possesses the light of YHWH...whose crown shines. I think the word choice is intentional to convey that everything YHWH has promised about his Messiah will happen.

Who is the Messiah Who Will Reign Forever at Zion?

Who is the one *perfectly faithful* descendant David saw in the far-distant future? In Gen. 49:8-12, a descendant of Judah is said to be the ruler of all peoples; his enemies will be his footstool. He will rule forever because he will die for his people.⁶ Only a few verses later Jacob blesses his son Joseph saying that all the best blessings are reversed for Joseph, but that Joseph would receive these blessings by the mediation of the Mighty One of Jacob (vss. 22-26). In Numbers 24, Balaam the Gentile prophesied about what would come in *the last days* (vs. 14), “I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near; a star shall come out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel; [he] shall crush the head of [his enemies] ... One from Jacob shall exercise dominion” (Num. 24:17-19). Who is the Mighty One of Jacob? “The Mighty One of Jacob” is a rare yet significant phrase in the OT. It’s used in Jacob’s blessing in Gen. 49, it’s alluded to in Num. 24, it’s used twice in our psalm this morning, and every other time this phrase is found in Isaiah in direct reference to the future city of Zion. The Mighty One of Jacob is the one who rules on David’s throne forever in Zion. Who is the Mighty One of Jacob?

The psalmist describes the Mighty One of Jacob as God’s Anointed One in fulfillment to his specific promise to David. The Mighty One of Jacob is the Messiah. Psalm 132 and 2 Sam. 7 tell us the Messiah would be a descendant of David from the tribe of Judah. The descendant of David would be male; he would be a son. The descendant of David would be called Son of God, which was a title reserved only for the kings. Importantly, the Messiah would be a *perfectly faithful* descendant of David. The Messianic King from the line of David, from the tribe of Judah, who would die for his people is one who lives and rules in perfect obedience to YHWH.

Only one person in all of history meets the criteria of Scripture and that person is Jesus of Nazareth. We all are naturally sinners against the holy and perfect Creator. We look to his law and in ourselves we see only fault, yet when we look to Jesus we see only faultlessness. Jesus lived the life that you and I fail to live and he willingly gave up himself, taking upon himself the curse reserved for us by suffering and dying to forgive the sins of his people and to show all the world

⁶ For more on this, please see my paper “Gen. 49:8-12 as Source for ‘Royal’ Messianic Theme,” or my message “According to the Scriptures.”

what true love is. Jesus died an innocent man. This is important because in accordance with God’s Word, the only way Jesus could cover the multitude of our sins is if he was our pure and spotless Lamb. Because he was *perfectly faithful*, after suffering and dying, God the Father raised Jesus from the dead, proving the ultimate power of God, proving once and for all that Jesus of Nazareth alone is the Messiah, proving death has not the final word, and giving the hope to all God’s people of our resurrection to come. It is for this reason that after he was raised from the dead, God raised him even further, exalting him into the heavenly throne room where he currently sits, reigns, and intercedes for his people in wait for his earthly return.

The arrival of the Messiah is the Gospel that David declared in 2 Sam. 7 was for not just Israel, but for all humanity; for all sinners. Those who will be at Zion are not just Jews, they are God’s people from all nations who Isaiah tells us will stream up the mountain to the city of Zion to lift up songs of joy to the King who has cleansed his people’s filthy rags; the place crimson robes are made white. The people who will be at Zion are from all the nations, fulfilling God’s promise to Abraham that all the ends of the earth will be blessed with salvation by the one Messiah.

How you respond to who Jesus is and what Jesus has done is the basis on which you will be judged when he returns. Our passage tells us when the Messiah enters the permanent-resting-place of Zion that all humanity will be clothed; we will either forfeit our own righteousness to be clothed with the grace of Messiah’s righteousness or we will pridefully cling to our own perceived goodness and be clothed with the shame of everlasting separation from all that is actually good. What is your response to who Jesus is and what Jesus has done? Some of you may have been hurt by the church or by Christians in your past. Your eternal salvation is not contingent upon how you respond to what sinful followers of Jesus have done to you; your eternal salvation is contingent upon how you respond to who Jesus is and what Jesus has done. Period. Scripture commands all people everywhere must turn from their sins, believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, and submit your life to the Lordship of Jesus. If you have never done this, delay no further; forfeit your own righteousness at the foot of the cross where Jesus’ blood will wash you clean. If you have already done this, then do it again; these are forever tasks in the Christian life. As long as we continue to sin, we continue to need to repent, believe, and submit.

Is God’s Home Where Your Heart Is?

Is God’s home where *your* heart is? There is a common misconception in the larger church ethos that the goal of the Christian life is to go to heaven. But that’s not the goal of the Christian life. Heaven is not our permanent-resting-place, because heaven is not God’s permanent-resting-place. The images of the end of days from Isaiah and Ezekiel, and the end of Revelation do not depict the consummation of all of “this” as us going to heaven. Rather than us going to heaven, it is heaven that comes down to the new earth as the New Jerusalem, the city of Zion. Heaven is the place of in-between, not a miserable waiting place like purgatory. Rather, heaven is the place Jesus currently reigns in waiting for his eternal *earthly* reign. Heaven is a place of union with God, a place of everlasting song, and yet a place where more is still to come. Heaven is not some ethereal abstract idea where we get our wings and fly away; it’s where God’s people who die in Christ are temporarily apart from the body, but present with the Lord.

When you become a Christian, Jesus sends the Holy Spirit upon you who dwells inside of you as a down payment of what a life in total union with God will be like in the age to come; a foretaste of glory divine. While in heaven these believers who have died are in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ. Yet, heaven is also the waiting area for all believers who have died until they are reunited with their restored body in the age to come when heaven *and earth* are finally one. That doesn’t mean heaven is the ultimate end. Zion the New Jerusalem—a real, earthy, future place—is the permanent-resting-place of God from which Jesus will reign forever, having crushed the head of every enemy that came his way, the last of which death itself.

Even though he did not fully understand its depths, God’s home was where David’s heart was, and this meant David found his earthly purpose in relation to God’s eternal presence. David’s priorities flowed from his heart-desire to be in God’s presence. We don’t get a detailed itinerary of our eternal existence in Zion the New Jerusalem on the New Earth, but one thing Scripture is clear about is that God’s presence will finally be among his people in the fullest and most unrestrained way. Even more than going to heaven and even more than having our sins forgiven, the grandest of Gospel-gifts is that we get to live in perfect, peaceful, and total union with God.

Church family, is God’s home where your heart is? Are you seeking fulfillment and purpose from the things of the world around you or from the things of the world to come. Are your priorities aligned with the whims of our age or are they aligned with the age to come. This is a challenging question that requires much self-reflection and prayer between you and God. Is God’s

home where your heart is? Spend some time this week and pray for God to specifically reveal areas of your life that are out of alignment with your eternal hope in Christ so that we may deny those things, pick up our cross, and follow Christ on the road of suffering, death, and resurrection.

Is God’s home where your heart is? If God’s home is where your heart is, then you will find your ultimate purpose here and now not in what is happening in the world around us but rather in what will happen in the world to come. If God’s home is where your heart is, then your priorities in life will revolve around that future reality, practicing the things we will do for all eternity. One of things we will do in our eternal home is sing with joy. The Church has been blessed with creatives who write songs that help us understand and grasp and love the depths of who God is and what he has done for us. One of those such people is the blind hymnwriter Fanny Crosby, who died 108 years ago today. Fanny Crosby wrote an estimated 9,000 hymns in her nearly 95 years of life; songs that transcend theological differences evidenced by the fact that the hundred or so songs of hers that remain widely sung today are published in the hymnals of nearly every denomination in the English speaking world. Three of the songs we’ve already sung and still one more we will sing this morning were written by Fanny Crosby. Songs have a way of bringing us back to that ultimate priority of where and to whom our heart ultimately belongs.

Two weeks ago, most of the young adults and high school students took a spontaneous trip to visit Arlene to sing a half dozen or so hymns with her. I asked if we could start with Robert Lowry’s hymn first published 150 years ago, “I Need Thee Every Hour,” to which she promptly responded, “Oh boy, do I, a hundred times over!”

I need thee every hour, most gracious Lord; no tender voice like thine can peace afford;
I need thee every hour, stay near to me; temptations lose their power when nigh art thee;
I need thee every hour, in joy or pain; come quickly and abide, or life is vain;
I need thee every hour, teach my thy will; and thy rich promises in me fulfill;
I need thee, O I need thee; every hour I need thee. Bless me O my savior, I come to thee.
“Could we start with ‘I Need Thee Every Hour’?” “Oh boy, do I, a hundred times over!”

As our time with Arlene came to a close that day, we prayed and read Psalm 23 with her. The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul. He leads me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for you, Lord, are with me; your rod and your staff comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the

presence of my enemies, you anoint my head with oil, my cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of LORD forever, to which Arlene faintly whispered, “Yes I will, amen.”

Church family, our hearts are heavy at the news of Arlene’s death on Friday morning. It is good and right to mourn, but let our mourning and tears be flavored by gladness of heart, knowing that like Christ her savior, death is not the end of Arlene’s story. Let our mourning and tears be flavored by gladness of heart knowing that she is at home with her gentle Savior who did not pass her by, for even in her final days on this earth she unhesitatingly acknowledged that she needed Christ her Lord alone and simply desired to be with him. Let our mourning and tears be flavored with gladness of heart, for we know that God’s home was where Arlene’s heart was, so we know where Arlene’s home is now, and we know what Arlene is doing right now—she is among the multitude of saints with whom she shares matching choir robes; clothed with the righteousness and salvation of Jesus her Messiah, singing boldly about the goodness, the greatness, and the glory of God. Church family, is God’s home *also* where your heart is?

Let’s pray.