

King David had a love for Jerusalem that expressed itself in joy, in an understanding of Jerusalem's divine function, and in prayer for Jerusalem. It was in the Tabernacle and later the Temple that God revealed His presence and it was upon Jerusalem that the Lord said He would put His name forever (1 Kings 11:13, 32, 36). Under King David's rule, Jerusalem became the political and religious center of the nation. We live in a different time and a different age, but God has also chosen to dwell by His Spirit among us in a temple not made with hands and we can learn from this psalm how better to focus on this presence of God with us.

I. *The focus of King David: He loves the city of Jerusalem.*

1. *His joy in being present in Jerusalem (122:1–2).*

In King David's time it was the tabernacle (also called the house of the Lord, cf. Josh 6:24) where God had chosen to reveal His presence on earth. David rejoiced with all those who joined together in appearing before the presence of God.

2. *His appreciation for the purpose of Jerusalem (122:3–5).*

- a. **Unity:** Jerusalem brought the nation together. Both physically and socially Jerusalem compacted the nation's people together. Three times a year all adult males were to gather in Jerusalem, bringing them together before the Lord.
- b. **Praise and thanksgiving:** Jerusalem was the central religious location. The required annual feasts were times of thanksgiving (and joy, cf. Deut. 16:14–15).
- c. **Judgment:** Jerusalem functioned as the civic capital, the center for justice. The "thrones of the house of David" implied not only administering justice, but also alludes to God's covenant with David (2 Sam 7:16) and His messianic promises (cf. Psalm 110:1–2).

3. *His desire for the peace and prosperity of Jerusalem (122:6–9).*

- a. King David desired peace (*shalom*, vv. 6, 7, 8, especially internal peace), rest for those who loved and visited Jerusalem (vv. 6, 7 "security" NIV), and her "good" (v. 9, "prosperity" NIV). Peace follows logically from "thrones" and justice, also in messianic thinking (cf. Isa 9:6–7).
- b. David's love for Jerusalem extended to the family and friends which the city drew to her, and especially for His God who deserved pure, hearty worship.

II. *The focus of the Christian: the Christian loves the community of the redeemed*

1. *What is the equivalent for the believer today?*

- a. Believers today have no required geographic place of worship (John 4:20–24) and no lasting city on earth (Hebr 13:14).
- b. Instead of in a physical building, God has revealed Himself in His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:14) and now resides on earth in the Body of Christ, the Church (1 Cor 3:16–17). A person's actions toward the church are actions toward Christ Himself (cf. Acts 9:5). God is present in the community of those whom He has redeemed by the blood of Jesus (Eph 2:22; cf. 1 Cor 14:25).
- c. Even God judgment is to be found in the Church, first and ultimately in Christ its Head (cf. Hebr 2:8; Phil 3:20), and then among believers themselves (1 Cor 6:1–4; 11:31), who do so by His Word (Ephesians 6:17; Hebrews 4:12). The Body gathers to hear God's Word proclaimed and have it touch our hearts (2 Tim 4:2) and to speak it to one another to build each other up (Eph 4:29).

The corresponding focus of the Christian's love is Christ and His Body, those redeemed by God.

2. *How then do we live out this psalm?*

- a. There should be a joy in coming together when we focus first on Christ, then on others (cf. Phil 2:12; Eph 4:29), and lastly ourselves.
- b. Appreciate in the church God's intent of unity (Eph 4:3; Acts 4:32; Phil 2:2) which grows as we submit to Christ and His Word (cf. Eph 4:11–16; Acts 2:42; Phil 2:5–8); His intent for praise and thanksgiving (cf. Acts 2:42; 1 Cor 10:16; 1 Tim 2:1); and His intent for judgment (1 Cor 5:3–5; 6:1–5; 2 Tim 4:2).
- c. Pray for and pursue peace and the well-being of the community of the redeemed (Rom 14:19; Hebr 12:14; Mark 9:50; 1 Pet 3:1).

Admitting our imperfections, we should still strive to be what we should be, all along looking forward to our ultimate gathering together in the presence of the Lord Jesus in the heavenly Jerusalem (Hebr 12:22). It must begin with belonging to God's people. Our efforts improve as our minds are renewed and our lives transformed by God's Spirit through His Word.

For further reflection: How do you, should or could you show you love for the community of the redeemed? Why is it important? What hinders you from helping other believers to grow spiritually and/or from being helped? How can you pursue true, God-given peace within the community of believers?