



Their longer journey to their homeland presented an opportunity for them to refocus and remember why they were making the trip. During this time, an author or authors penned a series of psalms known collectively as “songs of ascents,” psalms written for the journey home. In Psalm 120 we find the first in this series, and its content very naturally focuses on the author’s feelings at the beginning of the journey.

This psalm has a personal tone to it more than a collective national feeling, and yet its content quite naturally reflects the people as a whole. The psalm opens with a hint of their former captivity. A people in distress cried out to the Lord for relief, and He answered (Psa. 120:1), an acknowledgement that the opportunity to return to Jerusalem existed due to God’s deliverance. However, the reality of life among ungodly people and their regular words of mockery—an ever present problem throughout captivity—now receive a response. For decades they had listened while pagan lips ridiculed their God and their faith as insufficient to deliver them from their hand, but in the end they could point to His lovingkindness and mercy to prove that their faith had not been unfounded (Psa. 120:2-3). Therefore, in a sense, they could point out to those in Babylon that they too now felt the sting of Jehovah’s judgment (Psa. 120:4). However, this opportunity to return home had another effect. The faithful child of God now felt isolated from home as never before, as though living in the distant lands to the north or as nomads in the south (Psa. 120:5). The burden of living long with those opposed to God no longer appeared as merely a physical distance from home but also a moral chasm as well, for while seeking God’s will and peace with others through it, the surrounding world yet resists (Psa. 120:6-7).

Such a perspective should feel more than natural to the child of God. We also live in a world that promotes immorality and ungodliness. With increasing frequency we hear attacks on our faith and attempts to silence the Bible’s message. Many Christians work in an environment hostile to faith in general and Christianity specifically. The Supreme Court has stripped as many references to God as possible out of the public schools. Political correctness has reached the point where a basic statement of reality receives death threats in response in social media. And with so much out of our control, we should appreciate even more the focus of the psalmist and long for those times when we can gather together as God’s people, proclaim our faith, encourage one another, and build our courage to face the onslaught of Satan’s minions. It took the Jews decades to realize how much they should value worship and spiritual fellowship. God’s people today need to learn from Israel’s failure AND from the psalmist’s revival of hope—and learn quickly.

## Order of Service

Opening Remarks		Leonard Meredith
Song Leader		
Song #732	<i>We Praise Thee, O God</i>	
Song #705	<i>We Gather Together</i>	
Prayer		Russell Haydon
Song #359	<i>Jesus Keep Me Near the Cross</i>	
Communion		Chris Windham Dylan Petrosky
Song #237	<i>His Grace Reaches Me</i>	
Song #482	<i>O Listen to Our Wondrous Story</i>	
Sermon		Clay Bond
Song #23	<i>All Things Are Ready</i>	
Offering		
Closing Remarks		Leonard Meredith
Song #585	<i>Soldiers of Christ Arise</i>	
Dismissal Prayer		Wendell Harrison

### Upcoming Events:

- Today! Fellowship Meal
- August 8<sup>th</sup> Summer Series: Steve Lloyd will speak to us about the Beauty of Spiritual Growth

### Wednesday Devotional

July 4-Aug. 29 Summer Series

### ...Prayer List...

*Gay Kyle, Eugene & Barbara Haydon, Bud Bond, Don Walker, Gary Schneider has been diagnosed with prostate cancer, Kathy Ivanciw’s mother Shirley Kiatta, Butch Crownover*

Remember our college students who are away at school: Zach & Jarrett Haydon, Emily & Courtney Meredith, and Dylan & Steven Petrosky

Attendance: Sunday AM: 41 PM: 32 Wednesday: 32 Contribution: \$3164.15