

Psalm 132: 1-9; "Until I find a Place for the Lord", A Communion Sermon prepared to stimulate our thoughts to a sincere remembrance of Christ as we approach the Lord's Table, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 6th, 2009, in the Morning Worship Service.

We have, here, a psalm which was apparently penned by Solomon as a prayer which makes a request of God that He would remember His father's desire, and his vow; that he would be given the privilege by God of building a temple to His holy name in Jerusalem. This was granted to David; that through his son Solomon an earthly temple would be built. And it was given as a promise to David that his greater son and descendant, the Lord Jesus Christ, would build a spiritual temple for the Lord; that which we refer to in New Testament times as the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Church is the true and lasting temple of the Lord; the fulfillment of the sure mercies that were given to David. The temple that Solomon prays for here, and which he dedicated to the Lord when he completed it, is a type of the New Testament temple which Christ Himself is still presently in the process of building. Jesus Christ was the greater David in His preparations for the building; a king who was a man of blood when He went to the cross and where He died for our sins. He was the greater Solomon in the building of the temple, in that He is a king who was raised from the dead to give life, and peace, and blessing to all His people. He takes all the materials (all the living stones) which the Father has given to Him; those people who were Elected before the foundation of the world; and He makes them into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit. He is One who has the spiritual wealth and riches to build this temple unto His Father and His God. He is the One who is praying, and interceding, and working, in order that His Church would be built and solemn and joyful worship be conducted in every place in the world where His name is named, His person loved, and His kingdom is promoted. Solomon prays for the establishment of the Old Testament church and Old Testament worship in words that reach down to us today in New Covenant, New Testament times. "Lord remember David and all his afflictions." For us here this morning, who have come here to remember the Lord Jesus, our prayer is "Lord, remember your Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, and all his afflictions which He suffered, in order to bring the New Testament Church into being." "Lord, remember your Son," and let us remember Him here today, as well, so that we would live lives of thankful service to You for all that You have done for us. Jesus suffered so that He might establish a place for the Lord in our hearts; that He might bring us to God and create in our hearts a place for the Mighty God of Jacob to dwell. The way that I want to approach this text this morning is to ask three questions. First of all, I want to ask you whether you have come to realize that Jesus Christ is the greater David in all His afflictions and that He is the Ark of God's Covenant? (Verses 1-5) Second, I would like to ask you if you have considered the places where you might hear of Him and find Him? (Verses 6 and 7) And then,

Third, I would like to ask you whether you understand that Christ died so that you would be clothed with righteousness and shout for joy? (Verses 8 and 9)

1st of all - Have you realized that Jesus Christ is the greater David in all His afflictions and that He is the Ark of God's Covenant? (Verses 1-5)

"Lord, remember David and all his afflictions, how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob: 'Surely I will not go into the chamber of my house, or go up to the comfort of my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob.'" David was a man who had many afflictions in relation to coming into possession of his kingdom. He was hated by king Saul because he had done valiantly for God and had gone out to meet the Philistine Goliath in battle and had single-handedly won a great victory, because God was with him. Saul became envious of him and he hated David because the women said, "Saul has slain his thousands and David his ten thousands. He was pursued by Saul who wanted to kill him to keep him from coming into the possession of the kingdom. David, in all the times when Saul was chasing him, and hounding him, and trying to kill him, was trying to do the right thing. His highest concern was the honor and glory of God. He worshiped God in his spirit and wanted to see God's cause of righteousness and His kingdom of holiness established. He wanted to see His glorious person worshiped and adored by all Israel. He wanted to bring the ark up to Jerusalem and have God's glorious presence be with them as a people. This is why his greatest desire; greater than the comforts of going to bed and going to sleep, on a certain night when he was a young king; his greatest desire was to find a place for the Lord's ark to dwell and rest. This is the only place in the Scriptures where his vow was recorded. His vow was related to the longing of his heart, that God would have a place to live and dwell among His people. God had commanded Moses and the children of Israel to make the ark, this amazing cabinet or box, as a visible token of His presence with them. God's presence, and His glory and power, dwelling with His people, were; in those days, identified with this beautiful little box of Shittim wood. It was covered with gold, and overshadowed by the wings of the cherubim on either side and had a mercy seat in the center. In it the tablets of stone; God's law, the jar of manna, and Aaron's rod that budded. God commanded that the ark be made and carried with the children of Israel as a visible representation of His presence and glory with them. In this time of the Davidic kingdom, David wanted to find a place for the ark to permanently rest. He is a type of Christ in what we are looking at this morning.

For the Lord Jesus Christ was the descendant of David who was the fulfillment of all the promises that were given to David. God would remember David's afflictions and his vow, but He would also, and in a greater sense, remember His Son and His afflictions and apply the merit of His sufferings and death to all the believing sinners in Israel. And not only would he be the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world to Israel, but through the life and death of Jesus Christ, sinners of every tribe, people, and language in all the nations of the earth, all the way down through the history of the world would be saved by their faith in Him; because He fulfilled God's

holy law. He alone, of all men, had the law of God in his heart, keeping it and loving it; that when He obeyed it, He obeyed it perfectly in every way. Not only David is a type of Christ in this psalm, but the ark is also a type of Christ in this psalm. The ark was the Old Testament cabinet of God's glory among God's people. It was the perfect representation of what Jesus Christ came to do. He came down to tabernacle among men. The ark tabernacled among men. In John 1: 14 it says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. The ark was constructed of acacia wood, a very earthly substance; and it was covered with pure gold, a substance of transcendent value. Even so the Lord Jesus Christ assumed human nature, but he also retained His deity; two natures in one person, so that he might fully identify with us in our fallen human condition, and yet; because He was also deity, He could also merit by His righteous life and sacrificial death, all that was necessary to satisfy the perfect righteousness and justice of God. In the ark was deposited the tablets of the law, and in Jesus Christ we find that in His heart was the Law of God to do it. In the ark was deposited the pot of manna; that bread sent down from heaven to feed the children of Israel in the Wilderness. The Lord Jesus became the bread of life; so that all who come to Him shall never hunger, and in Him is seen the life of the world. We do not read of our Lord Jesus taking a vow, as David did, but as we look at His words and His life; it all seems like the fulfillment of one giant vow. In Psalm 40, verse 6, speaking in Prophetic language concerning the Christ, David says, "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire; My ears You have opened." "Burnt offering and sin offering You did not require." "Then I said, 'Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.'" "I delight to do Your will, O my God, and your law is within my heart. In the garden of Gethsemane when He had come to the place where He realized that God His Father was asking Him to bear His righteous indignation and wrath against sinners and their sins, He said this: "Abba, Father, all things are possible for You." "Take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not what I will, but what You will." The afflictions of David were like this is a smaller and more earthly sense. He strove, and He vowed not to rest for a short time, in order that he could find a place for God's ark to rest physically in a temple, and not simply in a tabernacle. But it is the afflictions and sufferings of Jesus, the greater David, that we remember this morning. They are remembered by all believing sinners in every generation down to today. That is because the Lord Jesus Christ strove with all of His heart and mind and strength to fulfill the law of God; He fulfilled it not to destroy it, but so that He could purchase the right for sinners to become the children and sons of God. He could then dwell in men's hearts and God's law would also become a delight to them.

The ark of God had a mercy seat. The mercy seat of the ark shows typically what Jesus Christ was sent into the world to do. He would tabernacle with men, but then He would offer Himself as a sacrifice for sins at the cross. He would accomplish redemption, the buying of sinners back from their state of condemnation and slavery in sin, and bring mercy to them, having made propitiation to God by His sacrifice.

When Bezalel made the ark, he made the mercy seat of pure gold. The indication, here, is that our coming to know God, being shown mercy instead of judgment, is a divine work. Salvation is of God alone, through Jesus Christ, and a most precious work it is. Listen to Jonathan Edwards on this: "The mercy-seat was upon the ark, and never was separated from it, which shows that God's mercy is only in and through Jesus Christ. God sent His Son into the world. The ark was God's chest, or cabinet. Men's cabinets contain their most precious treasure: which denotes the infinite dignity and preciousness of Christ in the sight of God the Father, and the infinite love the Father hath to him, and delight he hath in him. The beloved Son of God is his most precious treasure, in which God's infinite riches, and infinite happiness and joy, from eternity to eternity, does consist. Cabinets are made to contain a treasure; so the ark contained the precious treasure of the law of God, and the pot of manna: the one signifying divine holiness, of which the law of God is an emanation and expression; and the other signifying divine happiness, for manna was spiritual and heavenly bread, or food; but food is the common figure in Scripture to represent happiness, delight, and satisfaction; or in one word, those two things that were contained in this cabinet, signified the Holy Spirit, which is the same with the divine good or fullness of God, his infinite holiness and joy. Christ is the person in whom is the Spirit of God, and therefore he is called the Anointed. In him dwells this fullness of the Godhead: he is the cabinet of God the Father in which is contained all his treasure. In him the Father beholds infinite beauty, (or holiness, which is the beauty of the divine nature,) and in him the Father has his food, or infinite delight and satisfaction." So says Jonathan Edwards. So what can we conclude about the afflictions of David? We see that the Old testament afflictions of David on behalf of God's honor and glory, seeking to establish the people of that day and for generations to come in the true and lively worship of God; those vows were heard, and the prayers of David's heart were answered. They were remembered by God. The ark of the Covenant was going to find a place to rest. And that this incident represents every believer finding a place for the God of Jacob to reside in their hearts because of Christ's sufferings.

But now 2ndly - I would like to ask you if you have considered the places where you might hear of Him and find Him? (Verses 6 and 7)

"Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it in the fields of the woods, let us go into His tabernacle; let us worship at His footstool." "Arise O Lord, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength." It is evident in these verses that Solomon or one of the sons of Asaph, David's song-leaders must have written this psalm. It speaks of the tabernacle, the place where the ark of God rested in the past, before the temple was built. It could have been penned before the temple was built, or it could have been penned as the temple was built and was being completed, sometime shortly before the dedication of that temple. Whoever wrote it, wanted to relate some of the history for us as to how the ark came to reside with them there in Jerusalem. What David did then, in relation to the ark, was intended to speak to us here today. What they did in attempting to bring up the ark to the place where it

would more lastingly abide, is meant to speak to us of what we should do in relation to bringing the reality of the death and resurrection of Christ into our hearts and into our worship here in this place, as the church gathered. The ark of God was the ark of the Covenant and we have seen that it was representing Christ; His person and work to them. If they had the ark with them they beheld God's glory. If they had the ark with them, they could inquire of it in connection with the priestly and prophetic ministry of that age. If they had the ark, they had the evidence of God's love and mercy to them as a people. But the question which each of us must ask ourselves today is this. Have each of us here found this ark of the covenant? Have each of us here found Christ and prayed to have Him enter our heart? Do those of us who know Christ desire more than anything else that the God of Jacob and the God of David have a place to dwell here in our midst? Are we as believers concerned that the true worship of God flourish in our hearts and in this place? Are we zealous as David was to see God's honor and glory upheld in the regular and on-going worship of God, so that our ark, the Lord Jesus Christ is seen in our midst, and the presence and glory of God known as a reality in the way that we live our lives? I think that David and the children of Israel valued the presence of the ark with them more because of the fact that they had known for 20 years before this vow that David took; the absence of it.

The ark was kept in the Tabernacle in the time of Moses and the wilderness wanderings and was with Joshua and the people when they came into the land of promise. And then eventually it was kept at Shiloh in the days of the Judges and Samuel. But then something very awful happened in Israel. The priests who ministered to the Lord were unfaithful to the Lord in the days of Eli the high priest. They were very immoral men; they were very irreverent men, and their father Eli did not restrain them from their sins or take them out of their office. And so God determined to bring judgment upon Israel because of it. If you will recall, the Philistines defeated Israel in battle, even after Israel had brought the ark of the covenant from Shiloh to their camp beside Ebenezer. Israel shouted with a loud shout when the ark came into the camp because they believed that God's presence and His power would be with them in this second battle with the Philistines, and when the Philistines heard the shout they knew that the ark of the Lord was there with them. They talked it over with each other and determined to fight even harder so that they would not become Israel's servants. There was a very great slaughter made upon Israel and the ark of God was captured, and the two sons of Eli were killed in the battle. Eli fell off the wall that he was sitting on when he heard the news of the ark's capture, and with its capture, the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel. Things were really not the same in relation to the worship of God until the time of David. The ark, after some 7 months in Philistine hands, was finally sent back to Israel after God's hand was heavy upon every city that it was sent to. It came back to Israel via Beth Shemesh and God actually struck the men of Beth Shemesh because they looked into the ark of the Lord. 50,000 and 70 men were struck by the Lord and died. Mere curiosity about Christ and holy things will never do a person or a people any good. God must be treated with reverence if you would find a place for

Him to dwell in your heart. And so the men of Beth Shemesh sent to inhabitants of Kirjath Jearim and asked them to come up and take the ark of the Lord and bring it to them. This Kirjath Jearim is "the fields of the woods" of our text in Psalm 132. It was in Ephrathah, Judah. Ephrathah means the "city of woods or forests." They took it and brought it into the house of Abinadab on the hill, and consecrated Eleazar his son to keep the ark of the Lord. (1 Samuel 7: 1) Then it says, "So it was that the ark remained in Kirjath Jearim a long time; it was there twenty years." "And all the house of Israel lamented after the Lord." You see, with the loss of the ark to the Philistines, the glory of the Lord had departed from Israel as a people for those 20 years. And yet there were still people who were keeping the ark and housing the ark with them in Kirjath Jearim all during that time; and they were being blessed for it. Even so today; if other people are not trying to find a place in their hearts for the Mighty God of Jacob; you should, as a believer in Jesus Christ. In days of apostasy and great public sinfulness, the reality of hearts who hold Christ dear and precious will be blessed. "Behold, we heard of it in Ephrathah; we found it (that is the ark) in the fields of the woods. I like what Spurgeon says about this: "David said that he found it in the fields of the wood; that is, where he did not expect to find it." "Have not many of us found Christ where we never thought we should find him?" "Oh! says one, I shall never go to heaven, I am sure, through the preaching of Mr. so-and-so; I cannot endure him." "I am sure I should never get a blessing among such-and-such people." "And perhaps, dear friend, the very man that you have thought could not be a blessing to you, and the very place where you did not expect to find Christ will be the exact spot where you shall meet Him." "In the case of David's finding the ark, it was not only where he could not have expected it, but it was in a place that was despised--a rustic place, --in the fields of the wood." "Perhaps the Lord may lead you to some very plain minister, without any polish, or talent, or ability--a rustic speaker--a very Amos; and lo! There you will find the ark of the Lord." "If the Lord will guide you to heaven through the word of a chimney sweep, it would be far better than that you should go to hell under the ministry of the most eloquent orator or the greatest Bishop who ever lived." "If you are brought to Jesus Christ by one who murders the Queen's English--it is a pity that he should do that; but still, it does not matter much so long as he does not murder the Lord's gospel, but the gospel comes out straight and clear, despite his broken words; --then you will, as it were, find Christ in the fields of the wood." "I have known some who have found Christ in a very lowly place; they have gone away from all companions and up in their own little room they have sought and found Him." "I knew one who found the Savior in a saw-pit, and another who found him in a hay-loft." "Some have walked the streets of London; and have been more alone there than anywhere else; and as they have trudged along, men have seemed to them like trees walking; they have found Christ figuratively, "in the fields of the wood." "Get alone dear friends; it is horrible to live in a crowd." "I do not know how a man's spiritual life is to be maintained constantly in a crowd; he must often be alone." Truly, my friends, Spurgeon is speaking a very important truth. Christ is not often found in the crowd, but more often when we are

alone seeking him.

The other place where Christ, the New Testament ark of the covenant is found is in a church where He is preached and where people are seeking to understand just how they might bring Him up to them all together so that they might together worship Him. Now David had this desire to bring the ark up from Kirjath Jearim to Jerusalem. He wanted to "go up to His tabernacle" to worship Him. "Let us go into His tabernacle." "Let us worship at His footstool." Turn over to 1 Chronicles 13 with me. David tried at this point in time to bring the ark up to Jerusalem and he failed in the attempt. In verse 6 here, it says, "And David and all Israel went up to Baalah, to Kirjath Jearim, which belonged to Judah, to bring up from the ark of God the Lord, who dwells between the cherubim, where His name is proclaimed." "So they carried the ark of God on a new cart from the house of Abinadab, and Uzza and Ahio drove the cart." "Then David and all Israel played music before God with all their might with singing on harps, on stringed instruments, on tambourines, on cymbals, and with trumpets." "And when they came to Chidon's threshing floor, Uzza put out his hand to hold the ark, for the oxen stumbled." "Then the anger of the Lord was aroused against Uzza, and He struck him because he put his hand to the ark; and he died there before God." "And David became angry because of the Lord's outbreak against Uzza; therefore that place is called Perez Uzza to this day." "David was afraid of God that day, saying, 'How can I bring the ark of God to me?'" "So David would not move the ark with him into the City of David, but took it aside into the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite." "The ark of God remained with the family of Obed-Edom in his house three months." "And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-Edom and all that he had."

We see from these verses and the places where the ark had been in the previous 20 years that there are sinful things that will hinder the ark of Christ's presence and glory being with any person or any church if they fall into acting in these ways. The first was immorality in the days of Eli's sons. Immorality among God's people and in their either subtly or openly approving of it and encouraging it will cause the glory of God to depart from a church or a people. The second may seem trivial but it is not. It is when Christians tolerate procedural errors in the way that Christ's person and His work and His worship are viewed and conducted. Christ cannot dwell with irreverence in His worship. Christ cannot dwell with the doctrinal errors of those who stretch out their hand to steady the ark; not believing that God is well able to take care of His own glory, and thinking that they need to add their works to what Christ has done. It is the duty of pastors and people in our local churches to preserve the simplicity of the order of how God is to be worshiped. That order was not preserved that day. The only ones who were to be carrying the ark to bring it up were the priests and Levites. They were supposed to pick the ark up and carry it on their shoulders; not allow just anyone to touch it or move it. Even so, today, many people think that anyone who takes the lead or anyone that the church appoints is called to the ministry, and may lead in worship and bring Christ up into their Jerusalem. Women can preach; undiscerning and unqualified men can preach and lead; and so

God's glory is brought down to the dust and He is angered and provoked by those who take it into their own hands to steady the ark of God's worship. God is sovereign and He has determined what should be done for His own glory in the worship of the Church. David thought that if the Philistines sent the ark back on a cart, that it would not matter if the ark was put back on a cart to bring it into Jerusalem. But we must beware of procedural errors lest instead of blessing, God will come against us in judgment. True reverence is learning to do things in worship in the way that God has commanded and the way that He has appointed. As I ask you to come down to the front now, to partake of the Lord's Supper, let us search ourselves; our hearts and our lives to see if there is anything that would be hindering our being able to make our hearts a dwelling place for the Lord. Are there any sins that I have not confessed; is there any going around the commandments of His word to do things my way instead of His? Have I been careless in the way that I have worshiped and served Him. Let us now come down front and sit together and think a little more about these things, and there I will give you a few more thoughts.

3rdly - I would like to ask you whether you understand that Christ died so that you would be clothed with righteousness and shout for joy?

(Verses 8 and 9)

"Arise, O Lord, to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength." "Let your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Your saints shout for joy." I like what it says in 2 Samuel 6, verse 12 about what happened after this whole incident of David's failure to bring the ark up. It says, "So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." (That is; God blessing him for housing it.) "So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the City of David with gladness." "And so it was, when those bearing the ark of the Lord had gone six paces, that he sacrificed oxen and fatted sheep." "Then David danced before the Lord with all his might; and David was wearing a linen ephod." "So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the trumpet." The saints shouted for joy that day. And the priests were clothed with righteousness in the way that brought the ark up. 1 Chronicles 16: 1 says, "So they brought the ark of God, and set it in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it." "Then they offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before God." "And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord." "Then he distributed to everyone of Israel, both man and woman, to everyone a loaf of bread, a piece of meat, and a cake of raisins." "And he appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the Lord, to commemorate, to thank, and to praise the Lord God of Israel." Let us understand today that in these elements of bread and wine that are distributed to each of you who believes in Christ, we are renewing our covenant with our God. The ark of the Covenant, Jesus Christ is in the midst of His tabernacle, His temple, His Church today. As we partake of these elements, we are in our hearts thinking of all that He means to us. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in

Christ. He has given to us His presence and blessing, and has told us that He will always be with us to the end of the age. In Him is found our righteousness and strength. To Him we give our hearts anew, and all the praise that we can muster, we bring now to Him. He has clothed you with His righteousness in order that you might be more righteous and holy in your life. Let us take to heart, the reasons that He died, and the expectation that He has of us now as His disciples to be holy by His power and His grace.