

=STORIES BEHIND THE PSALMS=

Lesson 2

Psalm 126

AIM: to teach my pupils the story behind Psalm 126 and the truth of the Psalm

INTRODUCTION: Last Sunday's lesson dealt with the Jews in Babylon refusing to sing the Lord's song. They were captives for 70 years. Psalm 126 finds that captivity is now over and the Jews are going back home! They sang a song of joy and happiness as they marched back to the Promised Land. Can you picture it? Tens of thousands of God's people are marching back to Jerusalem, to their beloved land, to the beloved city, to the beloved Mount Zion, to the beloved temple site, after 70 long years in bondage! How happy! How joyous! What an occasion! Let us look at the song that they sing:

- I. HEART JOY. Psalm 126:1 says, "When the LORD turned again the captivity of Zion...." This is where all joy should begin. This is where the true song should begin—with salvation. No one can sing like a redeemed people. No one can sing like people who have been freed. The Jews had been freed, and from this springs their joy. Those of us who have been redeemed by the blood of Christ, of course, can have heartfelt joy.

Notice, it says in Psalm 126:1b that they "were like them that dream." It was so wonderful to be delivered, they could not believe it to be true. It was like a dream to them; it was so wonderful. Ah, when salvation becomes that wonderful to us, when we stop to realize we are God's children, saved from Hell and on our way to Heaven, heirs with God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ, what a tremendous change it will make in our joy!

- II. THE LAUGHTER AND SINGING. Psalm 126:2a, "Then was our mouth filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing."
 1. Laughter. Redeemed people can laugh. There ought to be true joy in the heart of a redeemed person, and laughter should come from this. God is not displeased when His people laugh. There are those who believe it is a sin and a shame to laugh in church. This certainly refutes that argument. God's people are happy; hence, God's people have a lot to laugh about.
 2. Singing. Not only was the mouth filled with laughter, but the tongue was filled with singing. You will recall that in last week's lesson on Psalm 137, the Jews were in bondage. Though they had a reputation for singing, they refused to do so. They hung their harps on the willow trees. They had said they could not sing the Lord's song in a strange land, but now they are delivered! They can sing again. Their song is joyous; their song is happy; and their tongues are literally filled with singing.
- III. WHAT THE HEATHEN SAID. As soon as the heathen saw the laughter and heard the singing, they said, "The LORD hath done great things for them." See Psalm 126:2b. What a testimony is spiritual laughter and spiritual singing! The churches that have people saved, the churches that reach the heathen and make them believe in the Gospel are those that have happy, singing people. When the prophets are false and the people who follow them see the fire fall on Mount Carmel for Elijah, then the people say, "The LORD, he is the God." Read I Kings 18:39. The world waits for a Christianity that works. It waits for a demonstration of real, true joy and laughter. When the Jews were saved and were happy about it, then the heathen said, "The LORD hath done great things for them."
- IV. THE TESTIMONY OF GOD'S PEOPLE. They were not timid, so they answered the heathen back. Psalm 126:3, "The LORD hath done great things for us; whereof we are glad." Not only did they witness by their song, and by their laughter, but they were ready to say a good word for Christ. We, too, are marching to the Promised Land. As the song writer put it, "We're Marching to Zion." People, as they watch us march, should hear our laughter and hear our singing and say, "The Lord has been good to them." We, in turn, should tell them what God has done for us.

- V. THE PRAYER OF GOD'S PEOPLE. In Psalm 126:4, notice the words, "Turn again our captivity, O LORD, as the streams in the south." They, no doubt, were speaking about the Nile River. When the Jews spoke of the "king of the south" or the "country of the south," they usually spoke of Egypt. When they spoke of the streams of the south, they no doubt had in mind the Nile River with its many streams and tributaries. If one flies over the Nile River, he can notice that things are green only close to the Nile. Wherever there is a stream off the Nile, there is greenery, productivity and fruit. The Jews are saying, "Lord, make us fruitful, as is the Nile River. May we, as we flow, bear fruit and influence those around us." Every Christian should be a little stream "off Christ," Who is the Living Water, causing fruit and productivity everywhere he goes. The Jews were asking the Lord to help them win the heathen, to become soul winners, and to convince the heathen of the living God. This is borne out by the next two verses.
- VI. THE SOUL WINNING. See Psalm 126:5, 6. Way back in the days following captivity, perhaps the best outline and recipe for soul winning ever given to God's people was given. Here is the outline:
1. "He." The first word in soul winning is "he." God uses human instruments. People are not saved without them. God needs people, and God wants people to be in the soul-winning business.
 2. "Goeth." God wants us to go where the sinners are. Not one time in the Bible is a sinner ever asked to come to church. Over and over again the church is asked to go and carry the Gospel to sinners.
 3. "Weepeth." We need a burdened heart. Many people do not win souls because they are not really concerned about the souls of men. God wants us to have hearts that are burdened.
 4. "Bearing precious seed." To be soul winners, we must take the Word of God. The Word of God is the seed.
 5. God's promise. Psalm 126:6, "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him." Notice, God promises that we will bear fruit if we do the aforementioned things. We will rejoice, and we will bring our sheaves with us! By that, God is promising us that not only will we win souls, but some of them, at least, will be brought in with God's people, join the church, get baptized and carry on in service for Christ.

CONCLUSION: The lesson should definitely be tied in with last Sunday's lesson. The refusing to sing of Psalm 137 should be compared with the singing of Psalm 126. The captivity of Psalm 137 should be compared with the deliverance of Psalm 126.