

Traveling the Up And Down Roads of Life
Psalm 126

Eugene Peterson says this: “There was no literature in all the world that is more true to life and more honest than Psalms. For here we have warts-and-all religion. Every skeptical thought, every disappointing venture, every pain, every despair that we can face is lived through and integrated into a personal, saving relationship with God, a relationship that also has in it acts of praise, blessing, peace, security, trust and love. Good poetry survives not when it is pretty or beautiful or nice but when it is true: accurate and honest. The psalms are great poetry and have lasted not because they appeal to our fantasies and wishes but because they are confirmed in the intensities of honest and hazardous living.” Eugene Peterson

The Psalms are divided into five books, and Psalm 126 is part of book five, that begins in Psalm 107, all the way to Psalm 150. We don't know exactly why they were divided into five parts but probably so that they could correspond in some way to the five first books of the Bible, so the Pentateuch or the Torah, Genesis through Deuteronomy.

How did you go bankrupt"? That's the question that Ernest Hemingway asked in one of his novels. And the rather famous answer: "Two ways. Gradually, then suddenly." That's how you go bankrupt. That also how you become financially independent. It's how you write a book, run a marathon, fall in love, and a thousand other things.

Almost anyone can accomplish almost anything if they work at it long enough, hard enough, and smart enough. It's going to take longer than you like and it's probably going to be harder than you think, but it's going to happen gradually, then suddenly.

A reporter asked Sam Walton, founder of Walmart, "How did you become an overnight success"? He said, "It took 20 years to become an overnight success". All of us admire successful people, we just don't want to make the same sacrifices they made to get there. It's going to take some blood, sweat, and tears.

At the 1984 Olympic Games, Rowdy Gaines won a gold medal in the 100 meter freestyle, set an Olympic record of 49.8 seconds. Rowdy Gaines won three golds, set 10 world records during his illustrious career. How did he do it? Gradually, then suddenly.

What's interesting is we boycotted the Moscow Olympics. Rowdy Gaines trained eight years for a race that would last less than one minute. Rowdy Gaines said, “I swam a total of 20,000 miles in training in 50-meter increments. I swam around the world for a race that lasted 49 seconds.” Long obedience in the same direction gets great results.

We cannot control suddenly. Suddenly is the payoff. Suddenly is the lag measure. Suddenly is the outcome. Gradually is the input. Gradually is the lead measure. Gradually is the name of the game.

Psalm 120 to Psalm 134 are 15 different psalms or songs they sang as they traveled to festivals. They are called “A song of ascents,” or sometimes “Song of degrees,” Pilgrim songs,” Gradual songs” or “The song of the steps,” “The Stairs of the Temple Songs,” or “The Pilgrim Festival Songs.” The 15 Psalms are connected with the 15 steps of the temple where the Levites sang. There were stations along the way where the pilgrims could stop for rest and refreshment. While they were there, they would sing one of these Psalms in worship to the Lord.

They walked and walked and then suddenly they were at the Temple worshipping. Along the way they sang songs. These songs were used in very specific kinds of worship. They highlight the role of worship in the life of somebody sojourning in the faith. Since Jerusalem was set on a hill, it was always a thought of going up to Jerusalem. No matter from what corner of the world someone had traveled on a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, they were always going up because Jerusalem was a city set on a hill, and because God had chosen it. These Psalms have so much to do with taking that pilgrimage and that ascent up to that high place of worship with God.

There were pilgrimage songs they would sing as they travelled along the road. They were coming from a very great distance. Most people lived away from the city because they were rural people. They were making their living with sheep or farming the land.

There were three great feasts in the life of the Israelites when the men were commanded to come and appear before the Lord. They would bring their families with them, and when their sons were of age, they were also commanded to be part of those who would also make this long pilgrimage for the feasts. The three commanded feasts were the Feast of Passover, the Feast of Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles.

Jesus would have taken this pilgrimage with his family, and we see it in Luke 2. It's wonderful to think about Him taking this journey all the way from Nazareth, 70 miles to get to Jerusalem, and they would have sung these songs.

He could have been the one saying, *"If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, now may Israel say; If it had not been the Lord who was on our side, when men rose up against us: Then they had swallowed us up quick, when their wrath was kindled against us."* Psalm 124:1-3

The songs of ascent were a little bit like us listening to music on a long trip to pass the time. They would sing along the way. The music made you forget how many miles it's taking, how long it's taking. The most popular playlist for the Israelite journey was these 15 psalms of ascent.

Music has always been a part of time and history. Singing and song predated humanity. Music comes from God. One way we know that is because, in the book of Job, God is talking to Job. In Job 38, God begins asking Job questions, *"Where were you when I established the earth? Who laid its cornerstone while the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?"* Job 38:6-7

This is how we know that the angels were created before man was created. We know they predated us, and they predated all of Creation coming together because they were singing and shouting as God was creating the earth. No wonder we still hear so many songs about Creation, whether they have any mention of God or not, because it's in us. It was created in us, and it was around us when the earth was created.

The Psalms of ascent were sung as they ascended up to a closer place with God. Each step meant they were getting closer and closer to the presence of the Lord. Ascending to the Lord Most High, He who is exalted. They were going up to worship the one true God. What was true of the Jewish pilgrims as they ascended geographically ought to be true of you and me spiritually as believers.

Psalm 84 is not one of the psalms of ascents, but you can hear it describe the life of the pilgrim and how similar it is to the Psalms of ascent. *"Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage who pass through the Valley of Baca, They make it a place of springs, and the autumn rains also cover it with pools, and they go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion."* Psalm 84:5-7

"Baka" is a word that means "Valley of Tears." They have been through difficult experiences. *"They go from strength to strength."* You can hear the steps. Their hearts are set on heaven, so they know the direction they're going. They know the destination they're going to. Ours is the heavenly journey. Theirs was the earthly Jerusalem, and they just went from strength to strength. Sometimes they think, "Man, we've still got 40 miles to go, and we've got six-year-olds and adults acting like six-year-olds, which is so much worse. How are we going to make it?" We go from strength to strength. That's the only way I'm making it. How about you?

Psalms 120 begins the Psalms of ascent, songs they would sing in the ups and downs on the roads of life. Maybe you're about to step into a different place. Whether you're brand-new in the faith or you're very seasoned in the faith, none of us have arrived at a place of ultimate intimacy with God and insight into his Word in the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

"In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. Rescue me from lying lips and a deceitful tongue. What will He do to you, and what will be added to you, O deceitful tongue?" Psalm 126:1-3

"Sharp arrows will come from the warrior, with burning coals of the broom tree! Woe to me that I dwell in Meshech,

that I live among the tents of Kedar! Too long have I dwelt among those who hate peace. I am in favor of peace; but when I speak, they want war.” Psalm 120:3-7

People often find themselves in distress. There is a refuge in our distress that we have when he “*cried to the LORD.*” We can have the singer’s testimony, and “*He heard me.*” The psalmist remembered God’s past faithfulness in his present need. There’s no better indication that we need to go to the Lord, then, when we look around us, whether in our city, in our town, in our school, in our workplace, in our church, in our home, in our marriage, “*Woe to me that I dwell in Meshech, that I live among the tents of Kedar! Too long have I lived among those who hate peace.*” Psalm 120:5

The psalmist is living in a troubled place, but longing for God’s peace. Maybe like the psalmist you think, “I need to stay,” but everything in you is wanting to go. Go, go, go to God. Meshech was the name of a group of barbarous tribes who, in the times of Sargon and Sennacherib inhabited the highlands to the east of Cilicia, and in later days retreated northwards to the neighborhood of the Black Sea. It was a distant place, far from the land of Israel. (Ezekiel 27:13, 32:26, 39:1)

Kedar was a place associated with the nomadic tribes in the lands surrounding Israel. (Isaiah 21:16-17, Jeremiah 49:28) “.... Kedar was one of the Bedouin tribes of the Arabian desert.” These two nations were located so far apart geographically that they can only be taken here as “a general term for the heathen.” No one person could have lived among both. They are examples of warlike tribes, among whom the singers of Psalm 120 had no true home.

The verbs “dwell” (*garti*, ‘sojourn’) and “live” (*sakanti*, ‘tabernacle,’ ‘dwell’) are significantly chosen. Even though the psalmist may have enjoyed a permanent residence, he felt as if he was no more than a traveler among his contemporaries. He did not feel at home among an ungodly people.

The answer to his question, “How can I go and not leave?” is, I can go on a fresh pilgrimage with God.

The second Psalm of ascent is Psalm 121. It is listed as The Lord Keeps and Helps. The singer of this psalm looked to the *mountains*, likely the distant *mountains* of Jerusalem, as he travelled toward the city to fulfill his pilgrimage. The point is wonderful. The singer understood that the group didn’t need to arrive at Jerusalem before they came under God’s protective care. He would watch over them on the journey. God is just as present in the journey as in the destination. The traveler looked to Jerusalem as his goal, yet his trust was not in that city itself. Help would come from the God who made heaven and earth. The Creator would be his helper.

Verse 1 says, “*I lift up my eyes to the mountains— where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth. He will not let your foot slip—he who watches over you will not slumber; indeed, he who watches over Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. The Lord watches over you—the Lord is your shade at your right hand; the sun will not harm you by day, nor the moon by night. The Lord will keep you from all harm—he will watch over your life; the Lord will watch over your coming and going both now and forevermore.*” Psalm 121:1-8

In the phrase, “*The Lord is your keeper,*” there are only two Hebrew words there. There’s not even a verb. It’s just “Lord” and “keeper,” “yours,” and it’s at the very top of it. Everything works up to that point, and then everything works down from that point, but the whole concept is, “*The Lord is the one who keeps you.*” You can make it personal and know, “The Lord is my keeper.”

“*He who keeps you*” the Hebrew word “shamar” (translated “keeps and preserves”) is used six times in this short psalm. The theme is that God will watch over His people as a watchman watches over the city or the party of travelers.

This psalmist is so absorbed in the thought of his Keeper that he barely names his dangers. The Divine One represents Himself as a watchman, who takes care of the city and its inhabitants during the night-watches and is never overtaken with slumbering or sleepiness.

“He who keeps you will not slumber.” When we look to the LORD, we have confidence in the fact that God does not sleep. The idea is repeated in Psalm 121:4 for emphasis. God’s watchful eye is always open, looking with love and care upon His people.

In his confrontation with the prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, Elijah mocked the idol prophets when Baal did not respond, saying that perhaps Baal is sleeping and must be awakened (1 Kings 18:27). We have the great comfort in knowing that He who keeps Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

Their daily march and their nightly encampment will then be placed under the care of Jehovah. We live in a hazardous world, but as God draws us to a place of greater intensity and rejoicing in our worship, there is a ladder effect in the Psalm. In Hebrew, there are exactly 58 syllables before that climactic point in the Psalm where it says, *“The Lord is your keeper.”* Then it ends.

Right in the rhythm of life, in the midst of all the stepping, of all the going up and down, of all the ascending and descending of life on planet Earth, of all the triumphs and tragedies that we go through, there is this one platform right in the middle of it, and it is, *“The Lord is my keeper.”* When I go through something that I wanted to go around, The Lord is my keeper, and nothing gets to come to me but by His hand, because I’m kept by him. Pray right now to Him, *“Lord, keep me. Keep me.”*

No matter what I go through, no matter what happens, no matter what anyone says to me, or says about me, keep me, keep me. Do not let me look to the right or to the left. Do not let me stare over my shoulder to what was behind me. Keep me. Be reminded in your journey, the Lord is your keeper.

We started in Meshech, which is the place of woe, and if that’s where you are, you are ever so prime for a fresh pilgrimage and journey with God. Because when we are somewhere that we say, *“I am so miserable,”* we are needing an ascent into a place of fresh worship and fresh revelation of God.

The Psalms of Ascent wraps up in Psalm 134, it says, *“Praise the Lord, all you servants of the Lord who minister by night in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord. May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who is the Maker of heaven and earth.”* Psalm 134:1-3

In the psalmist’s words, they’ve made it. They have gone as far as a regular person could go. It is not in the reality of their feet that they would be able to stand in the holy place, but they were standing on the property where, to them, the manifested glory of God dwells; and so they had made it. They were there, *“Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the Lord.”* Our pilgrimage has brought us to the place of our highest destination.

Psalm 126 is the middle psalm in the psalms of ascent, and it is divided into two parts. The first part is looking back, and the second part is looking forward. There are three distinct movements in this Psalm. First, there is praise for spiritual returning. They rejoice in the fact that God has brought them back from captivity. It’s like a dream come true. Laughter and singing fill the air.

There is a promise for spiritual reaping. In the last verse of this chapter, we have what God says to us about the important matter of winning people to faith in Jesus Christ. In this one statement of Scripture, virtually everything the Bible has to say about leading others to Jesus is distilled into one single statement.

Verse 1-3 focuses on the past,

1. They Celebrated Their Deliverance.

“When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Our mouths were filled with laughter then, and our tongues with shouts of joy. Then it was said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them.’ The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy.” Psalm 126:1-3

2. They Committed To A Decision.

Verse 4 shifts to their current condition, “*Restore our fortunes, Lord, like watercourses in the Negev. Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy. Though one goes along weeping, carrying the bag of seed, he will surely come back with shouts of joy, carrying his sheaves.*” Psalm 126:4-6

"When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed". We were like those who dreamed. Time to dream again is saying something when you've been a prisoner of war in Babylon for 70 years. Zechariah doesn't call them prisoners of war, he calls them prisoners of hope, because as long as you've got a dream you have hope.

"Restore our fortunes like the streams of Negev." In Israel, there are what were called wadis, and they were barren riverbeds. Rivers that ran dry during a drought. They were lifeless. It is a reminder of what was. But during the rainy season, these riverbeds would rise to flood tide and they would run miles in minutes.

In Psalm 23, when David refers to the valley of the shadow of death, probably referring to the Wadi Qelt, where he probably would have shepherded some sheep. After the flash flood goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, because in a matter of minutes, these valleys would come to life. They would turn green, and these red and yellow and orange flowers.

The picture here is God wants to restore some broken bodies, some broken minds, some broken marriages, some broken families, some broken people. And He'll do it. How's he going to do it? Gradually then suddenly.

Like the streams in the Negev, I'm believing for a flash flood of joy in the weeks to come, the joy of the Lord. The world can't give it and the world can't take it away. And the joy of the Lord is our strength.

How does Pentecost happen? How do the walls of Jericho come down? How does God deliver Israel out of Egypt? There's a temptation to say suddenly. Like, I mean, those walls just came tumbling down. But they walked around them for seven days and then seven times on the seventh day. At Pentecost 120 people prayed for 10 days.

Obedience has a compound interest.

There was a past tense time when they had experienced that kind of goodness of God, but they had forfeited what was theirs in their LORD, and he had restored it like a gush of grace over them. The people knew about the promises of restoration; but when the actual moment of restoration came, it was an overwhelming experience. They were like those ‘who dreamed.’ It all happened too quickly and seemed like a mirage.

“Then our mouth was filled with laughter.” They celebrated God’s amazing work with laughter and singing. There was so much laughing that their mouth was filled with it. The mercy was so unexpected, so amazing, so singular that they could not do less than laugh; and they laughed much, so that their mouths were full of it, and their hearts were full too.

The psalmist is looking back, but now he’s basically saying, “Come do it again.” They are in a season of tears and sowing. He is in a gap between verses 3 and 4. Many of us are suspended exactly there, where we have seen God do great things. He came through for us, and He did what only He could do. Yet we find ourselves in desperate need for another breakthrough.

We make foolish decisions and forfeit some of the things that were precious to us because we don’t realize what we had.

The word Negev means “dry.” In that very dry part of the world, when things looked the worst, that was when the very few rains that were going to come suddenly surprised them, and there would be a bursting forth of streams. That's exactly what he's talking about—when we're surprised by a sudden gush of the goodness and grace of God when we are exhausted in waiting, praying, and frustration.

You think, "I waited so long, and it was like it happened so fast." So often, we didn't even regard what a glorious thing God did for us until we're in the next season when we don't sense it at all. "*Lord, restore our fortunes.*" Their fortunes were the manifestations of the blessings of God that He had promised them, and He faithfully had fulfilled. For them, it all began with Abraham, and when he was called Abram, and God told him that He would bless him and He would bless all the nations through this nation and through Abram's line. And this was all going to be the gospel that was preached through Abraham, that involved him taking Isaac up the mountain where he went to offer his son, but God provided the sacrifice, and there was a substitutionary offering.

Their fortunes very often were in very tangible ways. He said, "I will bless your land. It will produce for you. I will give you rains when you need them. I will give you the sunshine when you need it." He promised them that they would prosper if they walked in obedience to Him, and they saw a lot of that prosperity. Their fortunes, in a lot of ways, were very physical.

In Luke 11:13, Jesus said, "*How much more will your Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him? If you, being comparatively evil parents, would give good things to your children, how much more would your Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit?*" So, here is what He's saying over and over again. Jesus would call the Holy Spirit, "*the gift,*" "*my Father will send you the Holy Spirit.*"

Theirs had been their physical fortunate, but ours is a fortune of soul and spirit. Ours is internal and eternal. The gift, God can bless you financially. I praise God if he has, and I praise God if he will. I know for sure that He meets our needs, because He says, "*I will meet your needs, according to the riches I have in glory.*" Philippians 4:19

For us, the promise is spiritual blessing. Ephesians 1 speaks about us having received, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.*" Ephesians 1:3 Why every spiritual blessing? Because in the old covenant, and in the people of the sons of Jacob, Moses was speaking blessings over the tribes. He would speak separate blessings on each tribe. Then, Jacob spoke these blessings over his sons, over Levi, and over Judah, and over the sons of Joseph. They had separate prophetic blessings that were spoken over them. Ephesians 1 says that in Christ, every spiritual blessing is ours.

You are a joint heir with Jesus Christ the Son, and every spiritual blessing is yours. We're so blessed. God told Abraham, "*I will bless you, and I will bless others through you.*" That's what he said to Abraham, and so they fully received it and acknowledged it and were engaged with God in it.

But there were the gods of the other nations, and there were things that worldly people were doing, and those things looked too good, so they forgot. They forgot, and He told them over and over, "Don't forget. You remember. Nobody can bless you like I can bless you." God knows there's no one like Him, and it is insulting to God for us to act like there is. Here's how it starts. He told them to repent, and they did not, so they were taken into captivity along with their fortunes. These fortunes were the manifestations of God's blessings and were taken from them. Then God restored their fortunes. As they were looking back when they had lost it again and were then thinking, "*Could we have it restored again?*"

How does this somehow apply to us? Because what has been given to us cannot be taken because it came through the cross of Christ. It's permanent. It did not rely on us, and it can't be taken away, but we can forfeit it.

Jesus said, "*I've come that you might have life, and that you might have life more abundantly.*" John 10:10

In Scripture, when it uses the word "abounding," that's coming from the exact same Greek word as "abundance," in abundant life, to the full. So, we have been given it to the full. But how much we abound in it depends on how much we engage with Him in it. Are we in that place of living life openhearted before Him, engaging in a real life relationship with Him? If we pray about once a week, we're not living in that place of engaged abounding.

So, we have the abundant life, but it's not being practically lived out in us. We don't remember the last time we felt any joy, real meaning. We're unable to really tell that there's any fruitfulness at all. He's calling us to our fortunes, our

ability through the power of Christ to be awakened to the overflowing life we have in Him, and to walk in that awareness.

The power in that Psalm lyric, hearing in those few verses the full stretch of the emotions, not just from sadness to joy, but from tears to laughter, so to me it is even further than the sadness or the joy in that it is the manifestation of each.

It is joy that becomes throwing your head back and laughing, sadness that becomes the outpouring of tears. It is the full measure of this experience in a journey with God. We can live portions of our life in between verses 3 and 4. We're looking back over our shoulder when the Lord restored the fortunes and we were like those who dreamed, and our mouths were filled with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy and people would say to us, "The Lord has been so good to you," and we say, "He has been good to us and we're just filled with joy," but that's in the past tense and in the worst way we need another mighty move of God.

We need to see His wonders again and so we asked him in verse four, "*So do it again. Restore our fortunes, Lord, like watercourses in the Negev.*" Those who sow in tears will reap with shouts of joy. I loved so much what one of the commentators said, "He goes from past tense to future tense. Would you do it now? Would you do it in our future?" We think about the past catching up with the future. No, we ask that the present would catch up with the past. In other words, that we have that kind of faith to believe that God could move among us again, to move among His people again, and he says, "The requirement for the present to catch up with the past."

Isaiah 55:10-11 "*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater; so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*"

His Word has accomplishing power, and you got to know that so that even if that Word has nothing to do with your present experience, keep planting His Word in your mind and soul. I don't want to just read it to try to find verses that go with my experience. How do we plant it? How do we plant it in the soil of our journey with God? The Word of God through the power of the indwelling Spirit is transformative.

Your heart may be so broken right now you don't know what to do. Maybe you're just worried or disappointed. Maybe a business has fallen through that you'd put your heart and soul and mind into. All sorts of things that just bring us disappointment. You might have thought you'd found the love of your life and then one day they were over you. That was it, and you've never known why. You had a friendship just end. You've never had any explanation for it. What do you do? You read God's Word, and you read God's Word, and you plant it in the real life soil of your present experience. Just let those tears drop right into it and that seed gets watered by those tears and it is its own act of worship before God. God made a promise over it. He said it will return. They will return with sheaves of joy.

Romans 8:18 says, "*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is going to be revealed to us.*" You talk about a seed you can plant; that no matter what I'm going through one of these days when I see the face of Jesus I won't even be able to compare my suffering to the extent of the joy that I'm about to experience, to be able to plant that seed in the ground and say, "This cannot help but turn out well."

Your story, if you're in Christ, has a really good ending; and for you to know that now, for you to be able to plant that in the reality of your tearful season, you plant that seed in that ground and let your tears fall on it and you know that there is a harvest coming.

Mark 4:26-29, "*The kingdom of God is like this. A man scatters seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day; the seeds sprout and grow, although he does not know how. The soil produces a crop by itself; first the blade, then the head, and then the full grain on the head. And as soon as the crop is ready, he sends for the sickle, because the harvest has come.*"

There is a gap between sowing the seed and the harvest. You can't see a thing. This is where only God is at work because whatever is happening is under there where you cannot see it. So you just stand there staring, staring, and staring, and staring going, "Is that a weed or crop?" But you know He's faithful to His Word. He's going to do what He said, and there will be seedtime and harvest. As surely as He said it, He will do it. God is faithful to His Word. We just stand back, and as much as we'll pray for something, as many things as we'll try, when God does it His way, we stand there and say, "I don't know how that happened."

Isaiah 55:12-13, *"For you shall go out in joy and be led forth in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall break forth into the singing, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands. Instead of thorn shall come up the cypress; instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle: and it shall make a name for the LORD, an everlasting sign that shall not be cut off."*

I don't want you to forget the wonder and the mystery of God, that we have this God that is going to see to it that mountains and hills sing, and that trees clap.

Psalm 133 is right before the last Psalm of ascent, and it says, *"Bless the servants of the Lord in the Lord's house. Lift up your hands in the holy place and bless the Lord. May the Lord, maker of heaven and earth, bless you from Zion. How good and pleasant it is when brothers live together in harmony! It is like fine oil on the head, running down on the beard, running down Aaron's beard onto his robes. It is like the dew of Hermon falling on the mountains of Zion. For there, the LORD has appointed the blessing, life forevermore."* Psalm 133:1-3

That is His desire for us, that we are one. Jesus said, "Love one another." We are to be together and love and serve one another.