



Up to Minneapolis

A Study for the Ride to Real. Present. God.

YOUR TRAVEL PLAYLIST

You're at the airport. You're on your bus. You're crammed into a 15-passenger van. By now, surely you or someone in your group has had their earbuds in. Clearly, you have the best soundtrack for this trip. So, let's hear it...

What's playing in your head? What music do you plan on listening to during this trip?

A big part of traveling is travel music. It can make the trip seem so much faster. (Ever notice how in the movies, the characters start a road trip, one chorus of "Life Is a Highway!" plays, and BAM...they're there!?) We can't guarantee your trip to Minneapolis will go that quickly, but let's talk a little more about road trip playlists.

SCRIPTURE'S TRAVEL PLAYLIST

Did you know there is a road trip "playlist" in the Bible?

This week at the Gathering, we will be taking a look at the Psalms. Psalms is a book in the Old Testament filled with 150 songs that God's people have been praying and singing for thousands of years. Within this book there is a particular set of Psalms that form a smaller collection that was used by God's people as they traveled.

This playlist is called the "Psalms of Ascent." It is a collection of 15 songs (Psalms 120-134) God's people would sing as they traveled to Jerusalem for religious events and festivals. Traveling to Jerusalem was a BIG deal for them, and the "Psalms of Ascents" were a special part of this trip.

Why are these called the Psalms of "Ascent"?

When you ascend, you go up. As God's people traveled to Jerusalem, regardless of their geographic position, they were always traveling UP.

UP...because Jerusalem was built on a hill.

UP...because this was a trip full of prayer and worship.

UP...because they were about to dwell with God, for the temple was in Jerusalem.

On their Jerusalem journey, God's people believed they were traveling UP—above the mundane things of life, above the struggles, above the difficulties—UP to a Jerusalem experience!

As we are traveling to Minneapolis, many of us are traveling UP on the map. (Remember, if you pass the North Pole, you've

gone too far!) But all of us are headed UP to a spiritually rich, impactful, and worshipful experience with God.

So, on our "ascent" to Minneapolis, let's take a look at one of the songs on Scripture's travel playlist: Psalm 122.

ON OUR WAY UP: (PSALM 122:1-2)

vs 1 I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD!"

vs 2 Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem!

Remember, this Psalm was written for people to sing as they traveled to a big, spiritual experience. You might have noticed that the voice here is pretty excited.

What are you excited about experiencing in at the Gathering?

You might also notice that the voice here is not traveling alone. Just like you, they are traveling with a group.

What do you hope your group gets out of this experience?

THINK OUTSIDE YOUR BUS (PSALM 122:3-5)

vs 3 Jerusalem—built as a city that is bound firmly together,

vs 4 to which the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, as was decreed for Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD.

vs 5 There thrones for judgment were set, the thrones of the house of David.

You are not traveling alone. And your group isn't traveling alone. All kinds of people from all kinds of places and kinds of backgrounds are heading UP to Minneapolis. Together we will gather in U.S. Bank Stadium. Together we will hear impactful speakers. Together we will explore the Scriptures, serve those in need, play epic games, and sing-so-loud-we-lose-our-voices at concerts.



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Look again at Psalm 22:4. Why did God gather together the people of Israel?

What might we give thanks to God for in Minneapolis? What might it look like for you to give thanks to the Lord?

PRAYERS ASCENDING: PSALM 122:6-9

- vs 6 Pray for the peace of Jerusalem! “May they be secure who love you!
- vs 7 Peace be within your walls and security within your towers!”
- vs 8 For my brothers and companions’ sake I will say, “Peace be within you!”
- vs 9 For the sake of the house of the LORD our God, I will seek your good.

Trips to places like Jerusalem for the people of Israel, and Minneapolis for us, can truly be impactful, “mountain-top” experiences. They can bring us above the mundane, above the struggles and difficulties. But they’re not meant for us to forget our difficulties and act like they aren’t there.

In Psalm 122:6-9, there’s one word that gets repeated three times. Did you catch what it was?

Ironically, as we go UP to Minneapolis, God comes DOWN to us. He comes DOWN by becoming one of us in Jesus. He comes DOWN through simple things like words and promises together with water and bread and wine. He comes DOWN to give us peace in his Son. He joins us in our struggles, sustains us through good times and bad, and sends us to share this peace with others.

He also invites us to give this peace to others. Think for a moment about what you might give to others this week. Can you think of a way in which you might give God’s peace to others?

It’s possible that you are going through some type of struggle these days, and that you need some peace. Perhaps it is a big deal. Or maybe it is relatively small. Either way, let’s talk to God about it right now.

Prayer was an important part of the ascent to Jerusalem for God’s people of old. It’s the same for us today. Prayer will be a big part of this Gathering. Let’s pray for everything we’re going to experience this week. You’re going to have a chance to offer up specific prayers (silently) for yourself, for our group, and all the youth coming to the Gathering.

PRAYER:

Heavenly Father, you have promised to be with us always for our good. You sent your Son, Jesus Christ to bring us peace with you and with each other. When we were baptized, you sent your Spirit into our hearts. It’s you—Father, Son, and Spirit—who we are worshiping and celebrating this week at the Gathering.

But God, we have some questions. We have some issues. Things aren’t perfect. In fact, God, sometimes we have concerns that feel bigger than worship services, or concerts, or Bible studies, or even prayers. Here are some real struggles we have going on our lives right now. **[Silently offer a prayer for yourself.]** We pray that you would speak to this struggle this week through your Word.

But the Gathering isn’t just about me. It’s about our whole group. God, we pray that you would use the Gathering to strengthen our group’s community. In fact, God, here is one way we ask you to work in our group this week. **[Silently offer a prayer for your youth group.]** Use this week to help us love and forgive one another as you love and forgive us.

And it’s not just about our youth group. God, there are thousands of people coming to Minneapolis with us. They also need Jesus. They also need peace. They need you to speak to their issues. In fact, here is one way we pray you would bless everyone who attends the Gathering. **[Silently offer a prayer for the Gathering participants.]**

Keep us safe this week. Strengthen our faith. Encourage us through your Word. Give us peace that can only come from a you, our Real. Present. God.

Finally, we know, Father, that there are many people in this city who do not know you or believe in your Son. We pray for these people whom you love and desire to save. Help us collectively as your church to witness to them in word and deed. Open their hearts and minds to trust in Jesus, and strengthen the church in this city to welcome them into their congregations. **[Silently offer a prayer for all the non-Christians in the Twin Cities.]**

Amen.

CONCLUSION