

Good morning! One of the things that stands out in the Old Testament is that the journeys of God's people were bumpy. They would have a "good" king---and then he would go badly. Some kind of idolatry would enter in and there would be mixture in his life. That king would die and another king would come along. He might start off as good, but then repeat the cycle of selfishness and sin. Why should we expect anything different? These kings were humans, after all. Not only that, it was not God's highest purpose in the first place for Israel to have a king. They wanted a king so they could be like the other nations! Israel's road was uneven...and so is ours. This morning, let's consider together the words of this plaintive psalm:

How can we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land? If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget her skill. May my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I do not remember you, if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy.

Psalm 137:4-6

In this passage we hear the sad cry of God's people, who are being held as captives, exiles in a foreign land. They have no song; it doesn't feel right to sing the Lord's songs in this place of foreign worship. They have hung their harps on the willow trees and they are remembering the joy and the beauty of the city and the land they love, the land that is so far away. Can you feel it? Sometimes God deprives us of our blessings in order for us to truly appreciate them. I recall a time when Pam and I were looking for a church and we felt this way. When God brought us to the church where we are now, it was a great surprise because it wasn't what we thought we were looking for! We had to be thirsty enough to see it. Out of the Babylonian captivity the Jews who returned, returned with a far greater devotion and commitment to Zion than they had ever had before. God knows when we have learned our lesson and will appreciate what He's done for us; when that time comes, He restores us. How about you, this morning? Do you today feel a longing for blessings that you've lost through disobedience and backsliding? Maybe God is allowing that to happen so that you will appreciate His grace in your life. Could that be true? If so, turn around and get that straightened out! When He restores those blessings to you, you'll appreciate them... as you never appreciated them before!