November 8-9, 2026

Sermon Series: The Long Way Home (Songs of Ascent)

Sermon Title: Far From Home

by: Pastor Alan Hannah

Key Scripture: Psalm 120:1-7 [NLT]

[1]I took my troubles to the LORD; I cried out to him, and he answered my prayer. [2]Rescue me, O LORD, from liars and from all deceitful people. [3]O deceptive tongue, what will God do to you? How will He increase your punishment? [4]You will be pierced with sharp arrows and burned with glowing coals. [5]How I suffer in far-off Meshech. It pains me to live in distant Kedar. [6]I am tired of living among people who hate peace. [7]I search for peace; but when I speak of peace, they want war!

Key Points:

- The Psalms (or Songs) of Ascent were a "playlist" sung by the nation Israel as they pilgrimaged to Jerusalem three times each year as commanded in Deuteronomy 16:16 for the Feasts of Unleavened Bread, Harvest, and Shelters. They would have been sung as a family.
- The writer of Psalm 120 (unknown) first gets honest about where he's living before he talks about where he's going (to Jerusalem).
- The psalmist doesn't go up to worship because life at home is perfect; he goes up because it isn't.
- You don't have to love where you are to know that you were made for somewhere else.
- When you're living somewhere that doesn't feel like home, cry out.
- When you're living somewhere that doesn't feel like home, carry peace.
- Peace is work:
    - It's the work of listening to understand, not to argue or prove someone wrong.
    - It's the work of having empathy: the ability to understand another person's experience, background, or perspective.
    - It's the work of asking more questions than giving answers.
    - It's the work of assuming the best of others.
    - It's the work of recognizing that every human being is created in the image of God.
- Don't just be *for* peace. *BE* peace!

Life Group Discussion Questions
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WARM-UPS

1. What was the longest road trip you ever took? Share a story from the journey.
2. What comes to mind when you think of pilgrims? How would you describe one?

DISCUSSION

1. This psalm begins with a cry for deliverance, and we learned that nearly one-third of the psalms are laments. What do you think of the concept that God would rather hear your honest complaints than your polished performance? How might that change how you pray now?
2. Of all the complaints the writer lists in Psalm 120, which one strikes you the most?
3. What is your "meshech" – where do you feel the most out of place right now? Why?
4. Are there times where instead of carrying peace, you carried war? What did you learn today and by meditating on this Psalm that would cause you to handle those circumstances differently?

IN THE WORD

1. Read Ephesians 2:11-17. Verse 14 declares boldly that Christ is our peace. How did He end conflict and reconcile us? How does this prompt us to reconsider our divisions in the church – whether political, racial, relational, or otherwise?
2. Psalm 130 is a parallel Song of Ascent. What similarities exist in the first verse of both psalms?
3. Just as many psalms were laments, Jesus lamented and wept when he looked over Jerusalem in Luke 19:41-42. How do you see Jesus' heart for peace here? How did His peace contrast with what the religious and political leaders of Israel were seeking at the time?
4. Finish with Psalm 131 (another Song of Ascent) and meditate on how David speaks of peace in his soul.

PRACTICE

Have a look at the "peace is work" list on the other side of this sheet. Be intentional and look at 2-3 of the concepts and put them into practice in your relationships and interactions this week. Journal them as they occur.