Longing for God in Zion

Lessons 12, 1st Quarter March 9-15, 2024.

Sabbath Afternoon, March 9

Memory Text:

"My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the LORD: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." KJV — Psalm 84:2

"There is need of prayer,—most earnest, fervent, agonizing prayer,—such prayer as David offered when he exclaimed: 'As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.' I have longed after thy precepts;' I have longed for thy salvation.' 'My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.' My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath unto thy judgments." (Psalm 42:1; 119:40, 174; 84:2, 119:20) This is the spirit of wrestling prayer, such as was possessed by the royal psalmist. Daniel prayed to God, not exalting himself or claiming any goodness: "O Lord, hear; O Lord, forgive; O Lord, hearken and do; defer not, for thine own sake, O my God." (Daniel 9:19.) This is what James calls the effectual, fervent prayer. Of Christ it is said, "And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly." (Luke 22:44.) In what contrast to this prayerless, self-sufficient spirit of heaven are the feeble, heartless prayers that are offered to God. Many are content with lip-service, and but few have a sincere, earnest, affectionate longing after God." GW92 30.3

Sunday, March 10

A Day in your courts is better than a Thousand

Read Psalm 84:1-12. Why does the psalmist long to dwell in the sanctuary? Why is he so blessed by the sanctuary experience?

"Oh, why does not the church of Christ arise, and put on her beautiful garments? Why does she not shine? The great reason of such feeble manifestations is that she has claimed to be wealthy and to have need of no knowledge of Christ, and so low an estimate of what he will be to them, and what they will be to him, that he has left the most solemn, weighty truths over committed to mortals. Were our words, our thoughts, our actions purer and more elevated, we would more fully realize our dependence upon God and our responsibilities in a far different light. How solemn, how sacred, they would appear! We should have a deeper sense of our obligations, and should feel that our souls are worth go before him, and he will be guided from above." 1BLittle, LS 93, 1903. par. 8

Monday, March 11

Pray for the peace of Jerusalem

Read Psalm 122:1-9. What are the sentiments of the worshippers upon their arrival in Jerusalem? What do you hope to find in Jerusalem? What should be your attitude?

"Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, led the women of Israel with timbrels, saying, 'Sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously' (Exodus 15:21). The ransomed of God in the Christian dispensation were their wonderful experience into song. They chanted the grand Hebrew psalms with the same reverence and devotion which inspired the composers of the sacred records. They exulted God; they brought their experience into history and elevated the sentiments of others. Many of the great odes in the Bible were composed on occasions of extraordinary manifestations of God. Some of the most sublime and inspiring songs and the music of the cymbals, the voices of praise and thanksgiving came from those who were in prison, in exile, in the furnace of affliction, in the lions' den, in the house of the dead. Our feeble voices are worthy the gates, to celebrate the praises of God, who has redeemed us from the power of the grave, who has ransomed us from the power of Satan. Psalms from David produced in feeble and sickly frames, and afflicted with every kind, were borne by the worshippers. The fervent and the choicest of Christians have found in these psalms a fitness to express their feelings of gratitude. Devotion to God was the order of all who visited the sanctuary. This should be the spirit of our worship. We should come into the courts of our God with his light of the holy city, they looked with reverential awe upon the living mass of people who like themselves were winding their way to the temple. As they saw the smoke of the incense ascending and heard the triumphs of the Levites heralding the break of day, the people caught the inspiration of the hour and broke forth into sacred songs. 'Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness. Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.' Mingled with the solemn grandeur of the Psalms 122:1-9. Open the ye gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength. Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. Awake and sing, ye that dwell in dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. Come, my people, enter thou in the chambers, and shut thy doors behind thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. Isaiah 26:1-20. Behold, the Lord cometh out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity: the earth also shall disclose her blood, and shall no more cover her slain. Isaiah 26:21. Let the heavens and the earth praise him, the seas, and everything that moveth therein. For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah: that they may dwell there, and have it in possession. The children also of his servants shall inherit it: and they that love his name shall dwell therein. Psalm 69:34-36. Let the saints be joyful in glory: let them sing aloud upon their beds. Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a sharp sword in their hand; To execute vengeance upon the heathen, and punishments among the people; To bind their kings with chains, and their nobles with fetters of iron; To execute upon them the judgment written: this honour have all his saints. Praise ye the Lord. Psalm 149:5-9. Let the saints of God in Christ Jesus, and offspring of God, be joyful in the Lord. Let the saints of God,