

# Psalm 134: The Pilgrim's Blessing

## Background:

- Track 15 – Last Track of the Songs
- Pilgrimage that started in **Ps 120** ends here, in the house of the Lord, with the pilgrims blessing the Lord and a prayer for the Lord to bless them.
  - A few minutes ago, in **132:7** the pilgrims proclaimed *“Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool!”*
  - Now, in **134** the pilgrims have arrived – to worship and receive their Lord's blessing!
- See the simple beauty of this short, 3 verse psalm:
  1. **Vv. 1-2**
    - **Call to Worship** (“Bless the Lord”)
    - **Exhortation** to gather and worship the Lord
  2. **V. 3**
    - **Prayer for Blessing** (“May the Lord bless you”)
    - **Invocation** to receive the blessing of the Lord

## 1. The Call to Worship: Come and Bless the Lord! (134:1-2)

*<sup>1</sup> Come, bless the LORD, all you servants of the LORD, who stand by night in the house of the LORD! <sup>2</sup> Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the LORD!*

### a. **V.1: What - Come and bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord!**

- **God's servants are called to worship.**
- **Who are these “servants?”** Commentators split on this: Many say it's addressed to the priests and Levites who worked in the temple (**1 Chron. 23, 9:33, etc.**), but others believe it's addressed more generally to the whole assembly of God's children (servants, pilgrims) called to gather for worship, standing and raising their hands in praise to God. Either could be true.
- **Application:** In any case, as Christians we should understand that this also applies to us. As his servants, we should worship our Lord, not just for an hour or so once a week, but day and night—all the time.
- **Key Questions:**
  1. **What does it mean to “bless the Lord?”** What is God-focused worship?
  2. **Why worship?** Why should we worship God and why is it good that God commands and expects it?

### 1. **What is worship? What does it mean to “bless the Lord?”**

- **Generally: Webster's Dictionary, 1828:** *“Worship is to honor with extravagant love and extreme submission.”*
- **Biblical, Christian: Piper:** *“All worship is an act of honoring God. That does not mean making God honorable. We don't improve upon God in the least when we worship him. Honoring God means recognizing his honor, feeling the worth of it, and ascribing it to him in all the ways appropriate to his character.”*
- **Psalm 96:6–8:** *“Honor and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.”*
- **This is what it means to worship, to “bless the Lord:”** Honor Him above all, above everything and everyone else, and ascribe to Him the glory due Him.

### 2. **Why worship? Why should we worship God and why is He just and holy and good and loving to command and expect it?**

- **Bill Maher:** “Let's face it; God has a big ego problem. Why do we always have to worship him?”
- **3 Answers (there are more):**
  1. **He commanded it. He said so!** Exodus 34:14: “*You shall worship no other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*” God rightly demands and expects that we worship him only. We are commanded over and over again in Scripture not to worship other gods, not to have idols.
  2. **He is worthy!** Rev 4:11: *Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, [why?] for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.*”
  3. **It completes/consummates our enjoyment of Him.**
    - **C.S. Lewis** struggled with this before he became a Christian and as read the Psalms. He resisted the notion that God should expect for people to praise Him. But after becoming a Christian it all made sense and deepened his faith and love of Christ. “**My whole, more general, difficulty about the praise of God depended on my absurdly denying to us...what we delight to do, what indeed we can't help doing, about everything else we value. I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation.**” (*Reflections on the Psalms*)
    - **Piper:** “Here is the end of the matter: God is the one being in the universe for whom self-exaltation is not the act of a needy ego, but an act of infinite giving. The reason God seeks our praise is not because He won't be fully God until He gets it, but that we won't be happy until we give it. This is not arrogance. This is grace. This is not egomania. This is love.”
- **Application:**
  - **Worship should be God-centered, gospel-saturated, and Jesus glorifying.** It's about Him, who He is and what He has done and will do. God—Jesus—is the hero of the Bible and should be the object on our worship! Worship isn't about us or our goodness or performance, but rather about God, who He is and his goodness. He is worthy of our praise!
  - FAR too much what is today called worship is **lowly**, focusing on us: what we need and want. But authentic, God-glorifying worship should not be lowly, but lofty, focusing on Him: his character and his work. If it's primarily about us—what we want and think we deserve, or someone or something else, it's idolatry. I'm not saying hymns and songs should never reflect our thoughts and feelings. They should – like the Psalms do. They should be a **response to God and his work and a plea to God to fulfill his covenant promises. Worship, above all else, should put God above all else.**
  - **Ultimately, we should worship nothing else and no one other than Him.**
    - **Augustine:** “**Man's chief work is the praise of the Lord.**”
    - **Westminster Shorter Catechism:** **The chief end of man is “to glorify God, and enjoy him forever.”**
- **Believers:** How would you answer the question: “What's your life's most important work?”
- **Unbeliever:** What/who are you worshipping? What/who is above God in your heart and life?

#### b. **V.2: How - Lift up Your Hands and Bless the Lord!**

- Call to worship - with **submissive passion**
- In the OT it was common practice to lift your hands in worship. This is not new!
  - Raising your hands says something. **(And it's not that Jesus scored a touchdown!)**
  - **It represents adoration, dependence, and submission.**
  - “**This act signified a looking to God, a reaching up [an appeal] to the Lord for help. It represented the upward focus of their praise and prayer, a symbolic gesture of a teachable spirit and submissive will.**”
- As **V. 1** tells us, worship should be God-centered and it should happen day and night, but **V. 2** tells us more. **Worship should involve the whole person. We are to worship with everything we are, in grateful, prayerful, and pleading submission to our glorious God.**

- [Romans 12:1b](#): *Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.*

## 2. The Prayer for Blessing: Receive the Blessing of the Lord! (134:3)

<sup>3</sup> *May the LORD bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth!*

- Blessing/benediction spoken by the priests over God's people, possibly before they departed the temple for their homes throughout the region.
- Similar to Aaron's Blessing in [Numbers 6](#): <sup>24</sup> *The LORD bless you and keep you;* <sup>25</sup> *the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;* <sup>26</sup> *the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.*
- **What does it mean for God to bless man (people)?** [Kidner](#): *"To bless God is to acknowledge gratefully what He is; but to bless man, God must make of him what he is not, and give him what he has not."*
- **How is this possible? How does God make of us what we are not and give us what we have not?** [Psalm 134](#) tells us, or at least points us to the answer, when it says *"from Zion."*
- [Hebrews 12](#) speaks about a true Mount Zion, where Jesus, the Mediator of a new covenant, brings blessing and "speaks a better word" through his shed blood.
- [Hebrews 12:22-24, 28-29](#): <sup>22</sup> *But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly,* <sup>23</sup> *to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect,* <sup>24</sup> *to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.*  
<sup>28</sup> *Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe,* <sup>29</sup> *for our "God is a consuming fire."*
- **Believer:** [Psalm 134](#) and texts like this from [Hebrews](#) should remind us that our blessing is from Zion, and his name is Jesus. And in Him we have full reconciliation, forgiveness and everlasting life. And like the priests of [v. 3](#) we should likewise pray for and tell the good news to those that have not received this ultimate blessing from the Lord. **May we plead to God, creator of the heavens and earth, through Christ, to bless those who are far off, to bless those alienated from the household of God, to bless those pilgrims who are lost and with no purpose. May He bless them as He has blessed us in Christ.**
- **Unbeliever:** As [Heb. 12:25](#) also says, please do not refuse him who speaks to you. Please do not refuse the words and work of the One (Jesus) who came to rescue you. **May you receive his blessing. May you receive Christ as Savior.**

### Conclusion

1. **Come and Worship the Lord!** Worship him alone, in spirit and truth, with everything you are, and ascribe to Him the honor and glory He for which He is worthy.
2. **Receive the Blessing of the Lord.** Enjoy and proclaim, now and for eternity, the blessing of the Lord: salvation, redemption, reconciliation, and eternal life in the glorious, blissful presence of God.

[Ps. 150](#): <sup>1</sup> *Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens!* <sup>2</sup> *Praise him for his mighty deeds; praise him according to his excellent greatness!* <sup>3</sup> *Praise him with trumpet sound; praise him with lute and harp!* <sup>4</sup> *Praise him with tambourine and dance; praise him with strings and pipe!* <sup>5</sup> *Praise him with sounding cymbals; praise him with loud clashing cymbals!* <sup>6</sup> *Let everything that has breath praise the LORD! Praise the LORD!*