

“A Prayer Before Church Services”

INTRODUCTION: A few years ago I was preaching Psalm 100, and I called it “A Prayer for the Parking Lot”

1. Meaning **not** that we pray for the parking lot but while we are in the parking lot before we enter into the Worship Center for Sunday corporate worship.

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving,
and his courts with praise!
Give thanks to him; bless his name! (Ps. 100:4)*

2. I suggest to you this evening that the *twin Psalm* to Psalm 100 would be Psalm 24

- a) not because they are side by side in the Psalter
- b) but because they fit side by side in *themes*
- c) **A Prayer Before Church Services**

3. Why do I say this? Because Psalm 24:7-10 is frequently used as an *antiphonal call to Worship* in Evangelical Church services:

Pastor: *Lift up your heads, O gates!
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in. (Ps. 24:7)*

Congregation: *Who is this King of Glory?*

Pastor: *The Lord, strong and mighty; the Lord,
mighty in Battle!*

Congregation: *Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in. (Ps. 24:9)*

Pastor: *Who is this King of glory?*

Congregation: *The Lord of hosts; he is the King of
Glory!*

4. In the tradition of the Church Psalm 24 has long been associated with the corporate life of the worshipping church.
 - a) Its occasion? Why David wrote this Psalm?
 - b) **H.C. Leopold:** *Psalms; p. 215*

A great majority of writers on the subject will concede that this psalm may have been written on the occasion of the return of the ark to its position of honor and dignity in the city of Jerusalem after it had been captured by the Philistines in the days of Eli and had then for a long time under Saul and in the beginning of David's reign been all but entombed or at least consigned to comparative oblivion. II Sam. 6:12ff, relates the

consummation of this purpose by David after an abortive attempt had previously been made with somewhat disastrous results. The people had not apparently yet learned the proper spirit of respect and humility at this first attempt, and so they were in need of sober correction. After this had been administered, and it was obvious that wholesome instruction might well be in place, David himself may well have written this psalm further to instruct the nation. Nothing in the psalm conflicts with this view; all things in it strongly substantiate such an approach.

c) The *sitz en leben*? 2 Samuel 6:1ff

(1) *David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart, with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. And David was angry because the Lord had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" So David was not willing to take the ark of the Lord into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household. (2 Sam. 6:1-11)*

(2) David writes Psalm 24

(3) *And it was told King David, "The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. And 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 horn. (2 Sam. 6:12-15)*

d) Later in Israel's history this Liturgical Psalm became a regular *entrance hymn* for special occasions in the Temple.

e) **Elmer A. Leslie:** *The Psalms: Translated and Interpreted in the Light of Hebrew Life and Worship*; p. 188

This psalm is a liturgy of entrance into the sanctuary. It has three parts: verses 1-2 form a hymn of the Lord's world dominion; verses 3-6, a compact liturgy of entrance; and verses 7-

10, likewise a thrilling liturgy of entrance, in which the ark of the Lord plays a significant part, especially in the ceremonies of the New Year in Israel. The noble liturgical hymn created by the fusion of these three parts is one of the most exalted and majestic in the Psalter and has fittingly found rich entrance into the anthems and solos of Judaism and Christianity.

- f) After the exile, when the Second Temple Levites put together the Psalter, they also chose of Israel “*the Psalms for the the days of the week*” (labelled so in the LXX)
- (1) Sunday: *Psalm 24*
 - (2) Monday: *Psalm 48*
 - (3) Tuesday: *Psalm 82*
 - (4) Wednesday: *Psalm 94*
 - (5) Thursday: *Psalm 81*
 - (6) Friday: *Psalm 93*
 - (7) Saturday: **A Psalm for the Sabbath** (*Psalm 92*)
- g) So, the “Psalm for the first day of the week” (Monday) is Psalm 24, because the Hebrews, after the Sabbath Day, would then go out in the world (*creation*) to do God’s work as farmers, herdsman, merchants, housewives, teachers, businessmen, etc. (on Sunday).
- h) In the Anglican Church Psalm 24 is sung on *Ascension Thursday*.
- (1) **Derek Kidner**: *Psalm 1-72; TOTC; p. 113*
Traditionally this is sung on Ascension Day, and has inspired some of the great hymns for that occasion.
 - (2) *The Earth, With All That Dwell Therein* (#68)
 - (3) *Lift Up Your Head, Ye Mighty Gates* (#198)
 - (4) *The King of Glory Comes* (#240)
 - (5) *Hail the Day That Sees Him Rise* (#290)
 - (6) *Who Shall Ascend to the Mountain of the Lord?* (#292)
- i) Some churches see Psalm 24 related to the season of *Advent*.
- (1) The OT anticipation of the coming Messiah entering His Temple.
 - (2) “*Behold, I send my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. And the Lord whom you seek will suddenly come to his temple; and the messenger of the covenant in whom you delight, behold, he is coming, says the Lord of hosts. (Malachi 3:1)*”
 - (3) **Keil and Delitzsch**: *Psalms; p. 334*
Incorporated in Israel’s hymn-book, this Psalm became, with a regard to its original occasion and purpose, and Old Testament Advent hymn in honour of the Lord who should come into His temple.
- j) Finally, who could miss the connection between this Psalm and *Palm Sunday*.

- (1) **James M. Boice** sees this as a Messianic Psalm pointing to Palm Sunday.
- (2) *Now when they drew near to Jerusalem and came to Bethphage, to the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Untie them and bring them to me. If anyone says anything to you, you shall say, ‘The Lord needs them,’ and he will send them at once.” This took place to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet, saying,*
“Say to the daughter of Zion,
‘Behold, your king is coming to you,
humble, and mounted on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a beast of burden.’” (Matt. 21:1-5)
- (3) **James M. Boice:** *Psalms: Vol I; pp. 214-215.*

Interestingly, the ancient rabbinical sources tell us that, in the Jewish liturgy, Psalm 24 was always used in worship on the first day of the week. The first day of the week is our Sunday. So putting these facts together, we may assume that these were the words being recited by the temple priests at the very time the Lord Jesus Christ mounted a donkey and ascended the rocky approach to Jerusalem. The people who were outside the walls, who were approaching Jerusalem with him, exclaimed:

Hosanna to the Son of David!
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!
Hosanna in the highest! (Matt. 21:9)

Inside the priests were intoning:

Lift up your heads, O you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is he, this King of glory?
The Lord Almighty –
he is the King of glory. Selah (Ps. 24:9-10)

5. Personally, I do not know of one other Psalm whose liturgical legacy and incorporation into the worship of the church is as rich and varied as that of **Psalm 24**.
6. On top of all this, Psalm 24 is a masterful piece of poetry for Public use.
- Three strophes (stanzas)
 - Each are to be recited *antiphonally* in the Temple or congregation.
 - Stanza 1: *An Expression of Belonging to God* (Ps. 24:1-2)
 - Stanza 2: *An Examination of One’s life* (Ps. 24:3-6)
 - Stanza 3: *An Exhortation to Enter into Worship* (Ps. 24:7-10)

7. All this ... **A Prayer Before Church Services**

I. UNDERSTANDING PSALM 24

A. An Expression of Belonging to God (Psalm 24:1-2)

1. The opening words to this hymn are to be used *antiphonally*
 - Priest/ Pastor: *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, (Ps. 24:1)*
 - The People/ Congregation: *for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. (Ps. 24:2)*
2. These are marvelously rich words of theological substance: *Every single thing and every angel, person or animal creature belongs to God. He created the earth; He placed in it the fullness of everything in the world; He set the earth "upon" the seas, and feeds it with rivers and streams. He made for Himself every soul/life of every creature, from the smallest of insects, to the most mighty of angels – with all mankind in between! They all belong to God, and **nothing** truly belongs to them except their shared God and the life He give to us all.*
3. One of my favorite hymns is inspired by this section of Psalm 24.
 - a) *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas and established it upon the rivers. (Ps. 24:1-2)*
 - b) **Isaac Watts' I Sing the Mighty Power of God**

*I sing th' almighty power of God
That made the mountains rise,
That spread the flowing seas abroad
And built the lofty skies.
I sing the wisdom that ordain'd
The sun to rule the day;
The moon shines full at his command,
And all the stars obey.*

*I sing the goodness of the Lord
that fill'd the earth with food;
He formed the creatures with his word
And then pronounced them good.
Lord, how thy wonders are display'd,
Where'er I turn mine eye,
If I survey the ground I tread
Or gaze upon the sky.*

*In heaven he shines with beams of love,
With wrath in hell beneath:
'Tis earth I stand or move,
And tis his air I breathe.
His hand is my perpetual guard,
He keeps me with his eye:
Why should I then forget the Lord,*

Who is for ever nigh?

There's not a plant or flower below

But makes thy glories known,

And clouds arise and tempests blow

By order from thy throne.

Creatures – as numerous as they be –

Are subject to thy care:

There's not a place where we can flee,

But God is present there.

- c) That last part of stanza 4 has been changed – and I think much improved: “... *while all that borrows life Thee is ever in Thy care; and everywhere that man can be, Thou, God, are present there*”

4. This is where the Christian life, the Christian faith, and the Christian worship begins – **God's gracious creation.**

- a) *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. (Gen. 1:1)*

- b) *Oh come, let us sing to the Lord;
let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation!
Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving;
let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise!
For the Lord is a great God,
and a great King above all gods.
In his hand are the depths of the earth;
the heights of the mountains are his also.
The sea is his, for he made it,
and his hands formed the dry land.
Oh come, let us worship and bow down;
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!
For he is our God,
and we are the people of his pasture,
and the sheep of his hand.
Today, if you hear his voice, (Ps. 95:1-7)*

- c) *Know that the Lord Himself is God;
It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;
We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. (Ps. 100:3 NASB)*

- d) *The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,
for he has founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers. (Ps. 24:1-2)*

5. Why is this important? For three reasons ...

- a) If God is Creator and we are creatures then the first thing creation owes to God is *worship rooted in humble gratitude for life.*

- b) If God is Creator and we are created then our worship is the *only appropriate response to the providence of God.*
- c) If I am a creature then I live in a fallen world of self-obsessed, idolatrous and deluded beings, and I need *to be reminded that I am not my own!*

*You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.
(1 Cor. 6:19-20)*

6. **Think of this:** From Monday to Saturday your souls are fed the incessant and incredible lie that all you are and all you have is Yours!

- a) It's my body! I can do with it what I want, sleep with whomever I choose, abort what I want to do without
- b) It's my gender to use or change as I desire
- c) It's my money I earned it and no one can tell me how to spend it.
- d) These are my kids, this is my house, it's my career!
- e) and on it goes *ad nauseum.*

7. **Going to church on Sunday to worship God, grow in His community, love others and learn how to serve the world biblically is the antidote to selfism and the recalibration away from man-centeredness.**

8. No truth is more shocking, more un-American or more liberating than this truth: "*You are not your own ...*"

*The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof,
the world and those who dwell therein,
for he has founded it upon the seas
and established it upon the rivers. (Ps. 24:1-2)*

B. An Examination of One's Life (Psalm 24:3-6)

1. Here is the second stanza and its liturgical form:

- Pastor: "*Who shall ascend to the hill of the Lord and who shall stand in his holy place?*
(24:3a,b) **(The Question)**
- People: *He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully.
He will receive blessing from the Lord
and righteousness from the God of his salvation. (Ps. 24:3c-5) **(The Response)***
- Pastor: *Such is the generation of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.*
(Ps. 24:6) **(The Affirmation)**

2. This Part of Psalm 24 repeats the question and answer of Psalm 15 –

- a) *O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent?
Who shall dwell on your holy hill?
He who walks blamelessly and does what is right*

*and speaks truth in his heart;
 who does not slander with his tongue
 and does no evil to his neighbor,
 nor takes up a reproach against his friend;
 in whose eyes a vile person is despised,
 but who honors those who fear the Lord;
 who swears to his own hurt and does not change;
 who does not put out his money at interest
 and does not take a bribe against the innocent.
 He who does these things shall never be moved. (Ps. 15:1-5)*

- b) Perhaps another “twin Psalm”
- c) Comprising a *Triplet* of Worship Psalms: 15, 24, and 100.

3. **John Goldingay:** *Psalms 1-41: Baker Com OT; p. 358*

Abruptly everything changes and we are asking a question about qualifications for coming into YHWH’s presence to make requests. By the end of the section it will be explicit that this is not a mere theoretical question: a group of people is waiting to discover whether they qualify. The question about the possibility of going into the presence of this God is therefore a solemn one. This liturgy functions to put the ball back into the questioners’ court. They have to examine themselves and accept responsibility for themselves. They cannot pass evaluation on to someone else.

4. Who would know if you or I had ...

- a) The four qualifications of soul ...

- (1) *clean hands* – absence from sinful acts?
- (2) *pure heart* – cleanness on the inside?
- (3) *a soul not given to falsehood* – a clear conscience?
- (4) *a mouth not swearing deceitfully* – a walk of integrity?

5. Answer: *Only you (I) and God.*

6. In the Medieval Church there were published small tracts or booklets (lists of sins) used for preparing the soul to confess their sins to a priest or preparing to receive holy communion: *A catalogue of sins based around the Ten Commandments.*

7. Here is a liturgical psalm to encourage us to do the same thing before we enter into the sanctuary for corporate worship on Sunday.

8. **Note:** These four aspects of the spiritual life of believers primarily affect their relationships toward one another. For when we come to church on Sunday we come as a *people (congregation/ community)* and not as a crowd of disconnected individuals. And our worship will be affected by our fellowship. Jesus said so ...

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. (Matt. 5:23-24)

9. There **is** a connection between verses 1-2 and verses 3-6.

- a) As a creature I acknowledge that God is both the Creator and Owner of everything, and I am but a tenant and a steward – *responsible to care for what God has given to me: my life and my world.*
- b) As a member of the Church I acknowledge that I am part of a greater spiritual family, and I am responsible for how I live with others – *I am my brother's keeper (Gen. 4) and a minister to other believers.*

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

10. It's good and necessary to examine my conscience concerning how I've treated others during the week, and to confess my sins, *prior to entering into God's presence and God's place.*

11. Our unconfessed sins against others will **pollute** our sacred worship in God's holy place (Sanctuary)

- a) *"Thus says the Lord of hosts: Ask the priests about the law: 'If someone carries holy meat in the fold of his garment and touches with his fold bread or stew or wine or oil or any kind of food, does it become holy?'" The priests answered and said, "No." Then Haggai said, "If someone who is unclean by contact with a dead body touches any of these, does it become unclean?" The priests answered and said, "It does become unclean." Then Haggai answered and said, "So is it with this people, and with this nation before me, declares the Lord, and so with every work of their hands. And what they offer there is unclean. (Haggai 2:11-14)*
- b) Our sins against others can pollute our worship.

12. So ... **Confession of sin** must precede all our worship.

C. An Exhortation to Enter into Worship (Ps. 24:7-10)

1. The third and final stanza of this hymn is a "call to worship"

- Priest: *Lift up your heads, O gates!
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in. (Ps. 24:7)*
- People: Who is this King of glory? (Ps. 24:8a)
- Priest: *The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle! (Ps. 24:8b)*
- People: *Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in. (Ps. 24:9)*
- Priest: *Who is this King of glory? (Ps. 24:10a)*
- People: *The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory! (Ps. 24:10b)*

2. There is yet a third shift or change in verse 7: *We are told to allow God into His Holy City and Temple!*
3. **John Goldingay:** *Psalms 1-41: Baker Com. OT; p. 361*

Once again everything changes. Dialogue and question-and-answer format continue, but the nature of the dialogue and the participants are quite different, as are its presuppositions and frame of reference. Whereas the presupposition of vv. 3-6 was that Yhwh was on Mount Zion and that other people wished to come there, the presumption of vv. 7-10 is that Yhwh is outside Mount Zion, and people are urging Yhwh's admittance.

4. Here is the historical context: As David led the procession of priests, Levites and people into Jerusalem (the Holy City), carrying the *Ark of the Covenant*, he designed a liturgy to command Jerusalem to open their doors and receive "the King of Glory" – *God's Shekinah Presence seated on the ark!* **James M. Boice** describes how this proceeded. (p. 219)

The chorus approaching with the king:

*Lift up your heads, O you gates;
be lifted up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.*

A voice from within the walls:

Who is this King of glory?

A spokesman for the king:

*The Lord strong and mighty,
the Lord mighty in battle.*

The original approaching chorus:

*Lift up your heads, O you gates;
lift them up, you ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.*

The voice from within, repeating the former question:

Who is he, this King of glory?

Everyone:

*The Lord Almighty –
he is the King of glory.*

5. In fact: *It was only the presence of a holy God, in his holy place, in the holy Tabernacle (Temple) which made Jerusalem the Holy City (the Hill of the Lord/ Holy Hill)*

*Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place? (Ps. 24:3)*

6. **Likewise:** This Worship Center is only a "holy place" (a *sanctuary* ...
 - a) Latin: *sanctuarium* – a shrine, a place for holy things
 - b) *sanctus* (holy) + *arium* (suffix: location or receptacle)
 - c) Sanctuary: The Holy Place for God and His people

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?

And who shall stand in his holy place? (Ps. 24:3)

- d) ... if/ when God comes to meet with us in worship!
7. When we come to church on Sunday, we need to corporately and individually *invite* God to join us in church and *invoke* His presence with us in all we do at Church on Sunday.
 8. Hence: The *Prayer of Invocation* – “calling God to show up at church!”
 9. **Robert Rayburn:** *O Come, Let Us Worship* (pp. 180-181)
Usually the first prayer which the minister leads in a worship service is referred to as “The Invocation.” An invocation is a prayer in which the presence and power of God are called forth in recognition of the fact that it is only as the Holy Spirit Himself moves upon and in both the minister and the congregation that the desired end of the service will be realized.
 10. Unless God the Holy Spirit joins us in worship nothing of spiritual worth or eternal effect shall take place. Our worship, without the Holy Spirit, would be a mere religious show.
 11. It is **not** our coming to a “Worship Center” (a church-growth, business-model term) that turns this common place into a **Sanctuary**; it is God’s presence with us that makes this room, this building, this campus, a **“holy place.”**
 12. And God only comes to church by *special invitation!*

II. HOW TO PRAY PSALM 24

A. Psalm 24 is a Psalm to be Prayed Word for Word

1. Psalm 24 is **designed** to be prayed, as is, antiphonally, by a Pastor and congregation.
 - a) For us as an *antiphonal* call to worship
 - b) As a *Response* Prayer in its entirety
 - c) For *Individuals* to pray before entering the Sanctuary.
2. Psalms 24 and 15 and 100 remind us that we *should* pray before we enter the Sanctuary every Sunday.
 - a) To *Orient* our souls to the Creator God
 - b) To *Examine* our lives in the community life of the Church
 - c) To *Encourage* us to Invite God’s Presence into this place.
3. I think Psalm 24 also reminds us that this is not ...
 - a) a “Worship Center”
 - b) and Auditorium, Lecture Hall, or Assembly Room
 - c) But rather a **sanctuary** in the fullest sense of this ancient word:
 - (1) a *Holy Place* where God visits every week
 - (2) a place where *Holy People* (consecrated) meet
 - (3) a place where *Holy things* and *Holy activities* are located.
 - d) and which calls forth from us a *holy attitude* and *holy actions*.

4. We live in a **profane** world: common things, secular orientation, and godless spirit. America needs holy places as never before.

B. Psalm 24 is a Corrective to False Worship

1. It is easy to treat this place the same way we do our homes, business places, classrooms and political platforms –
 - a) We sit in the sermon, like we listen to a candidate’s political speech, ready to clap if we agree or get in the pastor’s face if we don’t. *Psalm 24 reminds us that God the Spirit is speaking through His Word and in His holy place.*
 - b) We sing the songs (if we like them), rating them like the Top 40 of a Pop Music List, and letting the music director know what we want next time. *Psalm 24 calls us to sing, for God’s pleasure, songs about the Creator, the Redeemer and the Judge of mankind.*
 - c) We get up and walk out during a pastoral prayer, or announcement or a sermon like we protest at work or on campus, or in the city streets. *Psalm 24 tells us that worship is for all people, with all sorts of different needs, beliefs and personal opinions. But these are to be brought under God’s sovereign rule.*
 - d) We can even act in a surely manner toward those we are unhappy with, thus blocking our worship from ascending to God as pure praise. *Psalm 24 calls us to examine our hearts and actions toward other people before we bring our souls and worship before God.*
2. **May I state this simply:** Psalm 24 says to us, “Check all your worldly ways, common actions and secular ideas at the door. You are now entering a different place, a “set aside” place, into the Holy World of *the Kingdom of God*.”
3. American Evangelicalism has, for over 40 years now, tried very hard to make their Church Services feel as much like the world as possible.
 - a) They’ve stripped sanctuaries of any vestiges of *rubric* or *ritual*, and turned them into auditoriums or worship centers.
 - b) They’ve run away from *tradition*, and replaced creeds, catechisms, liturgy and even sacraments with trendiness and technology.
 - c) In the average Evangelical Church service most prayer has been eliminated, Baptism is being forgone, and the Lord’s Supper can be done online or by anyone, fewer times each year. But *contemporary music* continues to edge out everything else.
 - d) Even the *historic mainstay* of Evangelical Worship – the Sermon – is being lost. With the death of the sermon comes the death of the Church.
4. **Psalm 24** calls us to the “old paths” of worship in a Sanctuary before a Holy Creator – Redeemer God, in a congregation of “*saints*” (holy ones).

*Set up road markers for yourself;
make yourself guideposts;
consider well the highway,
the road by which you went.
Return, O virgin Israel,*

return to these your cities. (Jeremiah 31:21)

C. Psalm 24 Points us to Jesus Christ

1. All of us will say, “Who can measure up to all this?”

*Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord?
And who shall stand in his holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who does not lift up his soul to what is false
and does not swear deceitfully. (Ps. 24:3-4)*

2. Obvious answer: No one, except Jesus Christ.

*Lift up your heads, O gates!
And be lifted up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord, strong and mighty,
the Lord, mighty in battle!
Lift up your heads, O gates!
And lift them up, O ancient doors,
that the King of glory may come in.
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory! Selah (Ps. 24:7-10)*

3. Before you were ever invited to God’s *Holy Hill/ Holy Place* Jesus Chris had already entered Jerusalem, the *Holy City*, gone in to cleanse the Temple, and on Calvary’s Hill offered Himself unto death, as a sacrifice for our unclean hands, impure hearts, false souls and deceitful lips.
 - a) *As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, saying, “Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” (Luke 19:37-38)*
 - b) *And Jesus entered the temple and drove out all who sold and bought in the temple, and he overturned the tables of the money-changers and the seats of those who sold pigeons. He said to them, “It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you make it a den of robbers.” (Matt. 21:12-13)*
 - c) *Jesus left the temple and was going away, when his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. But he answered them, “You see all these, do you not? Truly, I say to you, there will not be left here one stone upon another that will not be thrown down.” (Matt.24:1-2)*
 - d) *So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus, and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called The Place of a Skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. (John 19:16-18)*
 - e) ... and turned his death on the cross into an act of **worship** to God:

It was now about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour, while the sun's light failed. And the curtain of the temple was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!" And having said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44-46)

4. When we pray Psalm 24 we do so "in Jesus name." We do so ...

- a) with Jesus paying for our sins
- b) with Jesus taking ownership of us as redeemed people for God

Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. (1 Cor. 6:19-20)

- c) with Jesus giving to us the gift of the Holy Spirit to make us more holy every week, Sunday by Sunday.
- d) as human sacrifices, offered alongside the person of Christ.

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (Rom. 12:1-2)

5. Don't be afraid to pray this prayer, perhaps in your cars, in the parking lot, prior to entering here each Sunday. *It will transform your soul and our corporate worship!*