

Week of March 25, 2012

I Thank You, Lord

Passage Outline:

1. **Invitation to Give Thanks** (Ps. 107:1-3)
2. **Reasons to Give Thanks** (Ps. 107:4-9)
3. **Response of the Thankful** (Ps. 107:33-38,43)

What This Lesson Is About:

This lesson is about expressing thanks to God for His many expressions of goodness toward us.

How This Lesson Can Impact Your Life:

This lesson can help you to reflect on the ways God has demonstrated His goodness to you and to express your gratitude to Him.

1. Invitation to Give Thanks - Psalm 107:1-3

Psalm 107:1-3

¹ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. ² Let the redeemed of the LORD say this-- those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, ³ those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.

- A. The Psalmist begins "giving thanks to God because He is good." In English, being "good" is just okay. But not so in Hebrew. Here the word takes on the superlative of the word good, that being the BEST. God is the best we could ever ask for or want. When we have God, we don't need anything else.
- B. "God's love endures forever." As we have seen in all of the previous Psalms we studied, this is God's *faithful love*. Not only does God love us, but we can count on that love being with us no matter what is happening around us.
- C. The added benefit that this Psalm gives is that God's faithful love lasts *forever*. At no time will believers find themselves separated from God's faithful love. St. Paul asks in **Romans 8:38-39** ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- D. When one has been loved forever, the natural response is Worship and an expression of gratitude. Since believers benefit from God's faithful love, they should speak up on His behalf. The Psalmist says, "Let the redeemed of the LORD say this."
- E. The psalmist indicated the redeemed were to proclaim that the LORD has redeemed them from the hand of the foe. The word *foe* refers to any distress of body or soul that God has redeemed us from.

If you have not already done so, please read the article "*The Psalms as Praise*" included in your preparation packet you picked up last Sunday. Additional copies are still available on the back table.

Thankfully Proclaiming God's Redemption

Regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves, God is always good and always deserving of our thanksgiving. In addition to salvation, we experience many acts of divine kindness as we live out our lives under God's watchful eye. When God does something wonderful for us, let us tell others what He has done, expressing gratitude all along the way.

Consider your attitude when you are in corporate worship. To what extent is your worship characterized by an attitude of thankfulness? Prayerfully place an X on the scale below with your answer:

1-----10
I rarely think about being thankful. Some Sundays my heart is focused on being thankful. I regularly experience thankfulness. I consciously seek to be thankful.

2. Reasons to Give Thanks - Psalm 107:4-9

Psalm 107:4-9

⁴Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. ⁵They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away. ⁶Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. ⁷He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle. ⁸Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, ⁹for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

- A. Psalm 107:4-32 provides examples of four different groups of people in distress who were delivered by God's goodness:
 - i. Desert wanderers (4-9);
 - ii. Prisoners (10-16);
 - iii. The sick (17-22);
 - iv. Sailors in a storm (23-32);
- B. The Israelites had wandered in the wilderness during exodus from Egypt as well as during the Babylonian exile. They knew first-hand what life in desert wilderness was like.
- C. Psalms tend to be deliberately ambiguous in order to make the song applicable to more than one situation. We too may have wandered in the desert (maybe not literally) in some crisis or difficulty when our spirits failed and our souls fainted. In other words we were "at the end of our rope."

If you have not already done so, please read the article "*The Wilderness and the Solitary Place*" included in your preparation packet you received last Sunday. Additional copies are on the back table.

- D. Four times in Psalm 107:4-32 we find a two-part refrain or chorus used in community worship (vv. 6 and 8; vv. 13 and 15; vv. 19 and 21; vv. 28 and 31).
 - i. "Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; He rescued them from their distress."

- ii. "Let them give thanks to the LORD for His faithful love and His wonderful works."

Thanksgiving for God's Deliverance

Take a moment to think of a specific time when you have felt as if you were wandering in a "desolate wilderness."

Using words or short phrases, describe ...

1. Your "wilderness"
2. How you "cried out to the Lord"
3. What He did to rescue you from your distress
4. How you expressed thanks for His deliverance

Now, here's the tough question: How complete was your thankfulness for the deliverance you received from God? Do you need to thank Him again? Do you need to thank Him for the first time for His wonderful works in your specific situation!

3. Response of the Thankful - Ps. 107:33-38,43

Psalm 107:33-38, 43

³³ He turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground, ³⁴ and fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there. ³⁵ He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs; ³⁶ there he brought the hungry to live, and they founded a city where they could settle. ³⁷ They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest; ³⁸ he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased, and he did not let their herds diminish.... ⁴³ Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the LORD.

- A. God can and does turn rivers into desert, springs of water into thirsty ground and fruitful land into salty wasteland. We might ask why He would do such a thing. The Psalmist gives us the answer, because of the wickedness of those who live there.
- B. God does not reverse positive situations, making them become intolerable, on a whim. He reverses fortunes as a matter of divine discipline and appropriate response to evil.
- C. This is not instant reversal every time there is some wrongdoing. God has perfect timing as to when to exact discipline in every situation.
- D. We need to be careful not to clamor for instant justice for those who do wrong, or we might find ourselves instantly judged for our own sins.
- E. So, why does God seem to take so long? Remember Peter's statement about the Lord's patience, "not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance" (2 Pet. 3:9).
- F. For the righteous, God reverses the negative situations, blessing every aspect of their lives. He turns their desert into a pool of water and their dry land into springs of water.

If you have not already done so, please read the article "Rivers in the Desert" included in the preparation materials you picked up last Sunday. Additional copies are on the back table.

- G. The phrase *fruitful harvest* is literally fruit of revenue, suggesting the people had enough to eat and to drink for themselves, plus an abundance to sell to others. The point is not that their hard work paid off, but that God was blessing on their efforts.
- H. “Whoever is wise” ought to pay attention to these things. The phrase *pay attention* means to mark with diligence or to guard from ever losing.
- I. This question was intended to stress that wise people contemplate the goodness of God toward the upright, but also His righteous indignation toward evil doers.
- J. Wise people conform their lives to God’s norms, trusting Him to take care of them. Foolish people take matters into their own hands, and flourish often at the expense of others. In the end, they guarantee their own doom.

Thanking God for His Discipline as well as for His Blessings

For most of us, giving thanks for God’s discipline is not as easy as thanking Him for His blessings. And yet, God’s discipline is often more beneficial than His blessings.

Think of some choices you have made that God needed to discipline you for? While at the time, it was not pleasant, yet the discipline helped you grow and mature in ways that God’s blessings could not have brought about.

Have you thanked God for His discipline? If not, take a moment now to share with God what His discipline accomplished in your life and humbly thank Him for the discipline He has brought?

Biblical Truths in Focus

1. Giving thanks to God is appropriate because He has lavished His faithful love upon us.
2. Most of us have dozens of reasons to worship God with thanksgiving and praise, and we should gladly and frequently do so.
3. Believers can take comfort in knowing God disciplines the disobedient and restores the upright. He liberates us from a judgmental attitude, freeing us to give thanks for His many acts of goodness.