

Bethel

Prayer Meeting Addresses

Number 52

Love to the House of God

Reading: Psalm 122

1 I was glad when they said unto me,
Let us go into the house of the Lord.
2 Our feet shall stand within thy gates,
O Jerusalem.
3 Jerusalem is builded as a city that is
compact together:
4 Whither the tribes go up, the tribes of
the Lord, unto the testimony of Israel, to
give thanks unto the name of the Lord.
5 For there are set thrones of judgment,

the thrones of the house of David.

6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they
shall prosper that love thee.

7 Peace be within thy walls, and
prosperity within thy palaces.

8 For my brethren and companions'
sakes, I will now say, Peace be within
thee.

9 Because of the house of the Lord our
God I will seek thy good.

Address

This little Psalm is entirely concerning the house of God, our love for the house of God, our desires for the house of God. I trust we meet this evening in the spirit of this Psalm: "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord." Of course, we read here of all the tribes of Israel being gathered together. It must have been a majestic sight. And they were gathered to give thanks unto the name of the Lord, and surely we are gathered together this evening to give thanks to the name of the Lord. We have so many mercies here at Bethel, outwardly, inwardly, in so many ways. We would never be complacent and we must ever be kept from pride, but yet, "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord" for maintaining our lot, blessing His Word, bringing some of you to that resting point of faith. So like the tribes of Israel, we go up to give thanks unto the name of the Lord.

But the Psalmist seemed so concerned about seeking the good – that is his expression – seeking the good of the house of the Lord. You enquire here, Well, what does it mean? How do we seek the good of the house of the Lord? And the answer is simple: Pray. We have it here, verse 6: "Pray." And that is what

we have met for: to pray for the house of the Lord. But the second question is what to pray for. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” There is a wonderful promise: “They shall prosper that love thee.” There is a blessed promise to those who seek the welfare of the people of God, the good of the house of God. As we sang yesterday morning,

“The man that seeks thy peace,
And wishes thy increase,
A thousand blessings on him rest.”

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” I take it that this word *peace*, so often in Scripture means a little bit more than what we think of by peace. The Jews even today when they meet, they wish one another peace, and really they mean prosperity, happiness, every blessing. So, “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” That is, “Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.” May we pray for real prosperity to the honour and glory of God and that the Lord Jesus might see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied; that sinners might be born again, see their danger, fleeing for refuge to Jesus, finding the Saviour, being blessed with that top stone of gospel liberty and sweet assurance, finding a resting place, being able to testify of it to the honour and glory of His name.

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.... Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.” Yet there does seem something attractive in this: praying for the blessing of peace. Well, there is peace between the members, dwelling together in peace. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!” “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem,” that it might be undisturbed, uninterrupted, that Satan might be kept out. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” O but pray that the Prince of Peace might often be found here, favouring us with His presence, making Himself known, just as surely as when on the resurrection day the Prince of Peace stood in their midst and He showed His wounded hands and feet and side, and they were “glad, when they saw the Lord,” and so we would be. And He said, “Peace be unto you.”

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.... Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.” Pray for God’s blessing on the glorious gospel of peace, as it proclaims,

“Peace procured by blood divine;
Cancelled all thy sins and mine.”

Now pray for the gospel of peace.

“Peace be within thy walls, and prosperity within thy palaces.” Pray that we might know that peace of conscience, that sweet, sacred peace made by the blood of His cross, that peace-speaking blood. Pray that you might know it for yourselves. Pray that others might know it. “Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.” Pray that that peace might be known when there is anxiety and disappointment and bereavement and sickness and trials and afflictions. Pray for yourself and for one another that we might know this peace of God that passeth all understanding to keep our hearts and minds through Jesus. Pray for it.

“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” O pray that this peace might be made known in our midst and in our hearts, and may there be those special occasions when, as on the Sea of Galilee He who is the Prince of Peace shall arise and still the stormy wind and the waves and with a voice of authority say, “Peace, be still.” And may there be that “great calm.”

“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem.”

This address was given at Bethel Chapel, Luton, by Mr. B. A. Ramsbottom, on Monday, 14th June, 2010

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Peace by His cross has Jesus made;
The church's everlasting Head
O'er hell and sin has victory won,
And, with a shout, to glory gone.

When o'er thy head the billows roll,
And shades of sin obscure thy soul;
When thou canst no deliverance see,
Yet still this Man thy Peace shall be.

In tribulation's thorny maze,
Or on the mount of sovereign grace,
Or in the fire, or through the sea,
This glorious Man thy Peace shall be.

Yea, when thy eye of faith is dim,
Rest thou on Jesus, sink or swim,
And at His footstool bow the knee,
For Israel's God thy Peace shall be.

J. Kent