



Fellow ICMC Travelers,

¹ I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from?

² My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth.

—Psalm 121:1-2

Psalms 120 - 134 are considered by scholars to be the “Songs of Ascent”. These songs of hope and celebration were sung by God’s people as they made their three annual journeys to up to the temple mount of Jerusalem for Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. As fellow travelers sang they reflected on themes of rescue, reconciliation and return to God. As we collectively “lift our eyes to the (Rocky) mountains” this summer for the annual ICMC we want to capture the same spirit of joyful, visionary pilgrimage! Leading up to and through the conference we have provided you with short, inspirational quiet times from these Psalms. Seven campus leaders from throughout the Western United States have shared their lives, insights and convictions to help us “ascend” to a weekend that will no doubt have eternal implications for us all.

Enjoy these times along with your fellow travelers as you prepare for this year’s US West Coast International Campus Ministry Conference in Estes Park, Colorado.

May God bless your journey to the mountain top! And may the vision you gain there call you “Higher” than ever before!

In Him,

Chris Clawson, Campus Minister

University of Colorado, Boulder

Day 1 – July 17, 2011

Psalm 120

by Shane Engel

Significant Themes

We are ascending toward the temple of God. Psalm 120 starts off with the psalmist crying to God out of deep distress with a faithful mindset that God will surely answer. We get a sense that the distress comes from two main areas; the battle against reining the tongue and living in the world of the ungodly “tents of Kedar and Meshech”. It seems as though this psalm would be appropriate for a Jewish person to sing as one begins his journey out of his everyday world on towards the temple. Consider this psalm as we journey towards the ICMC. One of the toughest things to do in leaving the world behind is deciding to leave the cruel edge that our tongues can be. The world around us will do whatever and say whatever to “get the advantage”, without realizing there is no advantage without our GOD.

Practical Application

1. Why do you think this Psalm is appropriate to sing first?
2. What power do your words have? (Consider the good and evil our words are capable of)
3. What similarities do you see here with the scriptures in James 3:1-8 on taming the tongue?
4. The Psalm ends in an interesting way. “When I speak they are for war.” Why do you think that this psalm ends in this way?

This psalm begins where we all should begin, calling out to God. We are all familiar with distress, stress anxiety and worry. The bible teaches us to not worry but the way to do that is by crying out to God.

This is best summed up in, “I cried out and He heard”.

1. Start your ICMC journey by crying out to God.
2. Are there areas in your life you need to get totally honest with yourself and/or others?
3. Make your decision to leave behind the “tents of Kedar” and prepare your mind for a life changing experience at the ICMC 2011.

Prayer

Father,

Help me as I journey onward and upward towards you in preparation for the ICMC. Save me from my own tongue, bitter lies and foolish talk. Lord, bring me to complete honesty so that I can know you and be a light in this world despite the severe darkness that fills it. Thank you for calling me out and wanting me to ascend closer to you. May your name be exalted, may there be peace, and allow me to fight the spiritual war you have called me to.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Day 2 – July 18, 2011

Psalm 121

by Shane Engel

Significant Themes

God provides us with incredible strength. Psalm 121 is an amazing passage of encouragement, reassurance and comfort. It shows God's divine protection and His presence in nature. Whenever hills are around, one can be reminded that God has the power to fold them together with the tips of His fingers. As pilgrims our God protects our feet from slipping. A pilgrim who walked toward the temple sometimes encountered treacherous terrain. God promises to keep His people stable and upright "both now and forevermore." And even though travelers sometimes journeyed after dark, God would never stop watching out for his worshippers. We are His own and He wants us to be with Him.

Practical Application

1. V. 1-2 speaks of looking to God for strength. How does God display His strength through creation? How does God strengthen you? Where are the places you like to be with God to be strengthened?
2. What does it mean to you that God doesn't need sleep? How are we different from God?
3. What feelings do v. 5 bring to your mind, knowing that God is watching over you, keeping you from harm?
4. Why do you think Jewish believers sang this Psalm on their way towards the temple?
5. How can you use this Psalm to get closer to God? What areas of life do you need help in right now? (Faithfulness to God, righteousness, purity, discipline in School, self control at home). Write it down and ask God for help.
6. God wants to reveal Himself to you through nature. Visit a spot where you can connect to God and let Him comfort you through this Psalm.

This Psalm is a great reminder to acknowledge the presence of God. He is always at watch; He is the best and greatest shepherd. He understands and knows his people. He created us.

Prayer

God,

I thank you for the comfort that you provide me. Your nature is a constant reminder that you love me and made everything so that I can see your strength. Thank you for your constant watch and for allowing me to call on your name no matter what hour. Although challenges are around me you can keep me traveling on the path with comfort and strength that you provide. Grant me the strength to overcome, keep my head looking up at your hills and help me to follow you with all my heart.

In Jesus' name, Amen!

Day 3 – July 19, 2011

Psalm 122

by Chris Swartzberger

Significant Themes

Excitement to worship is something to be desired. There have been times where I have approached worship service with less than an excited attitude (even times where I had a bad attitude). David on the other hand exudes excitement to worship God. His “heart leaps for joy” at the opportunity.

The attitude of worship here is centered on gratitude for what God has provided – the city of worship – Jerusalem. A well built city of worship, a place to gather as God’s people, a city of thanksgiving and righteousness (v. 3-5) – this is what Jerusalem meant to the ascending Jews. We too should base our attitudes not on how we feel but on how much God has provided – grace, the Bible, the Church, conferences and retreats!

With all that God has provided shouldn't our hearts be leaping even higher than David – after all God has provided through Jesus!

We need peace to worship wholeheartedly. Anytime you get a group of people gathered together there is potential that sin can destroy the occasion. I remember one Easter that my actions ruined the celebration. My brother and I refused to let up on our fighting – against my mother’s requests for peace. By the time that the arguing became physical the joy of the day was lost. Without peace within the people there is no celebration and worship.

The only thing that can destroy our worship and unity is us – the ascending people. We need a sense of peace. Praying for peace in our worship and in our fellowship allows God to be more clearly seen. I don't worship well with grudges, attitudes, sin or anger. We need God to grant peace in our hearts to clear the way for pure worship together.

This psalm should guide us to be concerned with the bigger picture. Our attitude of worship should be in response to God’s gracious gifts and should be guided by the peace He provides. God has given us great gifts to lead our hearts to leap for joy and worship wholeheartedly together!

Prayer

Father,

We earnestly praise you for what you have built in your Church. God we are overjoyed to worship in your presence.

Lord, make Estes Park like Jerusalem; fill it with your presence. Bring peace upon all who enter it so that we can worship you with all our hearts. Let us enter its gates rejoicing in this chance to worship together. Lord, I specifically ask that you would bring peace in my life so that I can fully appreciate you and that my heart may leap for joy as I come into your presence.

Amen

Day 4 – July 20, 2011

Psalm 123

by Chris Swartzberger

Significant Themes

The focus of the people as they journeyed to Jerusalem was on God. Their long journey was a sobering time to fervently seek God's mercy, favor and grace in their life. We need to understand our position – we are children who are totally dependent on our Father.

Like the servant our eyes need to be fixed on our Master ready for his will, like a trusting child waiting in eager anticipation for the answers we seek. Only someone who is dependent and submissive can request God's favor with the confidence shown by the psalmist (v. 3-4)

We become dependent when we scorn sin and the ways of this world. The people singing this psalm must have related to the final verse – "We've had more than enough contempt (v. 3 Holman Translation). We can really have the dependence on God and eagerly look to Him to provide when we have had enough exposure to the world. When the rules of the world are unfair and call for taking advantage of people we can cheat along with them or endure the challenges waiting eagerly upon God

There is something about a long road trip that provides clarity and deep thought. Living 280 miles from home during college, my drive home after a semester was long and lonely. But it gave me great time to think and see things clearly.

I remember returning to college after my grandfather died. I had many feelings and attitudes towards God. I decided to leave at 4 am on Sunday morning to make the long journey to worship with my brothers and sisters. As I drove at sunrise and the dawn awoken I gained clarity. As I climbed the hills on the journey my heart turned from grieving to worship; scorn to praise – I was seeing my God clearly and began depending not on my power but on Him. I arrived at worship the most grateful and worshipful person in the whole building!

Practical Application

Where are our eyes focused? Where are you looking for comfort favor and relief? Is it in things of this world or in the Creator and Sustainer of this world? The psalmist conveys an emotion of need, dependence and urgency to see God work. This time of ascension gave the Jews a clear focus on God – to look to Him and plead to see his favor, mercy and grace. How can we take this approach as we ascend toward Estes Park to worship?

Prayer

Lord,

I lift my eyes away from the things of this world like _____. I want to be a humble slave who looks to the hands of my master, you my God, to provide. My anxious heart longs for mercy, grace or favor in _____.

Lord, I cannot stand the ways of this world any longer – I long to see your hand work not my own. I want to have a mountain top experience where I see your favor and respond with zeal and eagerness to serve you my King.

Amen

Day 5 – July 21, 2011

Psalm 124

by Marty Wilkinson

Significant Themes – “Vantage Point”

David wrote of the Lord’s deliverance. He acknowledges that without “our help [the name of the Lord]”, we would have been and would be swallowed alive.

Reflect on your deliverance – *“If the LORD had not been on our side.”* As you ascend up a mountain, when you reach higher ground you are able to look backward and see the trail that took you to this place. You see foothills and the creek you forded. You recall how scared you were to cross the running water. You can see the places where you stopped to rest, thinking that you couldn’t take one more step. You see places where you got on the wrong trail and where you corrected your course. There were places along the journey you thought the incline was too hard and you wanted to quit. Now you are on higher ground and you have a vantage point where you can see the journey that you took up the mountain. Our spiritual walk is much like climbing a mountain. Often the Lord brings us to “scenic overlooks” where we should stop and reflect on the deliverance. Today can be such a vantage point, where we can stop and look at the journey. Consider what David asked, where would I be “if the Lord had not been on my side?” Stop and reflect for a moment on your journey. Do you remember enduring the pain of persecution? Do you recall the hopeless tears shed when you were enslaved to sin? Remember the pain of continuing to deny self day after day? There were days you wanted to quit, days you took the wrong path and turning points where the Lord delivered you again and again. From this vantage point we need to reflect on the Lord’s deliverance.

Reminded of your Deliverer – *“Our help is . . . the Maker of heaven and earth.”* When we don’t stop at these vantage points in our lives we can forget who delivered us. Sometimes Satan can tempt us with this faithless, proud idea “I would be a good person without God; my life would be alright without God.” We can believe the lie that by my own strength and goodness I’ve been delivered. The truth is we would be swallowed alive, engulfed, swept over, swept away, torn apart and enslaved. God is our ever-present source of help and without Him we would never escape. Praise God for his deliverance.

Prayer

God,

Thank you for being on my side. My life would have been and will be destroyed without you. Please help me to consider all the ways you have delivered me. Help me to approach you with gratitude and praise. You are my deliverer, only through you have I escaped. Today I pray that I can reflect on my deliverance and acknowledge that you alone are my deliverer.

Amen

Day 6 – July 22, 2011

Psalm 125

by Marty Wilkinson

Significant Themes – “Security”

The faithful will be immovable because they put their trust in God. He will only allow tests the faithful can handle. But the faithless will be banished by the Lord with those who do evil.

Security. As a college student both men and women struggle with feeling safe, secure and at peace. The transition from adolescence to adulthood can produce insecurities. College students are facing adult challenges with the experience of a child. We get insecure about: our future, job, romance, feelings of inadequacy, looks, fears, feeling insignificant, unwanted, etc. We often put our trust in our abilities, others opinions of us, our performance, etc. And when we don't reach the desired level of performance or praise and appreciation we feel insecure, troubled and in danger of being hurt, hurting others or failing. The Psalmist describes faithful people as secure as a solid rock; an unmovable object that endures forever. He gives reasons why we should trust in the Lord; the Lord is surrounding his people. In John 10 Jesus says that his sheep are in His hands and that no one can snatch them out of His hands. He goes on to say that no one can snatch the sheep out of His father's hand. We can be secure Jesus is surrounding us. No one can snatch us from His hands.

The Psalmist goes on to describe how God won't give you a trial you cannot endure. Imagine if a professor tailored every test you took to your ability to pass. That's exactly what God does; we can be secure that God will not give us anything we cannot pass. The Psalmist offers a request for prosperity then warns of the danger of those who don't put their trust in the Lord they will turn to crooked ways and be banished by the Lord. The danger of being insecure is you put your trust in something other than God and pursue things outside of his will. Let's heed the warning and put our trust and security in God. Then peace will be upon God's people.

Prayer

God,

I pray that my trust and security will be in you alone. I long to be secure and at peace in my heart. Help me to surrender to you all of my fears and anxious thoughts. Thank you for surrounding me like the mountains and holding me in your hands. I am so grateful that you have never and will never give me anything that I can't handle.

Amen

Day 7 – July 23, 2011

Psalm 126

by Thomas Thang

Significant Themes

1. God is able to restore life & renew joy in us is beyond our understanding.
2. Although you may feel hopeless and sorrowful in times of distress, God will bring about a time of joy to comfort you.
3. God can bring about good from any tragedy in your life.

Practical Application

Matthew 5:4 *“Blessed are those who mourn for they will be comforted.”* In moments when you are feeling Godly sorrow from the sins you have committed and seem distant from God remember all of the great things that God has done for you. Draw from the times that God has always fulfilled his promises to you and to his people. What are the great things in your life? How has He restored your fortunes?

The sorrow felt by the disciples as Jesus was nailed to the cross, transformed into joy & jubilation when they witnessed His resurrection. One must be cut to the heart before one can experience being restored to the joy of salvation.

Prayer

My Father,

I rejoice! When I think of all of the great things you have done for me. I think of all of the blessings that I have experienced in my walk with you. It restores my faith and helps me to feel like I can dream again. You've been there when I was overwhelmed with sorrow & pain and you've seen the tears I've cried because of my sin. You have always been such a great comfort to me when I'm mourning. Comfort me now, God, as I patiently wait for you to return I know that there will be nothing but joy awaiting those who find faith & hope in your Son's death, burial, and resurrection. When that time comes I will return singing songs of joy.

Amen

Day 8 – July 24, 2011

Psalm 127

by Thomas Thang

Significant Themes

1. Plans are empty & meaningless without God's involvement.
2. Life is more peaceful for those whom God loves.
3. God loves those who rely on Him and He will defend their cause no matter what happens.

Practical Application

1. Remind yourself that God is the reason why you do all you do.
2. Remember that it is God who will allow you to have success in all you do.
3. Make sure that you are keeping God in mind when you are at work or school.
4. Make God the purpose for whatever you are doing.
5. God will be able to use you and make you more effective the more you rely on Him for all you do.

Prayer

God,

You are the center of my life and all that I do. I pray that I can be more and more dependent on you for everything that my hands are entrusted with. I know that you will be faithful to me for all that you promise me as long as my trust is in you. Please do not allow my strength to be reliant on myself because I know that my plans and efforts will be futile. You truly are the reason for my life and all that I do!

Amen

Day 9 – July 25, 2011

Psalm 128

by Tim Schmidt

Significant Themes – “Blessed are all who fear the Lord, who walk in his ways”

In Psalm 128 we see the outcome of living our lives in reverent fear of God. We see some of the benefits of walking in his ways. Our lives will be blessed if we do. For the Israelites, life was in many ways much simpler than it is for us. Family played such a huge role in their existence. Much of Psalm 128 focuses on blessings to the family; the prosperity of a fruitful wife, strong sons and even grandchildren are promised. What does it mean to be “blessed”? The word “blessed” is sometimes viewed as some sort of lofty theological verbiage. In Young’s Literal Translation (YLT), blessed is translated as “happy”. Re-read Psalm 128 with this in mind. True happiness comes from the Lord. True happiness comes from a fear of the Lord. God knows that when we walk in his ways we will be truly happy. When we walk apart from God happiness is temporary if found at all.

Practical Application

As students, perhaps children and grandchildren are not on the forefront of your mind, although many are beginning to think about the “wife” (or husband) mentioned in psalm 128. It is so important to understand verse 2. “You will eat the fruit of your labor”. The way you live now will have long lasting effects on your life. If you build your life on God’s word now you will reap a prosperous harvest later.

Questions:

1. Do I fear God?
2. Am I being careful to walk in his ways?
3. Am I seeking my happiness from the Lord?
4. Do I understand that the foundation for my future, my future family, is being laid right now?

Prayer

Father,

Thank you for your love. Thank you for your word and the direction it provides for my life. Help me to remember that true happiness, true blessing can only be found in you. Help me to trust in you with all of my heart and lean not on my own understanding. Thank you for having the opportunity now to lay the foundation for my future. Help our generation to lay a foundation for the future of the church. May our children and our children’s children reap spiritual blessings and prosperity from the things we are doing right now.

I love you and lay my life before you. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 10 – July 26, 2011

Psalm 129

by Tim Schmidt

Significant Themes – Oppression and opposition

The psalmist remembers oppression throughout his life. He remembers ongoing oppression that felt like someone was plowing on his back. But more importantly, he remembers how God delivered him from his oppressors. How the oppressor did not gain victory. How God cut him free from the cords of the wicked. He also knows that God will ultimately deal with those who have treated him unfairly. Justice will be delivered in due time by the only one who is truly Just.

Have you ever felt like the world was against you? Have you ever felt like “the man” was holding you down? Welcome to life. Not to minimize the daily pressures and opposition we may face, but many of us do not know what it’s like to face extreme oppression and opposition. Most of us have never lived in a society where it is illegal to own a bible or pray out loud in public. Most of us have not lived through a time when you had to walk down the other side of the street because of the color of your skin. Most of us have not lived through a time when we could not vote because of our gender or color.

While most of us have lived relatively free lives, we still face oppression and opposition. Perhaps, it is in the form of persecution from family or classmates. Perhaps, it is chronic physical or mental illness. Perhaps, it is our sinful nature waging war against our souls. Whatever sort of opposition we might be facing we can take comfort in the knowledge that God will uphold our cause. His justice will prevail.

Practical Application

1. Do I feel oppressed by anyone or anything in my life?
2. Do I trust that God has and is delivering me from whomever or whatever I am facing?
3. Do I seek revenge on others or do I trust that God is just and will see that justice is served?
(De 32:35, Ro 12:19 “It is **mine** to **avenge**; I will repay,” says the Lord.)
4. Do I pray for my enemies? (MT 5:44 Love **your enemies** and **pray** for those who persecute you)

Prayer

Father,

Thank you for giving me freedom. Freedom in Christ! Thank you that I am able to love you, pray to you and read your word every day. Thank you for setting me free from the oppression of sin. Help me to love those who oppose me. I pray for those who have oppressed or opposed me that they may also find true freedom in you. I trust in your judgment and justice. Help me not to seek revenge but to forgive and forget and enjoy the peace that I have in you. Help me to follow the example Jesus set on the cross.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Day 11 – July 27, 2011

Psalm 130

by Brian Campbell

Significant Themes

Earnest cries and prayers for mercy (v.1-2). The earnest cry for mercy of Psalm 130 was an essential part of the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. The writer is crying out from the depths of his soul begging God to listen and hear his call for mercy. They were traveling to celebrate festivals of God's great mercy and grace. The Psalmist is calling the nation higher to join him in being in touch with God's mercy and grace because it is God's grace that makes the celebration so special. As we ascend to Estes Park, Colorado for the ICMC it is important that we capture the same earnest cry for mercy.

Confidence in God's mercy (v.3-4). The Psalmist recognized that no one could stand if God dealt with us according to what we deserved. His comfort was found in the fact that with God there is forgiveness. As a result of being in touch with God's mercy, he comes to the conclusion that God is to be feared. This general word for fear often includes the ideas of worship and obedience. The forgiveness of God cannot be treated lightly. It has the power to turn sinners into saints. Grace motivates people to follow Him in obedience.

Hope in the Lord (v. 5-8) The Psalmist is describing how he is patiently waiting for the Lord. He is like a watchman eagerly waiting for the first rays of dawn, for then they would be relieved of the duties by other guards. He eagerly looked for God's merciful dealings with the nation.

Practical Application

1. In anticipation of the ICMC, what is your cry for mercy? What do you want to see God change and mold in you? What areas of your life do you need to be inspired? How do you need to be called higher?
2. In what ways do you need a healthy fear of God? How can you let his Grace compel you to worship and heed God's callings at the ICMC?
3. What are you patiently waiting for God to do in your life at the ICMC? What do you feel like is the biggest need you want God to meet at the ICMC?

It is God's mercy and grace that makes the ICMC so special. Let us all spend some extra time today earnestly crying out for God's mercy in our lives.

Prayer

God,

Please help me to be in touch with your great mercy. I fall short all the time and I am so weak by myself. Your mercy is the very force that compels me to worship and obey you. I want this ICMC to change and transform my very being for all the days of my life. May my life reflect gratitude and servitude to you for the great mercy you have displayed in my life.

In Jesus name, I pray, Amen.

Day 12 — July 28, 2011

Psalm 131

by Brian Campbell

Significant Themes

Humility and Hope Gets the Heart Prepared for Pilgrimage. David writes about how humility and hope prepare us for our great pilgrimage. It sets your heart in place where you can soak up everything God is revealing to you and it really helps you to get the most out of every adventure. A humble and hopeful heart is what we all must capture as we prepare for the ICMC.

Humility (v. 1-2). David here displays the heart of humility. His heart was not proud. He was not caught up in insecurities, others opinions, or the things he could not change. He was not uneasy by the things going on around him. Instead he stilled and quieted his soul. He was at peace and ready for all that God was going to do. He had a sense of peace, so that he did not need to concern himself with selfish ambition. David had battled and conquered the pride and insecurities in his heart. So he could present himself before God as a man who could be used for great things.

Hope (v. 3). David called for Israel to hope in the Lord forever. Trusting Him is the opposite of pride.

Practical Application

1. In what ways does your heart get proud at big events like an ICMC? What insecurities do you have or feel when it comes to being around a ton of people you do not know? How can you prepare and battle these feelings for the ICMC?
2. If putting your hope and trust in God is the opposite of pride, what are the opposite actions and feelings to your pride and insecurities? In what ways will you need to put your hope and trust in God at the ICMC?

The ICMC is a time to grow spiritually, build friendships, and make memories! It is also a time where our pride and insecurities can flare up. Make sure that before you ascend to Estes Park that you share your answers to the previous questions with one or two friends. It is always beneficial to have a couple people who can look out for you, check up on you, that you can be open with at big conferences like the ICMC. To God be the glory through your openness.

Prayer

God,

You oppose the proud but give grace to those who are humble. Help me to reflect and see into my own heart. Please expose any pride and insecurities that keep me from growing closer to you and to others. Help me to be like David in the way that loved humility more than his selfish ambition. Teach me the ways of humility and let my hope and trust always be in you and not myself. Thank you for Jesus and for the chance to follow in his humility.

In His name I pray, Amen.

Day 13 – July 29, 2011

Psalm 132

by Kenneth Perkins

Significant Themes – “Worship travelers reaching their joyful destination”

Psalm 132 begins with the psalmist asking God to remember David and the hardships that he had endured due to an oath that he had made to the Lord. He so eagerly yearned for the Lord (and the Ark of the Covenant) to find his resting place with the people of Israel, that he wouldn't even allow himself to sleep until this happened. We then see the true worshippers of Israel singing praises of joy to God. Appropriately, the people would sing this psalm on their final approach to the sanctuary. In reaching the ICMC, it can be very easy to fall into the trap of giving all of ourselves and our praises to God at the conference and taking nothing with us from there. We can expect this “spiritual high” to come while experiencing an amazing weekend, but is it possible to possess this feeling even before, during and after we've reached our destination?

Practical Application

1. Why would the psalmist sing this song towards the end of the Festival?
2. Consider David's heart in the beginning of the psalm. When was the last time you lost sleep because you wanted to fulfill an oath you made before God?
3. David's desire for God to make his resting place in Israel was also God's desire for himself (v. 13-14). How are your desires matching up to God's desires?
4. What does this psalm tell you about God's promises?

As the people are approaching the temple, they are worshipping God before they've even entered it. The people praised God because He had chosen them, and not only that but they had chosen Him. The oath that David made to God came back to David so heavily that it spread not only to the people of Israel, but also to us through Jesus (vs. 11-12). This fulfillment of this oath has made it possible for God to dwell within us and not in buildings made by human hands.

1. We should sing and shout praises to God even before arriving to “the temple” and afterward because God has chosen us to be priests (1 Peter 2:9).
2. What are some practical ways to match your desires with what God desires?
3. What promises of God have been fulfilled in your life? Share them with the other participants at the ICMC.

Prayer

Lord,

Hallowed be your name. Father I will praise your name because I am yours. Thank you for choosing me to be your child. Father in heaven, help my desires to be your desires, and I pray that I will follow through with whatever pleases you regardless of the cost.

I love you Father and it's in Jesus' name that I pray all of these things, Amen.

Day 14 – July 30, 2011

Psalm 133

by Kenneth Perkins

Significant Themes – “Unified Travelers receiving their true blessing”

“How good and pleasant it is when brothers AND sisters live together in unity!” (v. 1) Imagine being a bystander and hearing a large group of people singing this song; singing songs about all of the things they had watched God do together. How amazing would that be? Many people desire to be apart of something bigger than themselves and for those of us who are Christians, we find great satisfaction in knowing that we in fact are. Knowing that our unity with one another can set us apart from the world is something amazing to think about. In these last hours of this year’s ICMC make the most of the opportunities to grow in the area of unity with one another.

Practical Application

What has the unity looked like within your campus ministry (roommates, households, the body, between brothers and sisters)? When the precious oils were poured onto the head of Aaron, it signified his total consecration to the duties that God had provided for him. Have you seen the unity in your campus ministry consecrated, setting you apart from the world? If not, where might you be able to help? Summer crops depended upon the dew for maturity and harvesting, and it was symbolic of blessings for the people of that time (Gen 27:28; Deut 33:13). Even more relevant to this scripture, the dew supports new life (Isaiah 26:19). What “new life” would you like to see sprout in response to your unity as you go back home?

The whole purpose of having unity with one another is so that through it we may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ (Romans 15:5). Some people might be inspired by a powerful sermon or a beautiful hymn they heard in church. But one of the main things that will change the hearts of the people coming around your ministry for the first time is your love for one another. Unity is necessary in order for us to have life and to see new life come grow.

1. Pray together. Pouring your heart out to God together is a sure way to grow in unity.
2. Resolve conflicts that may be holding you back from being unified. You’re missing out on the joy that God has for you when you let bitterness grow in your heart.
3. Share together. Fighting on the battle field will help you grow in your unity.
4. Consecrate your camp. Set yourselves apart for God and keep things that will prevent new life from growing out of your camp. Expose and repent of sin together!
5. Encourage one another daily. When you see that sister, tell her how nice her hair looks. When you see that brother, tell him how well he led that Bible talk. Encouragement can help show how much we appreciate one another.

Prayer

Father,

I thank you for the brothers and sisters you have put in my life. I pray that I can do my part in being unified with them. Father I desire a spirit of love and encouragement so that I might see new life not only in the size of our ministry, but also in my own life. Give me the courage to deal with anything that may be hindering me from being unified with my brother or sister. I know this is your desire for me, and therefore my desire as well. Father I love you and I thank you. It’s in Jesus’ name I pray, Amen.

Day 15 — July 31, 2011

Psalm 134

by Chris Clawson

Significant Themes – “PRAISE THE LORD!”

How do you keep the joy of the ascent and the vision from the summit, while returning to the valleys of your day to day life? The answer... PRAISE THE LORD! The mountain of the temple celebrations were meant to serve as reminders that God’s saving power did not reside on the mountain top but in the lives of the people He saved. The people had been celebrating what He had, was and would continue to do in their day to day living, ministering and worshipping. The blessed life was not found in the temple courts of stone but on the tablets of their hearts. And so, as the worshippers left, they sang and prayed this simple final, closing prayer calling each other to KEEP PRAISING GOD!,

¹ Praise the LORD, all you servants of the LORD who minister by night in the house of the LORD.

² Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the LORD.

³ May the LORD bless you from Zion, he who is the Maker of heaven and earth.

—Psalm 134

Practical Application

It really is profound that year after year of conferences I almost always come away simply seeing my need to take my personal relationship with God higher. Of all the practical lessons, insights and creative ideas the Holy Spirit convicted, reminded you of, counseled you in this weekend, what did you see about your relationship with “the Maker of heaven and earth?”

1. How can you take your love for God Higher? In Bible study? Prayer? Get a study plan, a worthy time, a special place!
2. What qualities of God did you see, hear and learn this weekend that you had never seen before? How did you get to know Him better?
3. When you come to next year’s conference in San Antonio how will you have grown?
4. What is the one thing you will most take away from this conference?

Prayer

Father,

You are the Maker of heaven and earth! Thank you for making this incredible place and allowing me to be part of this weekend. Strengthen your Spirit in me as I leave so I can love you, the people you’ve put in my life and your plan for me more than ever before. I want to grow. Help me see clearly the thing you most want me to learn as I leave this place. You are LORD of my life. Thank you, most of all, for Jesus.

I love you.