



# *Songs of Prayer*

*Prayers Based on Psalms 121-130  
Summer 2022*

Unless otherwise noted, all scripture quotations in this booklet are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Copyright © 2022 by First Baptist Church, Baton Rouge, Louisiana

# Foreword

Imagine with me a group of travelers, maybe 25-30 of them, who have journeyed two days on foot to visit the temple in Jerusalem. These people are pilgrims on their way to worship God. For many miles, those travelers have looked ahead to the horizon and beheld the great walled city of God, perched atop the hill of Mt. Moriah, where the faithful ones of God would soon gather to sacrifice, pray, and plead for God's mercy and blessing. As they have walked, they have likely discussed many concerns: their children, the burdens of work, and their fears of the future. These worshipers were much like us in these ways. But once these pilgrims could see the temple mount, and even glimpse the temple itself, they recognized the seriousness of what they were going to do, and they began to sing the songs of the Hebrew nation. These songs were known by all the people, both young and old alike, because they had been singing these praise choruses for generations. The songbook for the trip up to Jerusalem was known as the *Songs of Ascents*. Why ascents? Because these words would be in the mouths and hearts of the people as they ascended up to visit the temple in the holy city. As they would physically "go up" to Jerusalem, their songs would rise to God.

This summer we will once again journey through a few of the psalms, as we have for many summers now. Beginning in Psalm 121 and working through Psalm 130, we are going to study and learn together what these *Songs of Ascents* mean for the church today. I cannot express to you enough just how important and necessary these ten psalms will be for us and the renewal of our hearts and minds on the glory, goodness, and grace of God. I am very excited about what God is going to teach us. And I am especially excited about what you hold in your hand now, a collection of prayers written by FBC members which flow from the beauty of the *Songs of Ascents*. Your brothers and sisters in Christ have taken the time to study and put into words a prayer to God that expresses the heart of each of the psalms we will study this summer. I am grateful for their carefully selected words as well as their prayerful approach to this blessed project. Just like those pilgrims who sang for God's glory, I hope you will make use of this prayer journal as you read, pray, and rejoice in the goodness and mercy of God. Lift your heads, you saints of God, behold your King, and ascend the hill to offer Him praise!

Pastor Owen

# Acknowledgements

Each summer it is a joy to study the songbook of the Bible under the leadership of our pastor, Rev. Oren Conner. We appreciate his dedication to teaching God's Word and leading us to a deeper understanding of these songs in all of their variety.

The Psalms are also models of prayer, and for the past several years members of FBCBR have written prayers for us inspired by the psalms we study. These writers are our own "psalmists," providing words and inspiration for our prayers as did David, Moses, Asaph, and the other writers of the Psalms. Our most sincere thanks are due to this year's writers: Gwyn Baddley, Cecil and Helen Bankston, Joey and Judy Bayham, Debbie Cassel, Patsy Causey, Ginger Conner, Garrett Dupre, Jaime Rhymes, Jim Simon, and John Westbrook.

Our appreciation is also due to our pastor's assistant, Sarah Hunt, who creates the covers for our prayer booklets and is responsible for the design and production of the booklet.

To God alone be the glory,  
Eleanor Howes, Editor  
June 6, 2022

June 12

Psalm 121

*My help comes from the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth. (v. 2)*

## *My Lord and My Helper*

Dear Heavenly Father,

All praise, glory, and honor to You, Who made the heavens and the earth and created us in Your likeness. You did not create us and then turn Your back on us, although that is what we deserve for our sinfulness. Thank You for Your mercy and grace toward us even though we are not worthy of it.

In this time of strife and turmoil, when despair is all around, You are here with me. I am so grateful that You are near every time I cry out to You for help. Sometimes it is a struggle to get out of bed and go out into the world knowing it is filled with hatred and violence. People are dying at the hands of others for no reason, and this fills me with fear and sadness. There is nothing I can do on my own to change what is going on around me.

I turn my eyes toward You for the help that only You can provide. Everything has been created by You, and You have control over all things. You watch over me constantly and give me protection from the evil that is ever-present in this world. You keep my feet on solid ground when I would stumble and fall. You are my Rock and my Redeemer. Thank You for Your protection today and always.

In the holy and precious name of Jesus I pray,

Amen

*Debbie Cassel*

June 19

Psalm 122

*I was glad when they said to me,  
"Let us go to the house of the Lord!" (v. 1)*

## *Blessed Beyond Measure*

God, our Father,

We who call You Father are blessed beyond measure that we have been given the incredible opportunity to address You in such a special way.

By Your mercy, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, You call us Your own children; and by grace He has brought us into fellowship with You. To be in Your presence is peace and joy for all who believe in Jesus. And what joy it is when we gather with Your people in the place of worship designated for Your praises. I am glad to hear the praises of Your cherished people lifted up, knowing that You are with us when we gather in Your house.

Help us to find our greatest pleasure in You and not in the temporary things of this world. Teach us to remember that we GET to worship You!

We ask You today for a renewed sense of peace in our hearts and minds, which Jesus, our Lord, has come to give us in abundance. We plead with You for peace in our church, our city, and our nation. Although sin has had its effect, may Your grace and gospel heal what is broken in all of us.

In Jesus' Name, we call to You. Hear our prayers for Your blessing upon us today, O God, our Father.

Amen

*Ginger Conner*

June 26

Psalm 123

*Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the Lord our God, till he has mercy upon us. (v. 2)*

## *Eyes Upon the Lord of Mercy*

Merciful Father:

With grateful hearts we look only to You for saving our souls and for saving us from the sinful destruction which seems to be overwhelming the world, our country, and our communities. You hear us and let us look to You when we are hurting. We look with complete trust to Your face, our Master, for consolation and reassurance. Our efforts to understand and resolve problems are so often inadequate or futile. We look to You for protection, encouragement, and fulfillment—all in Your time, not ours. Help us to fully trust that victory is only through You and that You are always by our side. Calm our fears and anxiety as we reach out to You.

Just as the Israelites faced captivity by the Babylonians so long ago, present-day oppressors are intent upon robbing peaceful citizens of basic freedoms. Self-serving and greedy leaders undermine the principles of our democracy. Those without morals freely take human lives, plunging families into agony and grief. Health crises catapult large numbers into serious illness, death, and despondency. Disasters within nature leave large numbers injured and desperate.

You are our only refuge in a time of so much suffering and insecurity. You are the Friend of the oppressed and down-trodden, our only hope for peace and healing in a sinful world. We praise and adore You for having compassion and mercy toward Your people in such times, just as You always have.

Thank You for the promise of being able to look to You for all our needs in troubling times such as these. Thank You for hearing us and having mercy on us.

In Jesus' Name I pray.

Amen

*John Westbrook*

July 3

Psalm 124

*Our help is in the name of the Lord,  
who made heaven and earth. (v. 8)*

## *God Is on Our Side*

Dear Heavenly Father,

You are my help in a world of turmoil and strife, my protection while the battle is all around me. Thank You for going before me and surrounding me with Your steadfast love. Indeed, You are with all Your children who trust and follow You. You guide our fragile lives until our souls rest with You.

You are on our side. As wars, acts of violence, and rebellion against You continue to surround us, we know that You will not let Satan snatch us from your grasp. You are most powerful, because You made everything with Your mighty Word. We rejoice that You mercifully choose to rescue us even though we are undeserving.

We pray that You will grant us Your wisdom and grace to navigate our circumstances in a manner pleasing to You, both individually and collectively as Your Church. Help us to be courageous, patient, prayerful, and full of compassion as we follow You. Help us to love others and show them Your way of mercy.

Amen

*Jaime Rhymes*



July 10

Psalm 125

*As the mountains surround Jerusalem, so the Lord surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore. (v. 2)*

## *Our Mountain of Strength*

Dear heavenly Father, our great and awesome God.

We praise and glorify You, our holy God, for Your love and the gift of salvation through Your blessed Son.

As we enter Your holy presence, we confess those things which are not pleasing to You. We pray that You will bring to our minds and hearts those actions for which we need to ask forgiveness. Give us the courage to see our mistakes and to ask the forgiveness of others. When we allow ourselves to misuse the free choice You have given us and venture away from the mountain of Your protection, may Your mercy bring us back into Your loving arms and grace.

Father, as we invoke Your holy presence, may we remember that You are our Creator and source of strength. There is none like You. You were here before the world began and will be here forevermore. You made the mountains that surrounded Jerusalem and were the people's physical protection. You were the mountain of hope and steadfastness that surrounded the Hebrew nation as they journeyed to their promised lands. You are the mountain that surrounds and protects each of us as believers. As believers we are like the city of Jerusalem: many facets, many talents, many challenges, and many degrees of faith. You, as our mountain, Father, give us the comfort, wisdom, and strength to live in such a way as to give back to You as a daily sacrifice the praise and honor, words and deeds that are Your due.

We pray, Father, that each of us can be like the mountains that surround Jerusalem as we strive to be strong in our daily walk. We pray that we can be beacons of hope and teachers of grace to our family, our friends, and the many people whom we influence daily.

Thank You for the confidence we have from scripture that Your wall of protection is forever. As long as we live, we rest in the knowledge that You are always with us. Your mountain of strength always encircles us. Even when things happen that we don't understand, we can still be confident in the knowledge that You are forever in control.

For all of this, we are grateful.

In Jesus' Name, we pray.

Amen

*Cecil and Helen Bankston*

July 17

Psalm 126

*Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! (v. 5)*

## Reap in Joy

Dear God,

Help us remember all of Your faithfulness  
Your loving kindness, Your restoration  
Time and time again.

Yes, we remember oppression,  
Grief, sin's captivity.  
But we choose to remember Your faithfulness,  
Your past goodness  
Like refreshing rain  
In the parched time of our lives.

We have sown tears,  
But also seeds of prayer.  
You took our seeds of faith  
And made the desert fertile.  
You've given us hope for harvest.  
For this, Lord, we are glad.

Thank You for  
Jesus  
our Savior  
Yahweh

Amen

*Patsy Causey*

July 29

Psalm 127

*Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. (v. 1)*

## *Dependence on God*

Dear God, our Father, Who made all things and gives all things, we praise Your Name.

You created us and molded us in Your own image.

We honor You and thank You for Your wisdom and direction in our lives. We are aware that without Your Providence, we will fail.

We must depend on Your blessing, not our own skill or ability. Whether it be a physical structure or a family, our work is in vain until we accept that You are the Builder. We can strive and work, but You must be acknowledged as the Master. Without Your blessing, all is for nothing.

Confidence in You gives rest and sleep after toil. As we stress and worry over money, food, and material possessions, we fail to realize that as we love God and are beloved by Him, all the anxious striving is fruitless, for God gives us rest.

And, God, You give us families. We know the importance of our families and that our children are a reward. Help us to accept them as blessings. They are a heritage from You and for You. Help us to raise our children to be strong, healthy, and of service to the family and others. May they be zealous and faithful, trained and directed for God's glory.

Oh, God, You are the Builder, the Watchman, and the Giver. Without You, all our efforts are worthless.

Help us to surrender to You, knowing we will find rest and provision.

In His Name we pray.

Amen

*Gwyn Baddley*

July 31

Psalm 128

*Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord,  
who walks in his ways... (v. 1)*

## *Life Well-Lived*

Lord Jesus,

You are the one true God Who spoke everything into being and ordained the lives and times of all Your creation. We praise You for the mighty works of Your hand and the life-changing power of Your Word! You alone know and meet the deepest needs of our human hearts; for all this and so much more we give thanks and praise.

Thank You for Your precious gift of the Holy Spirit Who guides and teaches us through Your Word to walk in Your ways, blessing us with peace and happiness for obedience that rightly reflects Your character. Forgive us, Lord, for the times our "busy-ness" results in our neglect of quality time with You. Cause us to fear the loss of intimacy with You, so that we resolve to make our daily time with You the most important part of our day.

Father, how great is our concern for this world, lost and out of control, moving farther and farther away from You. Increase our opportunities to share the gospel so that Your kingdom may grow and bring needed change. Especially, God, grant wisdom and discernment to those of us who are parenting and teaching young children to follow You. May this next generation of believers come to know You early so that a lifetime of walking in Your ways will bear fruitful witness of a life blessed by the "fear of the Lord."

In His Name,

Amen

*Joey and Judy Bayham*

August 7

Psalm 129

*The Lord is righteous;  
he has cut the cords of the wicked. (v. 4)*

## *Cords Cut by the Lord*

Heavenly Father,

I'm grateful that You are righteous.

It is a comfort to know that You will not let the wicked prevail.

It is a joy to sing of Your goodness in this.

Your people wrestle against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil. But when You cut the cords of these wicked, the sound, feeling, and sight refresh us as well as remind us of the Red Sea crashing over an Egyptian army, of a fiery furnace turned cool, of the mouths of lions shut, of chains set by Herod falling off (*Exodus 14:26-28; Daniel 3:16-17, 24-30, Daniel 6:16-22; Acts 12:6-7*).

We look forward to the day when the last cord is cut—the cord called death: the day when Christ delivers the kingdom to You, Father, after destroying every rule and every authority and power. On that day, the wicked will wither, but Your blessing will be upon Your people.

And so, we pray in Jesus' Name.

Amen

*Garrett Dupre*

August 14

Psalm 130

*But with you there is forgiveness,  
that you may be feared. (v. 4)*

## *Forgive My Forgetfulness*

Heavenly Father,

I've done it again. Your servant's had another challenging week. I've forgotten to put You first and this 55-year-old man last. When I arrive here each time, it's because the world sees less of You and more of me. It's clearly the exact opposite of what You desire for me. I know I'm willfully and purposely putting You to the side to do what I want. I think and speak unwise thoughts. I act unbecomingly as Your follower and live as I want to live. And then there are those times when I get to the end of my day and suddenly realize how fantastic and incredible it was but that I did nothing throughout it to give You honor and praise for these blessings. I put our relationship on auto-pilot, expecting to arrive safely at the destination but with no forethought of everything You've provided.

And then I recall Psalm 130:4 "But with you there is forgiveness, that you may be feared."

Forgive me for not praying for my family, my church, my work, and the blessings of unexpected encounters.

Forgive me for not honoring You with the breath of my lungs and praise on my lips that everything provided is because You love me with an everlasting, eternal love.

Forgive me for seeking only my wants.

Forgive me for thinking selfish thoughts.

Forgive me for speaking out of turn.

Forgive me for living only for myself.

Forgive me for not fearing you.

Amen

*Jim Simon*





FIRST  
BAPTIST

BATON ROUGE  
EST. 1874