

[7 : 41] So you know what? To do so, why don't we hang God together. It's just like you're just lord of God.

Let's turn now to God's Word, the psalm that we sang, Psalm 132.

A Song of Ascents.

Let us go to his dwelling place. Let us worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, and come to your resting place here in the ark of your might. May your priests be clothed with righteousness. May your saints sing for joy.

For the sake of David, your servant, do not reject your anointed one. The Lord swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke. One of your own descendants I will place on your throne.

[9 : 19] If your sons keep my covenant and the statutes I teach them, then their sons shall sit on your throne forever and ever. For the Lord has chosen Zion. He has desired it for his dwelling.

This is my resting place forever and ever. Here I will sit enthroned, for I have desired it. I will bless her with abundant provisions. Her poor will I satisfy with food.

I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall ever sing for joy. Here I will make a horn grow for David, and set up a lamp for my anointed one.

I will clothe his enemies with shame, but the crown on his head shall be resplendent. We'll pray as we turn back to God's word.

Lord God, we thank you once more for this, your word. Lord, we thank you for this psalm which we have sung and which we have read, and which we now turn to meditate upon.

[10 : 22] And we ask, Lord, for the help of the Holy Spirit in all that we seek to do. We acknowledge, Lord, that without the Holy Spirit's help, we are not able to see or hear or understand or respond.

And so, Lord, we pray that the Holy Spirit himself would be our teacher. We ask that our hearts would burn within us as we consider the truth of your word. And we ask, Lord, that you would open our eyes and our ears, that we might see Jesus.

What we pray for ourselves here in this gathering, we pray for all congregations who gather around us in the island, across the nation, and across all nations.

We thank you that we are part of the worldwide church of Jesus Christ. And we ask, Lord, that today there would be many people, both here and across the world, who would come to faith in Jesus.

We pray also for the YF as they prepare to meet on Zoom in just a while. We pray for those who lead them. We thank you for them. And we ask, Lord, that you would speak through them, Lord, in the words that they say and in the lives that they live.

[11 : 37] And for these young ones who are growing up in a world that is so confused, we pray that the clarity of Scripture would have an impact on each of their lives.

And we pray that these young ones would remember their Creator and come to trust Christ as Saviour in the days of their youth. So hear our prayers and help us, Lord, as we turn to you.

And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. I want to begin this evening, as we look at this psalm, by asking the question, What are you and I willing to endure hardship over?

The psalm begins with that line, O Lord, remember David and all the hardships he endured.

What are we willing to endure hardship over? Or what is it that keeps us out of our beds? What is it that keeps us from our sleep because of the great zeal and interest that we have in it?

[12 : 46] I mean, it might be our work or even our homework. Work can be difficult. It can be costly. It can be demanding.

But if you're someone who has great ambition and drive, you're willing to bear the cost. You're willing to put in the hours, burn the midnight oil even, to get what needs to be done done.

Or it might be a competition that you've signed up for. Like the cycling challenge that Anish did in the last few weeks. It involves, I expect, getting out of bed a few hours earlier in the morning, going out cycling when it's dark and when it's cold.

But when there's an ambition and a zeal, we persevere. Or it could be something as trivial as a box set or a good book that keeps us from our sleep.

We're so engrossed in the story that at 2 a.m. we don't want to put it down. We're still gripped by it. Psalm 132 is a psalm where we see David, the psalmist.

[13 : 58] He's not the author of the psalm, I don't think, but he's the subject of the first part of the psalm. And as we find David as the psalm begins, we note here that he is not sleeping.

He's barely in the house. He's enduring hardship because of this drive, this zeal that seems to consume him. And that's our first point this evening.

It takes us from verse 1 down to verse 5. We see here the drive of David. O Lord, remember David and all the hardships he endured.

He swore an oath to the Lord and made a vow to the mighty one of Jacob. I will not enter my house or go to my bed. I will not allow sleep.

I will allow no sleep to my eyes, no slumber to my eyelids till I find a place for the Lord. A dwelling for the mighty one of Jacob.

[15:01] So we see there, we hear in these words, this drive that David has. And likely this looks back to the early part of David's reign as king.

If you want some context, you can flick between 2 Samuel and the psalm. 2 Samuel 5 is the point where we see David anointed as king. We see David as the newly anointed king, conquering Jerusalem, defeating the Philistines, the enemies of God.

And all seems to be going well. But David, as king, he's not happy. He's not settled in his royal palace.

He is conscious that although he has a royal palace to dwell in, he's conscious that God does not have a place to dwell in.

And David's desire was a desire to build a house for the Lord. We see that in 2 Samuel 6. We see it also in 1 Kings.

[16:10] And chapter 8. Solomon, David's son, is speaking about his father. And Solomon said in 1 Kings 8, verses 17 and following, he says, David had a desire.

He had a drive to build for God's glory. That was what was within his heart. We have an expression of that in the early part of this psalm.

And God, as he looked into the heart of David, he saw that drive, that desire that was in David's heart. And God was pleased to see that. And David himself, although he wasn't the one who would do the building, David must have been pleased to know that Solomon, his son, would be engaged in the work of building for God's glory.

So we see the drive of David. That drive for seeing God's name glorified. And I want to ask that question of you and I at this point in application.

Do we share that desire, that drive for God's glory? Is that something that consumes us in the way that it consumed David?

[18:06] And is this our greatest desire for our children? Not that they ace their exams. Not that they do well for themselves in this world.

But rather that they do well for Jesus' sake. They glorify Jesus. They do well for eternity. David's desire was that God would be glorified.

And that's what drove him to want to build this place for the Lord. This temple for the Lord. The question that we must ask as a follow-on question here is, well, if God doesn't have a temple to dwell in at the point that David comes to the throne, where is it that God dwelt?

And in David's day, God's dwelling place was in the Ark of the Covenant. So we ask the next question. Well, where was the Ark of the Covenant as David came to the throne as king?

And that was a good question that nobody knew the answer to. See, during Saul's reign as king, the Ark of the Covenant had been captured.

[19:27] You can read about that in 1 Samuel 4. It was captured by the Philistines. But when the Philistines began to find that they were in all kinds of trouble because of this Ark that they had captured, they very quickly wanted to return the Ark to Israel, the place where it should be.

And so the Ark was returned to Israel. It was returned to Saul. But he never bothered to bring the Ark back to Jerusalem.

Kidna, the commentator, says the Ark stayed in the obscurity of Kiriath-Jarim, which is the place alluded to in the names Ephrathah and Jar.

And so it seems that for 20 years of Saul's reign, the Ark of God was neglected. It was almost forgotten.

No attempt was made to bring the Ark back to the capital. God's place, which should have been at the centre of his people in Jerusalem, was not thought about.

[20:45] The things of God were just not a priority. And God's people just didn't seem to care that much.

They just got on with their lives. Apart from God. But David, as he came to the throne, he cared. He cared that God was not being given his right place. He cared that the Ark was nowhere to be seen. This very much bothered David. He lost sleep over it.

He wanted to see this situation changed. He wanted God to be given the rightful place that was his due. Because David's desire, his drive, was for God's glory.

And so what about you and I? Let's ask the question of ourselves again. Do we have that desire? Do we have that drive for God's glory? Does it bother us when God is not given his proper place?

[21 : 59] Does God have his proper place in our land today? Well, no. Far from it. Does God have his proper place in our hearts?

Do we seek first God's kingdom as a matter of the greatest priority? Well, if we're honest, very often we have to answer that question by saying no.

And if that's the reality that we see in our hearts, that's not something we should be okay with as we carry on with our lives as Israel did. That's something that should disturb us.

It should convict us. It should keep us up at night. If we're not seeking first God's kingdom, his glory, but we're pursuing our own self-interest before we think about the things of God, that should bother us.

Now, I think, if we're honest, it doesn't bother us as much as it should. So I think we need to be asking God to touch our hearts and to give us more of this drive and zeal that we see in David.

[23 : 17] So there's the drive of David. That's point number one. The second thing we come to hear is the determination of David. You know, it's one thing to say that we have drive and ambition.

That's an easy thing to say. But if it's real, it will show. A boxer may say, I have ambitions to be the heavyweight champion of the world.

And if he does, well, we would want to say to that boxer, well, you better get training. If that's your ambition, to be at the top, you better get training. I might say, well, I have great ambition to lose some weight.

Well, if I have ambition to lose some weight, I better put that extra piece of cake down. If we have drive, if we have ambition, it will show in the way that we live and the things that we determine to do.

Now, David here, he makes a vow, a vow that's driven by this desire for God to be worshipped and to have his rightful place in Israel. But at the time of making the vow, that's not the way things were.

[24 : 32] The ark of God, as we said, it was missing from Jerusalem. The location of the ark was unknown. So David determined to search for the ark of God until he finds it.

And so in verse 6, we see that this search begins. Verse 6, We, that's David and his men, heard it. That's the location of the ark. We heard it was in Ephrathah. We came upon it, that's the ark, in the fields of Jar, which was another name for Kiriath Jarrah.

See, the determination in David is not just to be content to remain in that bad situation, but he wants to act in a way that will bring glory to God.

James Montgomery Boyce says, The location of the ark seems to have been forgotten during the reign of Saul when it was at Kiriath Jarrah. And it was only found there later in David's day after a time of serious searching.

[25 : 41] So from verse 6 onwards, we see, we hear David engaged in this serious search. He says to his men, Let's go out.

We've heard about it. Let's go out and find this ark. And then when David finds the ark of the covenant, he says to his men, Verse 7, Let us go to his dwelling place.

That's the place, the tent that David had prepared for the ark in Jerusalem. Let us worship at his footstool. Arise, O Lord, and come to your resting place, you and the ark of your might.

May your priests be clothed with righteousness. May your saints sing for joy. And maybe in these verses, in verse 7, we should underline these words.

Let us go, says David. Let us worship. There's great determination. There's great activity in these words.

[26 : 43] David is determined he will not let things carry on the sorry way that they had been.

Rather, he is determined to lead his people to repent of their sinful wanderings and to put God first.

And a true drive for God's glory will always lead to that determination to go out and do things which will cause God to be worshipped.

And so here we find David, the king, not sitting back in his palace enjoying the high life, but he's going out with his men to bring back the ark so that the Lord will be worshipped and given his right place.

We can read about that in 2 Samuel 6. I'll read from verse 1 to 5. You can follow if you want. We're given the picture, the description of how David went out and took the ark back to Jerusalem.

2 Samuel 6 verse 1. David again brought together out of Israel chosen men, 30,000 in all. He and all his men set out from Bala of Judah to bring up from there the ark of God which is called by the name, the name of the Lord Almighty who is enthroned between the cherubim that are on the ark. [28 : 14] They set the ark on a new cart and brought it from the house of Abinadab which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the new cart with the ark on it and Ahio was walking in front of it.

David and the whole house of Israel were celebrating with all their might before the Lord with songs and with harps, lyres, tambourines, cistrums and cymbals.

So we have this real graphic picture of the celebrations as the ark of God is taken from the obscurity of where it had been lost and brought back to the centre.

And you might ask the question, why is this ark so significant when we know that it was a very simple structure in some ways.

It was a rectangular box. It was made of acacia wood. It was about four foot by two and a half foot by two and a half foot.

[29 : 24] It was just a box. It had been made to God's specification but it was in real terms just a rectangular wooden box.

So why go to such great lengths to bring it back? Why is there such exuberant rejoicing as they took the ark back to Jerusalem?

Why is this so important? And the answer to the question is because the ark was the symbol of God's presence.

Now David knew, he wrote Psalm 139, he knew that God was everywhere. But this ark, it represented, it symbolised the special presence of God.

One of the commentators said it served as the symbol of the divine presence guiding his people. So there was great significance in the ark because of the sense of God's presence that went with the ark.

[30 : 31] And this ark also was of great significance because this was the place where the sacrifice for sin was made every year. On the day of atonement, the high priest brought the blood of sacrifice and sprinkled it over the ark of the covenant.

So it was central to that act of atonement, that sacrifice of atonement. And yet it seems that for 20 years, the people of God lived without that sacrifice for sin being made.

And it seems not to have faced them. They seem almost not to have noticed. Now we think if we apply this for a moment, we think that if God moved away from us, we would notice. notice. We think that if we lost the presence of God, we would know and we would be alarmed by that.

But the reality that we see in this psalm is that often we don't notice when we lose the presence of God. God. There can be a gradual moving away from the special presence of God that leaves us just preoccupied with getting on with the details of our mundane lives.

[32 : 13] God's people, they seemed not to notice that God, in terms of a special presence, was absent. God's people here seemed not to notice that their sin accounts with God were getting longer and longer and longer and they weren't seeking forgiveness, they weren't seeking atonement.

And today in the UK, if we try to apply this at the national level, if we ask the question, is God present in our education, in our schools as he once was, the answer to the question is emphatically, no he's not.

There's people who are watching tonight, who met with God at school, as the Bible was read, as the catechisms were taught, as pilgrims progressed, the story was told to them, they met with God.

That's not happening today. Is God's word present in hospitals? Well, very often no. I remember hunting for a Bible one day in a ward, it wasn't here, and I was told very abruptly all Bibles have been removed, health and safety.

Couldn't find a Bible anywhere. Is God's word present in politics? Is the presence of God acknowledged in politics?

[33 : 50] Absolutely not. Many of us have been just longing for the first minister in these days of pandemic to speak, to acknowledge the fact that there is a God that we should be looking to.

And yet there's briefing after briefing after briefing and there is no word, there is no mention, there is no thought of God. God. We don't see God present in politics, we don't see God present often in hospitals, we don't see God present in schools, when once we did so clearly.

And perhaps the most searching question of all is, is God present in the church? A.W. Tozer wrote, if the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95% of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference.

If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 90% of what they did would stop and everybody would know the difference.

the disturbing reality is that God can be absent. And we may, like Israel, did for 20 years, we may not even notice.

[35 : 30] But David noticed. And David had the drive and he had the determination to want to do something about that.

To lead his people in repentance and seeking to return to the Lord. Tim Keller writes, David wants God near at whatever cost in order to know God's blessing in his heart.

And the text tells us that it cost David much suffering, much hardship to establish God's house in Jerusalem. We too, says Keller, should pay any price to get near God, remembering the one who took a vow like David's and bore the infinite cost to come near to us.

Hebrews 10, 5-10, the focus there is on Jesus. Well, for a closer walk with God, we often sing. nearer, my God, to thee. Nearer to thee. That's the drive that should be within our hearts. The drive that was in David's heart.

[36 : 48] He was driven by a desire for God's glory. We see the determination of David as he acts to pursue God's glory and to know God's presence.

And then in verse 10, there's this brief prayer. For the sake of David, your servant, do not reject your anointed one.

And then as the psalm comes towards a conclusion, we hear the response of God to this prayer. As he promises not to reject David, but to bring blessing through the descendants of David.

That's our third and that's our final point. We have the drive of David, we have the determination of David, and now as God responds to this drive and determination that's seen in David, we have this promise of blessing through the descendants of David.

Sometimes we talk about a response of disproportionate force. You know, one nation fires a shot, another nation responds with a torpedo.

[37 : 58] It's an act of disproportionate force, we see. And here it seems to me that God's response to David, both in David's heart and in his determination, God's response to David is a response of disproportionate grace.

David is driven by this desire for God's glory. He's determined to do something for God, so he takes the ark back to Jerusalem. He swears an oath to the Lord.

He wants to build a house for the Lord. And God in response takes that word house and applies it back to David.

Sometimes when we talk about a house, we're talking about a building. You know, other times when we're talking about a house, we're talking about a family name.

We talk about the house of the McDonald's or the house of the McLeod's. We're talking about a household, a family, a people. The word can mean both things. It can mean the structure or it can mean the family.

[39 : 03] And David vows that he will build a structure, this physical house for God, a temple. But God in response vows to David that he will build his household.

He will bring blessing through the descendants of David. And the blessings that God promises are far in excess of anything that David could ever have expected.

Verse 11, the Lord swore an oath to David, a sure oath that he will not revoke one of your own descendants. I will place on your throne if your sons keep my covenant and the statutes I teach them.

Then their sons will sit on your throne forever. That's God's promise. His vow to David. If you want a fuller version of that promise, go to 2 Samuel chapter 7.

We'll just read it out to you. God's promise to David. After the king was settled in his palace and the Lord had given him rest from all his enemies around him, he said to Nathan the prophet, here I am, says David, living in a palace of Seer while the ark of God remains in a tent.

[40 : 20] Nathan replied to the king, whatever you have on your mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you. That night the word of the Lord came to Nathan, saying, go and tell my servant David, this is what the Lord says, are you the one to build me a house to dwell in?

I have not dwelt in a house from the day I brought the Israelites up out of Egypt to this day. I have been moving from place to place with a tent as my dwelling. wherever I have moved with all the Israelites, did I ever say to any of their rulers, whom I commanded to shepherd my people Israel, why have you not built me a house of cedar?

Now then, tell my servant David, this is what the Lord Almighty says, I took you from the pasture and from following the flock to be ruler over my people Israel.

I have been with you wherever you have gone and I have cut off all your enemies from before you. Now I will make your name great like the names of the greatest men of the earth and I will provide a place for my people Israel and will plant them so that they can have a home of their own and no longer be disturbed.

Wicked people will not oppress them anymore as they did at the beginning and have done ever since the time I appointed leaders over my people Israel.

[41 : 45] I will also give you rest from all your enemies. The Lord declares to you what the Lord himself will establish, a house for you.

When your days are over and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you who will come from your own body and I will establish his kingdom.

He is the one who will build a house for my name and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with the rod of men, with floggings inflicted by men, but my love will never be taken away from him as I took it away from Saul whom I removed from before you.

Your house, says the Lord to David, your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me. Your throne will be established forever.

That was God's promise to David. His promise of blessing through the descendants of David.

[43 : 00] And who is it that we see in this promise? Who is this promised one of God? Whose throne and kingdom will endure not for a short period but forever?

Well, it's the throne, it's the reign, it's the kingdom of Jesus. Montgomery Boyce says there are two levels of promise here.

The first being a promise to the heirs of David that they would not cease to occupy the throne of David as long as they keep God's covenant and statutes. The second is the promise of the divine Messiah who alone would perform all the requirements of the law and rule forever.

So that was God's promise, that promise of blessing through the house, through the family, through the descendants of David. And if we were to go to Matthew 1, we see the detail of that as God's promise to David is fulfilled because in Matthew 1 we have that family line of David.

It says David was the father of Solomon. His mother had been Uriah's wife. Solomon the father of Rehoboam. Rehoboam the father of Abijah. Abijah the father of Asa.

[44 : 23] Asa the father of Jehoshaphat. And all the way down we trace David's family line all the way down through the years. We see all these names in all these places.

And then as it comes to verse 16 in Matthew 1 it says there and Jacob was the father of Joseph the husband of Mary of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

So God's promise to David is Jesus. the blessing would come through Jesus.

David wanted to build a house. It was a noble desire. And the house that was built not by David but Solomon it spoke in whispers of the glory of God.

But Jesus the one to whom the temple points he is the one in whom the fullness of God's glory is revealed. The ark that David took back to Jerusalem it was a symbol it was a sign of the special presence of God but it was a sign that pointed to Jesus.

[45 : 46] Think about John chapter 1 verse 14 it says the word Jesus became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory the glory of the one and only.

The ark spoke of the atonement for sin that the high priest sought on behalf of the people but our great high priest who made atonement for sin once and for all is Jesus.

Jesus Jesus was the one who became a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God that he might make atonement for the sins of the people.

That's Hebrews 2:17. So God's promise to David was Jesus. As the psalm comes to a conclusion verse 13 to verse 18 we see Jesus over and over again.

The blessing that God promises in these closing verses is blessing that comes in and through Jesus.

[47:05] The satisfaction that we crave would be delivered only in and through Jesus. The salvation that we read of in this final section that we need it comes through Jesus.

The horn which symbolizes power points to Jesus that the lamp that the light of the world is Jesus the anointed one is Jesus.

So says Kidner this psalm which began with hardships and grim determination ends with the glory which is their proper aim and outcome the victory and the radiance of the promised king that king being king Jesus.

So let me finish simply by saying look in faith to him let us make him our vision and let us seek to live out our lives here with that drive and determination to give him all the glory Amen yea yea yea are my vision O Lord of my heart not beyond Interior Hear me sing on the Lord.

Thy life is not my day or my night. Make me not sleep in thy presence alive.

[49:09] Be thou my wisdom, be thou my true heart. I am ever with thee and thou with me, Lord.

Thou my great Father and I thy true Son. Thou with me, loving, and I with thee one.

Be thou my battle, shield sword for my fight. Be thou my dignity, thou my delight.

Thou my soul, shelter thou my high tower. Raise thou me, O power of my power.

Wishes I yield, O Lord's empty grace. Thou mine in heaven stands now and always.

[50:22] Thou love, thou only, first in thy heart. High King of heaven, my treasure the light.

High King of heaven, my victory won. May I reach heaven's joy so bright as sun.

Heart of my own heart, whatever before. Still be my vision, O ruler of all.

Amen. Amen. And now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit be with us all, both now and forevermore.

Amen.