

Lesson for October 17, 2021,

"Give Thanks For Deliverance"

Background Scripture: Psalm 107

In Psalm 107: Thank the Lord for He is good, verses 1-3, Thank the Lord for His leading, verses 4-9, Thank the Lord for His deliverance, verses 10-16, Thank the Lord for His healing verses 17-22, Thank the Lord for protection from nature, verses 23-32, and Thank the Lord for His blessings, verses 33-42.

The psalmist starts right off introducing the main points for the passage. Giving thanks to God, remembering God's goodness, speaking out about God's deliverance (sharing testimony) and remembering God's deliverance in Israel's history

The psalmist himself is giving thanks for God's goodness. At the same time, he is calling others to join him. In this psalm, he remembers history and lists out many specific things God has done for his people for which he and the nation should be grateful for. Giving thanks is something that believers need to be intentional about. Sometimes we see people receive gifts for a birthday or Christmas, but never stop to say, "thank you." Instead they complained or rolled their eyes when they received gifts they didn't like or weren't exciting enough. We should be trained to stop after every gift and say, "thank you" to the person who gave it to us.

We will see in this psalm that the writer lists out many things he has observed that God has done for His people. He lists these out one by one. Writing them down in an orderly fashion helped him and all the people to clearly recollect God's many gifts in their history.

By nature, people have short term memories when it comes to blessings. It is easy to overlook and forget the many things God has done. Throughout the Bible, we see God commanding people

to remember. He tells them to create memorials. He establishes festivals. They are to write Scriptures on the gates and doorposts. They are to memorize His words.

Deuteronomy 4:9 – Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children.

Remembering God's goodness is not just a good idea or a mere suggestion. It is a command. What a family does at Thanksgiving. They write down key blessings from the previous year that they want to thank God for. After sharing them with each other, they save them in a jar. The next year they bring out all the previous years' reminders, first remembering and then thanking God for them again.

We see the psalmist sharing different things from Israel's history that God has done for them.

Some wandered in the desert: It is likely that the psalmist was thinking about the forty years of wilderness wanderings. During this time, they could not enter the Promised Land.

Finding no way to a city to dwell in: They could not go to dwell in the land promised to them because they refused to obey God's command and timing. Moses sent twelve spies to spy out the land. Out of the twelve, only Joshua and Caleb encouraged the people to go in and take possession. The other ten incited the people of Israel to rebel against God's command, lacking faith that He would give them victory. Because of their disobedience, God disciplined them with forty years in the wilderness. When they heard that they would not be allowed in, they decided to try anyway and many died in battle.

Sin has consequences: Here we see clearly that sin has consequences. Those consequences cannot always be instantly reversed. Sometimes they last for a long time, even a lifetime.

Every single one of the people who rebelled died in the wilderness, locked out of God's blessings that they could have received.

Then they cried to the Lord, "They" does not refer to the individuals who sinned, but to the nation. By this time the older generation had died and the younger generation was willing to obey and do it God's way.

He delivered them, we will see this and similar refrains throughout this passage. This is the comforting thing about God. He is patient and forgiving and He answers when we call to Him. No matter what you have done in the past, God is willing and ready to forgive you and deliver you if you will turn to Him.

He led them by a straight way, God's leading is normally clear and simple. Things get complicated and messy when we take matters into our hands or leave the path He has laid out for us. The road into the Promised Land was simple. It was when the people disobeyed that they began wandering in the wilderness.

God does not want us to be lost. He does not want us to go forward with no sense of direction, meaning, or purpose. All of these He gives to us in His Word, if we will only look.

Thank the Lord for His steadfast love. This principle is repeated throughout the passage. You know what it means. It is simple. It is clear. The key is to do it.

In verses 10-12, it is not clear what time period the writer had in mind here. Perhaps he is referring to the time of the judges. During this time period, the people of Israel were often subjugated and forced into heavy labor by their conquerors. This possibility fits also with verse eleven, which lists their rebellion against God as the reason for their plight. Another possibility is that it refers to King Zedekiah and the exile to Babylon period.

Disobedience to God comes with serious consequences. We can see through the author's perspective of history that their sins are what caused their suffering. Unfortunately, people who are suffering for their sins often don't realize it at the time. Many times they will blame others or circumstances rather than look at themselves as a possible cause. Of course, suffering is not always the result of one's own sin. Jesus suffered more than anyone and He was sinless. But it sometimes it.

They cried out and God answered. This is the story of the Israelite nation. The cycle is repeated over and over. It is still not finished. Even now, the Jews are living in rebellion against God, refusing to accept His Son as the Messiah. Eventually they will once again cry out to God and He will deliver them from.

It is easy to look at the history of Israel and see this cycle. We need God's deliverance and forgiveness just as much as they did.

Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love. See verses 12-14. When we thank the Lord, we will often list out things that we perceive as positive: our work, health, materials, financial blessings, etc. We should not forget to thank the Lord for His love in discipline or in allowing us to go through trials for sanctifying us.

Thank the Lord for His healing, verses 17-22.

From Numbers 21:4-9 – They traveled from Mount Hor along the route to the Red Sea, to go around Edom. But the people grew impatient on the way; they spoke against God and against Moses, and said, "Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? There is no bread! There is no water! And we detest this miserable food!"

Then the Lord sent venomous snakes among them; they bit the people and many Israelites died. The people came to Moses and said, "We sinned when we spoke against the Lord and against you. Pray that the Lord will take the snakes away from us." So Moses prayed for the people. The Lord said to Moses, "Make a

snake and put it up on a pole; anyone who is bitten can look at it and live." So Moses made a bronze snake and put it up on a pole. Then when anyone was bitten by a snake and looked at the bronze snake, they lived.

Psalm 66:16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul.

This is likely a reference to the Israelites in the wilderness. We see similar accounts in Numbers chapters 11 and 24. The people complained about eating the same food all the time (manna). The psalmist said it is foolish behavior. God provided easy-to-access, free, nutritious food for them for forty years. In return, they complained and whined and asked to go back to Egypt.

God was not happy with their ungrateful spirit either. The author says that they almost died because of it. This did take place both in Numbers 11 and 24. In both cases, God was merciful and spared most of them.

God is serious about gratitude. The people barely avoided a death sentence because of their bad attitudes.

Verse 22, shows others ways a person can show gratitude. We can offer a thanksgiving sacrifice. In Old Testament times, that would mean giving an offering at the tabernacle (Leviticus 7:11-15). How could a person do something like that now? Maybe, give an offering to a church or ministry, or tell people of your gratitude. Express your gratitude by singing hymns.

In verses 23-27, it is unclear what the psalmist is referring to. The only biblical account that sounds similar is that of Jonah, where we do see God showing His wonders by calming the sea and delivering the crew of the ship who were in distress. It is also possible that the writer is referring to something not in the biblical account. What we read in the Bible is only a small fraction of God's deeds. In the gospel of John, John wrote that the

heavens themselves could not contain all of the books necessary to write down all of Jesus' deeds.

Verse 32: Believers should be sharing testimonies publicly. Giving thanks and praising God is good to do privately, but telling others of God's work in your life is one of the best ways you can glorify Him.

God is in complete control of nature, using it to bless the righteous and afflict the wicked. It is not clear what specific event or person the psalmist is referring to. At times God did pronounce a curse of judgment on wicked cities (such as Sodom and Gomorrah and Tyre). God showers His people with providential blessings and sets His face against those who rebel against Him.

The wise should consider the steadfast love of the Lord, verse 43. We have seen in this chapter that God is active. He pours out blessings. He answers prayers. He disciplines the rebellious, but forgives the penitent. Everywhere we look, there are stories of God's goodness. But many people do not see these things. Instead they label good things that happen to them as good luck or chance. We need to spend time meditating on God's wondrous deeds, in us and in the world around us. We need to write them down so as not to forget. We need to share them to inspire and encourage others (and to help us not forget!) God's goodness should be ever present in our minds.

Closing: For the love that casts out fear, the faith that sustains and the hope that never perishes, be with us now and forever more. Amen.

Next week's lesson October 24, 2021, "The Joy of Worship"

Background Scripture: Psalm 84

Sources for this lesson: The Bible, International Sunday School Commentary, Psalm 107 Inductive Bible Study, and The Present Word Lesson.

