

Opening Illustration:

Our introduction to living in the inner city of North Minneapolis:

- Loud bustling streets (the sound of cars zooming down the one-way street in front of our house at speeds that far exceeded the 30 mph speed limit... people yelling at each other... a helicopter flying over the neighborhood... a spotlight on the door as I went outside to see what was going on...
- Later that night: “Protected by VIPER. Stand Back.” Repeated for hours. Someone broke into a car that had a security system.
- This was a foreshadowing of what was to come. On two different occasions, we had our car stolen: once from our driveway... the other from the parking lot of the church.
- It wasn’t the most STABLE, SECURE ENVIRONMENT I had ever seen!

Transition to the experience faced by the pilgrims as they embarked one of three annual festivals in Jerusalem: Passover, Pentecost, and Booths – the Psalms of Ascent (120-134).

A pattern discovered (Psalms of Ascent:120-134)¹

- Difficulty – a situation of difficulty
- Deliverance – focuses on God’s power to keep
- Delight – the security in Zion and its God

Psalm 123-125 –

- 123 – Difficulty: the ill and unjust treatment of people (contempt through scorn and pride) (3-4)
- 124 – Deliverance from the Lord
- 125 – Security in Zion (1)

A Picture of Security

- Trust in the Lord (1-3)
 - Note the transition between verses 3 and 4.
- Cry out to the Lord (4-5)

READ PSALM 125

I. Trust in the Lord. (1-3)

¹ *Psalms by the Day: A New Devotional Translation* by Alec Motyer

A. For stability... (Titus 1:2 – a picture of God the Father)

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

- A song about people who choose to trust in the LORD

Those who trust in the Lord **are like Mount Zion**, which cannot be moved, but abides forever.

- A PICTURE OF STABILITY
 - A city on a hill
 - A nation located in the center of the globe
 - A nation surrounded by enemies
 - 22 Islamic Nations
 - 640 times in size
 - 60 times in population

Those who trust in the Lord are like Mount Zion, **which cannot be moved, but abides forever.**

- Isaiah 60:1-22
- Zechariah 8:20-23
- Revelation 21:9-27

B. For security. (2) (Presence of the Holy Spirit [Jn 14:15-17])

² **As the mountains surround Jerusalem,**

- A picture of the topography of Jerusalem

so the Lord surrounds his people, from this time forth and forevermore.

Zechariah 2:5 -- ⁵ And I will be to her a wall of fire all around, declares the Lord, and I will be the glory in her midst.”

2 Kings 6:17 -- ¹⁷ Then Elisha prayed and said, “O Lord, please open his eyes that he may see.” So the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw, and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire all around Elisha.

- How do the mountains surrounding Jerusalem remind the pilgrim of God’s presence?

The Significance of Mount Moriah as it relates to the presence of God:

- 2 Samuel 24:1-25
 - 24:1-9: counting of David's army
 - 24:10-17: confronted by a prophet; choice of judgment (3 years of famine; 3 months of flight from his enemies; **3 days of pestilence**)
 - 24:18-25: confronted by the Angel of the Lord; the purchase of the threshing floor from Araunah the Jebusite
- Genesis 22:2 – location where Abraham offered up his only son Isaac
- 2 Chronicles 3:1 – location where Solomon built the magnificent temple

Mount Moriah was the place God made His presence known to Israel! Today, He dwells within us through the Holy Spirit!

C. For mercy. (3) (The reign of King Jesus [Rev. 19:11-16])

³**For the scepter of wickedness shall not rest** (Isaiah 11: just rule of the Messiah)
on the land allotted to the righteous, (Psalm 16:5-6: the lines have fallen on pleasant places)
lest the righteous stretch out
their hands to do wrong.

- The Tribe of Judah in Nehemiah 4:10, 12 & the wealthy in Israel in 5:1-5
- Gen. 3:22: God's love and mercy displayed through His protection from sin and deliverance from temptation)

A PICTURE OF THE TRINITY:

Verse 1 – The Promise [stability] made by **God the Father (Titus 1:2)**

Verse 2 – The Comfort [security] offered by **God the Spirit (John 14:15-17)**

Verse 3 – The [Mercy] provided by **God the Son (Col. 1:20)**

A Picture of Security

I. *Trust in the Lord (1-3)*

- A. *For stability (1)*
- B. *For security (2)*
- C. *For mercy (3)*

II. **Cry out to the Lord (4-5)**

“The psalm ends with an implicit call for living by faith – that the world we live in is ruled by Yahweh so as to enforce moral standards, to reward well-doing and punish evil-doing.

In verses 4-5 this is made a matter of prayer – not prayer against the oppressors (or whatever) but prayer that Yahweh will act according to his nature and revelation of his will [*connect with David’s selection of 3 days of pestilence based on the character of God in 2 Samuel 24:14*]. **This is the way to keep the ultimate in sight when the immediate is rough.**” – *Psalms by the Day* by Alec Moyter (page 373)

⁴Do good, O Lord, to those who are good, and to those who are upright in their hearts!

⁵But those who turn aside to their crooked ways
the Lord will lead away with evildoers!
Peace be upon Israel!

- A. For justice (4-5a)
 - Internal goodness (4)
 - External corruption (5a)

Retribution Theology (the conclusion made by Job’s friends): Lev. 26 and Deut. 28

- B. For peace (5b)
 - Shalom – wholeness, wellness, reconciliation
 - Upon Israel
 - Selective
 - Deut. 7:6-11
 - Inclusive
 - Gal. 6:16 ¹⁶And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.
 - Redemptive
 - Col. 1:20 ²⁰and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Application:

- **Are you like Mount Zion?**

- Stable. (1)
- Secure. (2)
- Satisfied. (3)

- **Are you flirting with sin?**

- "Your hands stretched out through..." (3b)
 - Unguarded doubts (Gen. 3:1-5)
 - Misdirected desires (James 1:14-15)

- **Are you viewing your life through the lens of the Law or the Gospel? (4-5)**

- Retribution?
- Redemption?