



## NOVEMBER 4, 2018

## The Focus of Worship Kevin Rhodes

After a potentially long, arduous trek, Jews returning to Jerusalem to participate in a great feast would make their final ascent to Jerusalem. enter a gate of the city, and ultimately approach the temple in order to worship. Climbing the stone stairs to the temple mount, they would sing psalms and focus their minds on the purpose of their journey. The Songs of Ascent chronicled their pilgrimage and helped shape their perspective as they left their homes to appear before the LORD. Beginning with a desire to return to Jerusalem for the feast (Psalm 120), the Jews would request safety for their travels (Psalm 121), building their anticipation for the day that they would arrive (Psalm 122). The hazards of their journey reminded them of the challenging nature of the world (Psalm 123), but to this they would add the constant trust that God was with them (Psalm 124), protecting them from their enemies (Psalm 125). The thought alone that He would do so sparked yet another series of reflections. If God values His people enough to protect them, we should value what it is to be God's people (Psalm 126) and therefore prepare the next generation of God's people accordingly (Psalm 127).

102 FM 1431 East

Meeting Times

9:30am

10:30am

6:00pm

Sunday

Bible Class

Worship

Worship

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00pm

Ladies Bible Class

meets Tuesdays at

10am

Marble Falls, TX 78654 www.lakecountrychurchofchrist.org (830) 220-8980

Indeed, to be God's people is to be a blessed people (Psalm 128), and the preservation of Israel through all their trials not only shows God's interest but implies a significant purpose (Psalm 129). That implied significance receives voice in the very next psalm as it reflects on the meaning and means of atonement (Psalm 130). Indeed, atonement provides the foundation for contentment while living in a world filled with moral challenges (Psalm 131), and that full atonement would ultimately come through David's Successor, promised by God and anointed by God (Psalm 132). This hope, this perspective, and this mindset brought Jews back from foreign lands to Jerusalem in the spirit of unity reflected in the growing chorus of voices singing as they arrived in their homeland's capital (Psalm 133).

Thus, Psalm 134 serves as the culmination of all their anticipation. Ascending the steps to the temple in the final stage of a passage begun far away, the people take in the scene as they join the ranks of those present to worship the LORD and enter the temple to see God's servants, the Levites, standing ready in the temple even at night (1 Chr. 9:33) to perform their duty on behalf of the people (Psalm 134:1; cf. 1 Chr. 23:25-30). As the people therefore approached the sanctuary of the temple bringing their own gifts and sacrifices, they could then enjoin the priests to worship with outstretched arms—not in the meaningless waving so commonly assumed by some today, but in the manner prescribed for the wave offering as they came before God on behalf of the pilgrims (Psalm 134:2). Then the psalm closes, with the rhetorical response of the priests pronouncing God's blessing on those who came to worship in accordance with His will (Psalm 134:3).

From the moment the preparation for the journey began, worshipping God remained the focus, and so should it be for us today. Worshipping God provides the motivation to go, for He deserves our full attention. Worshipping God offers sufficient reason to show determination and dedication. Worshipping God focuses on following God's will and therefore on offering what God promises to receive instead of entertaining ourselves and our worldly sensibilities. Worshipping God focuses on what God has done for us-not on what we have done for Him-because He has proven Himself worthy as our Creator and Benefactor. As Jesus would later explain to the woman of Samaria, true worship requires true worshippers (John 4:23-24). The Jews of old correctly journeyed to Jerusalem to worship at the temple and sang this song as the final part of their sojourn. As such, it points to a principle worthy of imitation. The highlight of the journey was bowing before God. It provided the motivation for beginning and the culmination at the end. This remains true today-not only in assembling to worship together as God's people on the first day of the week, but also in ultimately bowing together before God in heaven.

## Order of Service

Opening Remarks		Chris Windham
Song Leader		Tom Barr
Song #419	Lord We Come Before Thee Not	w
Song #571	Seeking the Lost	
Prayer		Sam Tarbet
Song #359	Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross	
Communion		Ray Parks
		Sam Phillips
Song #544	Redeemed	
Song #800	Zion's Call	
Sermon		Clay Bond
Song #337	Is Thy Heart Right with God?	
Offering		
Closing Remarks		Chris Windham
Song #438	My Hope is Built on Nothing L	ess
Dismissal Prayer		Leonard Meredith

## Upcoming Events:

- Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>
  Nov. 11<sup>th</sup> 14<sup>th</sup>
- Potluck Fellowship Schertz Lectures

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		Prayer List	
Wednes	sday Devotional	Schneider, Kathy Ivanciw's mother Shirley, Butch	
Oct. 31 <sup>s†</sup>	Russell Haydon		
		Remember our college students who are away at school: Jarrett & Luke Haydon, Emily & Courtney Meredith, and Dylan & Steven Petrosky Shut-Ins: Robbi George	
Attendance:	Sunday AM: 31 PM: 27	Wednesday: 17 Contribution: \$2755.03	