

Faith Cumberland Presbyterian
Church In America

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Cleveland, Ohio 44112

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Message:

The Journey To God's Holy Hill

Psalm 24:1-10

Rev. Dr. Anthony W. Johnson

The Journey To God's Holy Hill

Biblical Text: **Psalm 24:1-10** =====> **Journey to God's holy hill is routed through affliction and agony through heaven's gate!**

Psalm 24 God's Lordship In The World

- 01** The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
- 02** For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.
- 03** Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?
- 04** He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.
- 05** He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
- 06** This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.
- 07** Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.
- 08** Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.
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Life Is A Journey

by **Anonymous**

Life is but a stopping place,
a pause in what's to be,
A resisting place along the road,
to sweet eternity.

We all have different journeys,
different paths along the way,
We all were meant to learn some things,
but never meant to stay...

Our destination is a place,
far greater than we know.
For some the journey's quicker,
for some the journey's slow.

And when the journey finally ends,
we'll claim a great reward.
And find an everlasting peace,
together with the Lord.

The Journey To God's Holy Hill

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Introduction

Think of life as a journey! We are not only going from place to place, town to town, or state to state, we are also going somewhere in the spiritual realm. Whether saved or not, every soul has a specific journey to complete. What is your journey? What does it entail?

Our journey starts with birth and concludes with death. Each day of life we move closer to our destiny. There is no sidestepping your destiny. In other words, there is no such thing as not going somewhere, not being somewhere, and not without going or being.

The journey itself is the events of life. Some seem to have an easier life, but don't fool yourself. Job tells us, "Man that is born of a woman is of a few days, and full of trouble!" Job's life mirrors the journey all men travel. Life difficulties can be construed as the:

- ▶ **Long journey:** painful periods of illness, disability, persecution, drastic life changes due to upheaval
 - ▶ **Difficult journey:** single parents raising children, low-income, poverty, drug addiction, hopelessness
 - ▶ **Dangerous journey:** religious and/or political persecution, missionaries risking life in Muslim countries
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The journey we travel in life varies with each of us. Our journey ends at two destinations: the first is heaven, also known as God's holy hill. The other destination is judgment, also known as the outer darkness, where there is "weeping and gnashing of teeth!"

We daily encounter a range of life difficulties that require determined endurance to stay on the road to God's holy hill. By God's design we travel in life up to His holy hill through much affliction. Consider these Bible heroes who suffered dearly to ultimately reach God:

- **Abraham:** he had to trust God when told to leave his family behind
 - **Joseph:** he had to endure being sold to slavery by his own brothers
 - **Moses:** had to trust God, face Pharaoh, lead Israel in the wilderness
 - **Jeremiah:** faced rebellious Israelites; imprisoned for telling truth
 - **Hosea:** told to marry a prostitute to illustrate Israel as unfaithful
 - **Apostles:** suffered beatings, prison, death, to spread the Gospel
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Compare your life with these spiritual giants who were on their journey with God. You will realize your journey matches theirs. They endured grievous afflictions, but they stayed on route to reach God's holy hill. As you continue your journey, God labors on your behalf:

"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose" [Romans 8:28]

In our Text, David is bringing the ark of the covenant back to Jerusalem. David leads the celebrative procession up the hill to holy Jerusalem to place the ark in the temple, in the Holy of Holies. Christ returns to lead a holy procession with His saints, up to God's holy hill.

The Journey To God's Holy Hill

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No higher responsibility exists for us than to acknowledge our Creator; we must live soberly so as to daily recognize His handiwork in our lives; as we enjoy creation we must be godly stewards; by this we enjoy God's presence

In society it is a matter of respect to recognize our elders. In many venues our superiors demand recognition. Failure to do so brings costly consequences. If we fail to give proper credit to those who have rule over us, we are chastised.

Failure to acknowledge God has more grave and spiritual consequences for us to contend with. For many God is merely an impersonal force, with no established rules for standards for living. The Bible makes clear the results of natural man who purposely disregarded God:

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" [Romans 1:21]

Natural man purposely remains in enmity with God, unaware his life journey ends in doom. Two sins seals the doom of man: 1) he refused to glorify God as God; 2) he was unthankful; The carnal man was born in sin, but God pricks his heart and calls him to repent.

By not glorifying God and being unthankful to God for all His benefits, man's journey is a death march to doom. Instead of glorifying the true God, man creates an idol god fashioned after his sinful appetite. Man indulges in sins; thus, he glorifies the devil, not God.

► Gravity of disregarding God

As believers busy themselves with daily life, they can drift away from glorifying God as a way of life in thought, word, and deed. When this happens worldliness begins to build in your life. This is tantamount of the branch (believer) being cut away from the vine (Christ).

The Journey: When believers stop acknowledging God they are no longer moving toward God's holy hill. Going off route results in praising the creation rather than the Creator. The gravity of going off route equals to an emerging of modern idolatry in the life of believers.

01 The earth is the LORD'S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.

02 For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods.

- God created entire universe: nothing exists except God created it
 - God rules all that earth does: floods, earthquakes, storms, etc
 - Man is a created being who contributes nothing to sustaining earth
 - God brought order to a chaotic sea: put the waters in its place
 - Man is subject to God: has no legitimate claim to nothing he holds
 - Man is a steward: God made the earth to bring goodness to man
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The Journey To God's Holy Hill

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On one's own merit, no one qualifies to stand in God's presence on His holy hill; even so, God gives us Christ's righteousness to assure no one need be excluded from Christ's holy procession up the holy hill to claim His throne

Natural man is unfit to be with God. Initially, man is at enmity with God. Man chose to rebel rather than obey God. Man feeds on the fruit of sin and is incapable of producing anything worthwhile. As a result natural man travels on a doomed route, a journey to eternal death.

Man needs to be with God, but how can he dwell in God's presence? How can man hike up to God's holy hill with his sinful disposition? The question man must ask, "how do I reach heaven?" Nothing plagues man more than being estranged from his God, whom he hates.

Only those with clean hands and a pure heart will reach God's holy hill. Those who reach to the top of God's holy hill will be blessed. Imagine being in a place where deceit, anger, malice, or evil intent, is no more. In God's presence there is nothing short of pure holiness.

► Holiness is required to be in God's presence

God's holiness demands that He punish sin. There is no tolerance of any unrighteousness with God. Consider what's needed to stay on route to God's holy hill:

"As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance: But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy" [1 Peter 1:14-16]

To know God's holiness in this life, we must strive daily to stay severed from unclean things, in thought, word, or deed. We must be fashioned after God's holiness by living in Christ!

The Journey: we must pray for strength to hate the things of sin that causes us to get off route to God's holy hill. The devil will exploit human weakness for sin to take you off route.

03 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

04 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

05 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

06 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.

- Who is qualified to dwell in Christ's abode, the place of worship?
 - Who is worthy to stand in God's presence without an sinful heart?
 - Man rebelled and is utterly corrupt: he is unfit to dwell with God
 - Jesus qualifies to be in God's presence, for He is without sin!
 - Jesus is righteous: in thought, conduct, and worship!
 - Man reaches God's holy hill only through the merits of Christ
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The Journey To God's Holy Hill

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Worshipping God must be elevated to highest priority; the challenge of our time is to make time to worship God in spite of busy schedules; when we truly worship God, through Christ, we stay connected (on route) to God

For David, there is **celebration** in the air. He reclaimed the **ark of God** from the enemy and brought it back to Jerusalem. The **presence of God** returned to the nation through the **ark of God**. **What do saints need more of when life issues beat them up than God's presence?**

In David's time, he enjoyed **God's presence** through the **ark of God**. David had good reason to celebrate: **God's presence** was returned in the **midst of Israel**. Only then was Israel sure of her **protection** and **preservation**. The ark in its **rightful place**, Christ claims **His kingship**.

Who is the King of glory? Christ who fought and defeated **Satan, sin, and death**. He claims the **spoils of war**: all the souls Satan kept in **bondage to sin**. Christ, **mighty in battle**, owns the **power to redeem** by His blood, forgiving the sins of those who **exercise faith** in Him.

For this reason, saints **glorify Christ**. Once **enslaved to sin** and death, **saints are victors** in Christ. Saints will be included in the **holy procession**, following after Christ who returns to Jerusalem as **King of Glory**.

Before the **victorious procession** begins we must complete our **life journey** with Christ:

"Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me" [Revelation 3:20]

The Journey: in life we must keep an **open heart** so Christ can dwell with us. Opening up our hearts to Christ is not a **once-for-all** decision. Demands of life exploits **our tendency** to **drift from God**. **As a result we must instantly open the door when Christ knocks.**

07 **Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.**

08 **Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.**

09 **Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.**

10 **Who is this King of glory? The LORD of hosts, he is the King of glory.**

King Jesus: mighty in the **battle against sin**, leads **holy procession** • **King Jesus**: declared **Lord of hosts** through **death, resurrection**
King Jesus: battle **fought, won**; ark of God the **leads procession** • **King Jesus**: this time **He is received** by His people as **Savior**
King Jesus: leads freed **slaves of sin** up to holy hill to **worship God** • **King Jesus**: has made **saints triumphant** by **His righteousness**

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Conclusion

Our journey will never be absent of **daily struggles**, saints never forget who you are and who you belong to. The Bible says, **"There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit!"**

The **Journey to God's Holy Hill** is about continually shedding **sinful deeds** of the flesh and learning to **obey the dictates** of the **Holy Spirit**. To stay on your route to **God's holy hill**, you must know **who you are**, and **whose you are!** To assure you **stay on route** you must:

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- **God's faithfulness**: did not God save you yesterday? **Why not now?** • **Recommit**: to God's **salvation plan**: **love, fellowship, ministry**
 - **Wait, Watch, Pray**: be still until **God speaks**: wait for **your salvation** • **Eliminate**: anything **tearing down** your **beliefs, desire** for God
 - **Stay faithfully alert**: what are your **life aims, desires, and direction** • **Commune**: give God **quality time**, you will **stay on route** to God
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Whatever you do in **daily life**, keep God in your **thoughts** and **labors**. This is the route to your **Journey To God's Holy Hill**, especially in **difficult situations**. In situational failure and success, **take to heart** the words of **Apostle Paul**:

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord" [1 Corinthians 15:58]

Whatever you are **saying, doing, or going**, assure that you are still on route to **God's holy hill**. As you travel **up the hill**, Satan purposely places many distractions to cause you to take your eyes off the **prize of Christ**, who is leading the **holy procession!** **Stay the route!**

Message Reflections: 1. How often do you acknowledge God in your day? 3. How vital is verbally praising God in daily routine?
2. What ambitions takes you off route up God's hill? 4. What intensify your passion for God's presence?

===> **Kindle the will** ===> **Energize the will** ===> **Disturb the conscience** ===> **Stir the heart**

Meditation

Prayer: =====> **2 Corinthians 13:5: Examine yourselves** and to see whether you are in the faith

Father God, we come now, humbly, to ask you to give us a renewed determination to stay the course of our life journey up your holy hill; give us strength, O God, to keep our eyes on Christ on our route to heaven's gates; we often are discouraged, distracted by the glitter the world offers; O God, give a burning desire to dwell in your presence, not only in the good times, but especially in the dark hour; we confess Jesus, through faith, for eternal life; we give you the **praise, glory and honor**, in Jesus' Holy Name; Amen.

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- **Journey:** know eternal destiny: yield to God in thought, word, deed • **Journey:** know the costs of changing direction: stay the route!
• **Journey:** know direction you're headed and how you'll get there • **Journey:** know Jesus knocks at the door: let Him in your heart

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- God created entire universe: nothing exists except God created it • **God rules** all that earth does: floods, earthquakes, storms, etc
• Man is a created being who contributes nothing to sustaining earth • God brought order to a chaotic sea: put the waters in its place
• Man is subject to God: has no legitimate claim to nothing he holds • Man is a steward: God made the earth to bring goodness to man

Application: Man has no higher calling than to acknowledge His Creator, and to live accordingly; Israel observed the demonstration of God's power over the impotent Pharaoh of Egypt; God never relinquishes His ownership or rule of the earth; by the power of His command, the God ordered the seas to a designated place to raise the foundation of the earth; in doing so, God put importance of man on His agenda, giving him abilities to produce; man makes nothing apart from his God!

03 Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in his holy place?

04 He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully.

05 He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.

06 This is the generation of them that seek him, that seek thy face, O Jacob.

- Who is qualified to dwell in Christ's abode, the place of worship? • **Jesus qualifies** to be in God's presence, for He is without sin!
• Who is worthy to stand in God's presence without an sinful heart? • **Jesus is righteous**: in thought, conduct, and worship!
• **Man rebelled** and is utterly corrupt: he is unfit to dwell with God • Man reaches God's holy hill only through the merits of Christ

Application: man is utterly doomed in himself because sin can never dwell in God's presence; the answer to David's question, "who will ascend into the holy hill of the Lord?" None, except Christ Himself; thanks be to God, Jesus has no intention leaving man to suffer doom in the "outer darkness of damnation!" We either travel up into eternal life on God's hill, or we go down to eternal death; Jesus has made the way for sinner man to be included in the procession; Jesus victorious having beat the death, the saints victorious having been liberated from grievous bondage to sin; with Christ, the saints will indeed ascend!

07 Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in.

08 Who is this King of glory? The LORD strong and mighty, the LORD mighty in battle.

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- **King Jesus:** mighty in the battle against sin, leads holy procession • **King Jesus:** declared Lord of hosts through death, resurrection
• **King Jesus:** battle fought, won; ark of God the leads procession • **King Jesus:** this time He is received by His people as Savior
• **King Jesus:** leads freed slaves of sin up to holy hill to worship God • **King Jesus:** has made saints triumphant by His righteousness

Application: Jesus came to fight a fierce battle; Satan had captured all of mankind when he introduced sin into the world; Jesus fought against that old devil, sin, and death; Jesus owns the spoils of war, the sinners blinded by the god of this world; they only need to open up their hearts to repentance and let Jesus save them; in Jesus, they too will be part of the holy procession that King Jesus leads up God's holy hill; we have victory in Jesus and are enabled to proceed upward to God to worship

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"Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me..."—Psalm 139:23-24

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Genesis 1:9

And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be **gathered together unto one place**, and let the **dry land appear**: and it was so.

Psalm 89:11

The heavens are thine, the earth also is thine: as for the world and the fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.

Job 41:11 : Who hath prevented me, that I should repay him? whatsoever is under the whole heaven is mine.

1 Chronicles 29:11

Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.

Psalm 15:2 : He that **walketh uprightly**, and **worketh righteousness**, and **speaketh the truth** in his heart.

Job 17:9 : The righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger.

Isaiah 1:15

15 And when **ye spread forth** your hands, I will **hide mine eyes** from you: yea, when **ye make many prayers**, **I will not hear**: your hands are **full of blood**.

16 **Wash you, make you clean**; put away the **evil of your doings** from before mine eyes; **cease to do evil**.

Acts 2:23

Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.

Isaiah 59:3

For your hands are defiled with blood, and your fingers with iniquity; your lips have spoken lies, your tongue hath muttered perverseness.

Romans 3:23 : For **all have sinned**, and **come short** of the glory of God.

1 Peter 1:7

That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be **tried with fire**, might be found unto **praise** and **honour** and **glory** at the **appearing** of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 5:10

But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you.

2 Corinthians 5:17

Therefore **if any man** be in Christ, **he is a new creature**: old things are **passed away**; behold, all things are **become new**.

Romans 5:8 : But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

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2 Corinthians 2:14

Now thanks be unto God, which always **causeth us to triumph** in Christ, and **maketh manifest the savour** of his knowledge by us in every place.

John 4:23

But the **hour cometh**, and now is, when the **true worshippers shall worship** the Father **in spirit and in truth**: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

1 Corinthians 15:57-58

57 But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Revelation 3:20

Behold, **I stand at the door**, and **knock**: if any man **hear my voice**, and **open the door**, I will come in to him, and will **sup with him**, and **he with me**.

Revelation 1:18

I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.

Hebrews 1:3

Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Hebrews 10:22

Let us **draw near with a true heart** in full **assurance of faith**, having our **hearts sprinkled** from an **evil conscience**, and our **bodies washed** with pure water.

Matthew 7:13-14

13 **Enter ye in** at the strait gate: for **wide is the gate**, and **broad is the way**, that **leadeth to destruction**, and many there be which go in thereat:

14 Because **strait is the gate**, and **narrow is the way**, which **leadeth unto life**, and few there be that find it.

2 Corinthians 5:21

For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

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