

Finding Thankfulness in Trouble

Psalm 107:1-32

(preached Pine Grove 11/13/16; Sunday PM)

Introduction

For the next two Sunday nights, I want us to take a look at Psalm 107...

This is a rather long psalm, so it will take two nights to get to get through it, but my prayer is that it will set our hearts right as we approach Thanksgiving...

Thanksgiving was started by George Washington, and it was celebrated on and off by our nation until Abraham Lincoln made it a federal holiday during the Civil War in 1863..

Since then, Thanksgiving became a holiday that was celebrated in various ways around the country...

It was not until Franklin Roosevelt that the 4th Thursday in November became officially Thanksgiving Day..

Roosevelt's motivation was simple....

If it was on the 4th Thursday, that allowed for an extra payday for people to shop for their families before Christmas...

And with the country trying to claw its way out of a Great Depression, shopping and spending was exactly what the doctor ordered..

Unfortunately, Thanksgiving Day has never recovered from its association with spending and shopping...

Even today, Thanksgiving Day is simply the day before Black Friday, which is the busiest shopping day of the year..

It once was considered very inappropriate to even advertise Christmas shopping before Thanksgiving, but now stores even open on Thanksgiving Day to accommodate the shoppers...

Needless to say, the opportunity for being thankful is lost in the turkey and dressing and the fact that the 70" TV is selling for \$99 at Target on Friday at 2 am...

Well, let that not be the case with any of us....

As we begin Thanksgiving on Sunday night, Nov 13 right here at Pine Grove...

So, let's begin to take a look at Psalm 107 tonight...

Here's the outline that we will follow as we move through these 43 verses over two nights...

I. Be Thankful for God's Goodness (1-3)

And the plan is to just dive in and let this psalm unfold as we look at the verses...

We are not sure of the author of this psalm, but it is a psalm of deliverance of the nation Israel and their thankfulness to God for it...

Israel was a nation that was always in need of deliverance...

They had been in bondage in Egypt...

They had been carried away to foreign lands in the days of the kings after David...

They had been surrounded by hostile nations, and they were always needing a deliverance from someone...

And God had always been the source of that deliverance...

We understand that today or we should understand that today...

When the money is tight but we make it through another month, the response is not...

“Whew, we did it.”

But, “Whew, thank you Lord.”

When the enemies that were closing in on us retreat, it is not “Wow, I outsmarted them.”

It is “Thank you Lord.”

In this psalm, Israel was in need of rescue and God had come to their rescue, and let’s look at the first words of this psalm that spoke of God’s rescue...

Verses 1-3...

107

***Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good,
For His lovingkindness is everlasting.***

2

***Let the redeemed of the Lord say so,
Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the
adversary***

3

***And gathered from the lands,
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the [a]south.***

I just want you to take note of 2 things in these verses...

#1- The fact that God is good.

People use the phrase all the time....

“God is good all the time, all the time God is good.”

But I think we lose what that actually means...

The best way to understand and appreciate God’s goodness is to take a moment to imagine if God were bad...

What if the God who created the heavens and the earth were a bad god?

What if he didn’t love the people that He created?

What if He didn’t care about their needs?

What if he didn’t love people?

What if he had made no way for salvation from sin?

What if we were born to die and then experience eternal punishment with no offer of salvation?

We take for granted that God is good, and we often take advantage of that fact, but Christians need to be a thankful people simply because we have experienced the goodness of God...

Which leads to point #2...

Look what the psalmist writes in verse 2..

“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so..”

In other words, if you hold your breath waiting on unbelievers to call God good, you will be holding it for a very long time.

If anybody should be proclaiming that God is good, it should be His people...

It is literally up to us to tell the world that God is good...

When people gather around tables in a few weeks and carve turkeys, most of them will not be thankful for God's goodness to them...

Most will be thankful for their goodness and their hard work and all the good things that they have...

Very few will truly express thanksgiving to God for his goodness to them....

Because only believers truly understand how good God truly is...

And those 3 verse are really the introduction to the psalm

...

They set the stage for what follows and what follows are really specific ways that God had displayed his goodness to Israel...

And this psalm is really representative of God's goodness in our own life...

We know He's good but He doesn't always show his goodness in the same way...

And in this psalm, we are going to see various ways that God was good to Israel...

But the common theme of the entire psalm is this...

Whenever we see God's goodness, it is a time to be thankful...

So, let's move to verse 4, and see another reason to be thankful to the Lord...

II. Be Thankful for God's Leading (4-9)

Verse 4....

4

***They wandered in the wilderness in a [b]desert region;
They did not find a way to [c]an inhabited city.***

5

***They were hungry [d]and thirsty;
Their soul fainted within them.***

This could be a reference to Israel's wandering in the desert on the way to the Promised Land...

Or it may be another time, but you see the situation of Israel...

They were in trouble...

They had a huge problem...

They were tired and hungry and thirsty...

And then we read this in verse 6...

6 Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble;

Do you know what this means for us tonight?

Cry out to the Lord in your trouble...

Don't cry to your neighbor or to Facebook or to your co-worker or even to your spouse...

Cry to the Lord in your trouble...

So many people have so many problems but they never go the Lord for help..

They head to unbelievers with their problems...

They head to their family with their troubles...

But your first response in your trouble is to go to the Lord with it...

Look John Andrew understands this really well...

If he can't get his shoes on or he has dropped some food in the floor or he can't reach a ball on a shelf, he has a code word that goes like this...

DAAAAADDDDDYYYY!!

It doesn't matter the problem, he has one solution, call Daddy...

Doesn't matter the time of night or the coldness of the floor that I must cross to get to him...

If there is trouble, I get the call...

And the same should be true of us as believers....

When you find trouble, you should call on the Lord...

Now, most people respond this way...

Well, I would call on Him, but He can't do anything right then and I need immediate help...

O we of little faith....

The one who made the heavens and the earth is much bigger than your emergency...

And he can provide immediate help, and sometimes that immediate help is just taking your anxiety away in the moment...

End of Verse 6...

He delivered them out of their distresses.

7

***He led them also by a [e]straight way,
To go to [f]an inhabited city.***

8

***Let them give thanks to the Lord for His
lovingkindness,
And for His [g]wonders to the sons of men!***

9

*For He has satisfied the [h]thirsty soul,
And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.*

This is the answer to the people's prayer...

Complete deliverance.

From wandering in the desert to making their way to a city filled with water and food...

And what is the response of the people?

Verse 8...

Let them give thanks to the Lord for his lovingkindness...

How good is God to rescue those who have sinned against Him...

Yet, that is the depth of His goodness..

While we were sinners, Christ died for us....

And while Israel wandered in the desert and complained against Him, God was good enough to lead them out and find rest...

We were all on the broad way wandering aimlessly in this world, but aren't we grateful that God put on on the narrow way that leads to life...

We are grateful for God's leading us out of the darkness into his glorious light...

A second way to be thankful for the Lord's goodness is found in verses 10-16...

III. Be Thankful for God's Release (10-16)

Look at verse 10....

10

There were those who dwelt in darkness and in the shadow of death,

Prisoners in [i]misery and [j]chains,

11

Because they had rebelled against the words of God

And spurned the counsel of the Most High.

12

Therefore He humbled their heart with labor;

They stumbled and there was none to help.

Not sure of the specific time of Israel's capture...

It could have been their slavery in Egypt..

It could have been when the Assyrians came and conquered the northern kingdom and took them into exile...

It may be the time of Judah's exile to Babylon..

Whatever the occasion, this was time of imprisonment and hard labor according to verse 12...

Now look, the people were to blame for their imprisonment...

They had rebelled against God and His word...

They had not listened to His counsel...

So they were to blame for their misery, so can you expect God to rescue you when it is your own doing?

Verse 13...

13

*Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble;
He saved them out of their distresses.*

14

*He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of
death
And broke their bands apart.*

15

*Let them give thanks to the Lord for His
lovingkindness,
And for His [k]wonders to the sons of men!*

16

*For He has shattered gates of bronze
And cut bars of iron asunder.*

Do you see a pattern in this psalm yet?

There is trouble.

There is a cry to the Lord.

There is deliverance.

And then there thankfulness...

This is the pattern of the psalm and this is the pattern of our lives at times as well...

We find trouble.

We cry for help.

God delivers.

And we should give thanks...

Yet, how often do we stop at part 3...

God delivers and we go our own way without any thanks..

Remember the 10 lepers that Jesus healed?

How many came back?

1.

And that shows that 90% of people are not grateful at all for the Lord's goodness...

The third reason to show offer our thanks to God is found in verses 17-22....

IV. Be Thankful for God's Healing (17-22)

Verse 17...

17

***Fools, because of [l]their rebellious way,
And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.***

18

***Their soul abhorred all kinds of food,
And they drew near to the gates of death.***

The problem of verses 17-22 is more of an individual problem...

Some people were sick...

So sick that they were abhorred by food...

In other words, they thought of food made them sicker and they even stopped eating...

They were literally starving to death and at the point of death...

And please notice verse 17....

This sickness was their own fault...

It was due to their rebellious ways and their iniquities...

Maybe they were drunkards or had sexually transmitted diseases...

Maybe they were gluttons and way overweight...

WE simply know that they were sick because of their own sin...

Yet, guess what they will do in verse 19...

19

***Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble;
He saved them out of their distresses.***

20

***He sent His word and healed them,
And delivered them from their [m]destructions.***

21

***Let them give thanks to the Lord for His
lovingkindness,
And for His [n]wonders to the sons of men!***

22

***Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving,
And tell of His works with joyful singing.***

Let me say something here that applies to the last section as well...

But I am grateful that God is not like me...

I know none of you would never do this or even think this...

But sometimes, I rejoice that sinners are getting what they deserve...

I think to myself, "Well, they broke God's law. It serves the right to be suffering. It was their fault anyway, so they are only getting what they deserve."

Yet, I want you to notice here and in the last passage...

Even though the troubles of the people were their own fault, God did not let them suffer when they cried out to Him...

The Lord is kind even to those who have made their own trouble...

The reason I walked in darkness before I was saved was because I loved my sin...

But I am grateful that God didn't say that I was simply getting what I deserved, but that he stepped in to help when I turned to him in faith and repentance....

I want you to take note of something in verse 20 that is so encouraging....

These people were sick and look how God healed them...

He sent His word and they were healed...

Listen to what Charles Spurgeon says here...

“Though God uses medicine and medicine is fine. God doesn’t need medicine. Sometimes a word from His mouth is all it takes. Sometimes a word will do it. In fact, 1000s of times a word has done it.”

Let’s look at one more reason to be thankful for God tonight, and then we will finish up the psalm in 2 weeks...

V. Be Thankful for God's Rescue (23-32)

Let's read verses 23-27...

23

*Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters;*

24

*They have seen the works of the Lord,
And His [o]wonders in the deep.*

25

*For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind,
Which lifted up the waves [p]of the sea.*

26

*They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the
depths;
Their soul melted away in their misery.*

27

*They reeled and staggered like a drunken man,
And [q]were at their wits' end.*

The problem of this section is again very easy to see...

Sailors are caught in an incredible storm at sea...

And this time, God is the one who is responsible for the trouble...

Verse 25 says that he spoke this time and a mighty wind came upon the men at sea...

So much so that the boat rose up to the heavens and sank
to incredible depths....

And though these men made a living on the sea, this
storm made them melt with fear....

They were walking around the ships like drunks not
knowing what to do...

So, when you get to your wits end, what do you do?

Verse 28...

28

*Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,
And He brought them out of their distresses.*

29

*He caused the storm to be still,
So that the waves [r]of the sea were hushed.*

30

*Then they were glad because they were quiet,
So He guided them to their desired haven.*

31

*Let them give thanks to the Lord for His
lovingkindness,
And for His [s]wonders to the sons of men!*

32

*Let them extol Him also in the congregation of the
people,*

And praise Him at the seat of the elders.

Does this rescue remind you of anything that you have read about anywhere else in the Bible???

Sure, this is a preview of what Jesus is going to do in a boat on the sea of Galilee...

Where he is going to clam down the disciples who were very experienced fishermen but calming down one of the worst storms that they had ever experienced...

Now, look the disciples were good Jewish men...

They knew the Scriptures...

They would have read this psalm growing up in the synagogue with their families...

They would have read about God causing the waves to kick up and then making the sea go flat...

And so when Jesus did it, do you know what hit their heart...

Fear.

They were afraid in the storm, but they were more afraid that God was in the boat with them..

That fear would eventually turn to thankfulness when they realized their rescue...

And that is the response to rescue, right?

Thankfulness and gratitude...

First, thankfulness expressed to God in our own heart, but notice verse 32...

Which says that such a rescue should also cause us to thank God before others as well...

And not only thank Him but praise Him as well...

Conclusion

I want to stop right there for tonight and we will finish the psalm in 2 weeks...

But let me leave with you with a couple things to take home with you tonight...

#1 - Trouble comes in all directions.

Sometimes, we create our own mess...

Sometimes, we have disobeyed God and found trouble...

Sometimes, our sinful lifestyles can lead to trouble...

Sometimes, trouble finds us as we wander in the world..

And sometimes, God sends storms our way to display his power to rescue us...

#2- Help comes from one direction.

Our first reflex to trouble must be to call upon the Lord in our trouble...

It is tempting to handle trouble in our own power and in our own way, yet sometimes you dig a deeper hole...

God would desire that you call upon Him in your distress, and trust Him for rescue...

And then finally, ...

#3 - Rescue causes one reaction.

We are simply called to be thankful for God's deliverance...

And we are to be thankful inwardly and outwardly...

If God's people don't appreciate and show gratitude for His goodness, no one will...

Let me suggest something to you as we approach thanksgiving...

Take time to write down some of God's leading you this past year, and be thankful for it out loud at your family gathering....

Take time to write down how God released you from sin how ever many years ago that was and read it aloud at your Thanksgiving with family...

Take time to write down how God has healed your physically in your life time and read it to family and friends before you eat the turkey...

And finally, take some time and write down how God has rescued you from dangerous situations in your life and read it out loud before you pick up your fork this year...

It is often easy to say you are a thankful person, but it is often very encouraging to hear how thankful you are as well...

Israel sang psalm 107 as an act of worship...

May we make our thanksgiving to God just as worshipful...

Let us pray.

VI. Be Thankful for God's Justice (33-42)

VII. Be Thoughtful about God's Kindness (43)