



PSALMS OF ASCENT

SONGS FOR THE JOURNEY



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PSALM 120

May 24, 2026

SUNDAY REFRESHER

There's something deeply human about singing on the journey. Slaves sang through suffering. Soldiers sang through exhaustion. Travelers built playlists for long roads because songs have a way of carrying us when our legs and hearts get tired. Psalm 120 opens the Psalms of Ascent with a song that isn't polished or peaceful. It's raw. Honest. Discordant. A weary pilgrim surrounded by lies, hostility, and conflict crying out, "I am for peace, but when I speak, they are for war." The road to Jerusalem was uphill, but so was the spiritual climb. And before the worshipper ever reached the Temple, the song itself was already shaping the soul.

Pastor Donovan reminded us that following God does not mean pretending everything feels okay. Psalm 120 gives permission to be honest about hurt, exhaustion, betrayal, and the ache of living among people who wound with their words. Some wounds were spoken over us years ago and still echo today. Yet the Psalmist refuses to become what surrounds him. He keeps calling out to God. Keeps speaking peace. Keeps walking uphill. The psalm ends unresolved because faith is often lived in tension. We are travelers still climbing, strangers longing for home, learning that our identity is not ultimately defined by the lies spoken against us but by the God who hears us when we cry out.

PERSONAL REFLECTIONS

- *What did God say to you through this passage and teaching?*
- *Did God reveal anything new to you?*
- *How is this relevant in your journey to make disciples who Love God and Love people?*

QUESTIONS

- *Why do you think words and lies can wound so deeply, sometimes even more than physical pain?*
- *Where in your life do you feel the tension of “I am for peace, but they are for war”?*
- *What does it look like practically to leave hurt, betrayal, or conflict in God’s hands instead of carrying it forever?*

SCRIPTURE REFERENCES

Psalm 86:7 | Psalm 118:5 | Psalm 138:3 | Isaiah 58:9 | Isaiah 65:24 | Jeremiah 33:3 | Zechariah 13:9
Hebrews 11:13-14

CONCLUSION

Psalm 120 reminds us that faith is not always clean and resolved. Sometimes it sounds more like a traveler singing through clenched teeth while climbing uphill. The Psalms of Ascent begin here on purpose. Before celebration, before arrival, before the beauty of Jerusalem, there is honesty. God is not intimidated by the tension in us. He does not ask for polished prayers while we quietly bleed inside. He invites truth. Real prayers from real people walking difficult roads.

And maybe that’s part of the journey itself. Not pretending we belong fully here. Hebrews says we are strangers and exiles searching for a better country. The ache we feel in a world filled with hostility, deception, and conflict is a reminder that our hearts were made for something greater. So we keep climbing. Keep singing. Keep calling out to the Lord who answers. Because somewhere along the road, even before we arrive, the song itself begins to form us into people of peace.

Knowing that life transformation happens best through intentional, meaningful relationships, don’t let this week’s sermon remain as mere information. In the next few days, look for ways to teach, challenge, encourage and/or pray about what you’re discovering!