

The Penitent's Cry

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- [0 : 00] Well now let's turn back to Psalm 106, Psalm 106, and we'll take as our text Psalm 106 verses 4 and 5 and think about this cry for salvation from the Lord.
- The penitents cry for salvation from the Lord. Remember me, O Lord, with the favour you have toward your people. O visit me with your salvation.
- It's an interesting thing to notice here that God puts these words in the mouth of his servant. All scripture is God-breathed. It comes to us through men, it comes to us through holy men who were moved by the Holy Spirit.
- So God has put these words, remember me, O Lord, with the favour you have toward your people. God has put these words in the mouth of his servant.
- And he's put them there not only for him to use, but for us to use as well. He wants us to pray this prayer again and again, that we might have knowledge and experience of the salvation of God.
- [1 : 29] Remember me, O Lord, with the favour you have toward your people. Visit me with your salvation. These will be our two points. A penitents cry for salvation from God.
- And I think, you see, that it's an encouragement to us when we find that this prayer is a prayer we use. We use regularly. It's an indicator to us that we have a real sense of need, that we know that salvation is of the Lord and we find it in him.
- Not once, but again. This poor man cried and the Lord heard him and saved him from his distresses. And whenever we have distresses, we're back to square one.
- We're back to calling upon the name of the Lord for help. Now the psalmist, in the context here, traces the way God saved his people from themselves and from their enemies.
- It goes back to when God delivered Israel from Egypt. And God delivered the Israelites repeatedly from themselves in the forty years in the wilderness.
- [2 : 43] And of course it bore upon the people all the way down through the history after that. And through the people of God in the New Testament period as well. Down to the present.
- God delivering his people from themselves and from their enemies. Now in the original setting, the psalmist writes, but he writes, at least the Hebrew interpreters are fairly agreed on this, that it was an exilic psalm, expressing longings for the presence of God, to enjoy his presence.
- The psalmist with the people knew that they had been sent into exile on account of their sin. Nothing new there. That's what happened to them in the desert. God had chastised them for rebelling against them from turning away.
- And so here in the psalm, God's people are serious about experiencing his salvation. Experiencing him near them.
- You and I know it's not enough to know the doctrine. We need to experience it. We need to know that God is interacting with our spirit. That what we have by way of Christian religion is real.
- [4 : 07] It is of the soul, of the spirit. It is God interacting with us. God bringing to bear upon us his truth in a saving and empowering way.

And so the psalm writer says, remember me, O Lord, and visit me with your salvation. Now it's a curious thing that when God is called upon to remember, remember me, O Lord, it's not that he forgets.

It's simply a way that God allows us to speak to him, to as it were called to mind. And then the suggestion is not that he forgets.

Actually, for God to forget is an impossible. Sometimes we're a bit careless in our thinking and we say that nothing is impossible with God.

That has to be qualified. It has to be qualified in a number of ways. God cannot forget. God cannot forget. God cannot lie. God cannot fail to keep his promises.

[5 : 17] He cannot break his word. He cannot lose what belongs to him essentially. He cannot stop seeing all things, knowing all things.

And like I say, he cannot forget. And yet here we are encouraged to say, remember me, O Lord. We're asking him to do something he's willing to do.

The psalm writer wants to be remembered by God in this way. He wants to be remembered with the favor God has to his people.

He wants to know that he is forgiven. That his sins have been dealt with. Now bear in mind this was all spoken long before Jesus came into the world.

So he's asking for something that is wrapped, parceled up as it were, in the promises of God made about Messiah.

[6 : 31] He wants to know the favor of God that God has towards his people. And a key part of that favor is forgiveness. Believers under the old covenant, in the old testament time, always had a sense of unease.

Because the substance of the promises never came. They still had to go through all that routine and rigmarole of sacrifices. And there was no peace in the sense that they couldn't get the peace through the sacrifices.

They had to hold on to the promises that God would fulfill what all these things meant. And so when he asks to be remembered with the favor God has towards his people, it was the favor of God in accepting them and pardoning their iniquities.

Removing from them all that separated them from him. Forget them he would not. There they were in exile, struggling with the changes that had come upon them.

Wondering if somehow God had abandoned them. And yet you remember God said through the prophet, A nursing man may forget her child, The child that she's given sick to.

[8 : 00] But I won't forget you. I have inscribed you upon the palms of my hands. I've got that intense concern for you. And so the psalmist is saying, Lord, remember me with that favor.

In our metrical version we sing, Remember me, Lord, with that love which thou to thine dost be. But the word that's used for favor here is a very rich and deep word.

That a son of God is the good pleasure of God. It lies at the heart of his response to us as needy sinners.

It is his good pleasure. It's to be the source of our hope. That God in his sovereign pleasure acts for us.

The coming of Jesus was part of that plan. It was a good pleasure of the Father's will, you see, to give him.

[9 : 11] And to hold him there in the cradle of the promises all the while, Until the fullness of time had arrived. And so the psalm writer is saying, Remember me, O Lord, with the favor that hath sung the good pleasure you have Toward your people.

And it's most interesting and revealing that in the New Testament, Paul especially makes much of this.

He talks about believers being adopted into God's family. Having the family mark upon them because of the good pleasure of God.

Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes. The grace of God. And yes, yes, yes, yes. The love of God. But back of it all, the good pleasure of the Lord was set upon them.

It pleased the Lord. It pleased the Lord to remember them. It pleased the Lord to save them. It pleased the Lord to bruise them.

[10 : 16] That's the way. Think of me in this way, Lord. Remember me in this way. Spurgeon says on this, commenting on this, Think of me with kindness as thou thinkest upon thine elect.

I cannot ask for more, nor would I seek less. That's really a classic Spurgeon one.

Let me say it again. Think of me with a kindness as thou thinkest on thine elect. I cannot ask for more, nor would I seek less.

Remember me, O Lord, with the good pleasure you have. Towards your own. Bring me into your family.

And you see, if you go back again for a moment to the Israelites in exile. This amounted for them to show us you have not forsaken us utterly.

[11 : 34] Show us you haven't cast us off and simply forgotten us. And you see, we need this ourselves.

We need to have this word brought home to us. To reassure us that this is for us. We need a word like this to seal God's assurance to us that we belong to him.

If you don't think like that, something's wrong. If you have no desire that you would know assuredly that the Lord is for you, that he remembers you with that good pleasure of his will in Jesus, what on earth wrong?

We ought to want to know earnestly this from him. And we say to him with the psalmist, Remember me, O Lord, with the good pleasure you have toward your people.

And so with contrite hearts we turn to him. And like the penitent thief, we say to him, Lord, remember me.

[12 : 53] Remember me with your good pleasure. Who has a thought at all but that they would ask this from the Lord, remember me, remember me, O Lord, with the good pleasure you have toward your people.

And from that we can heartily say to him, Visit me, O Lord, with your salvation. Think about it, visit me.

How often we've wished that someone would just visit. Someone perhaps we hadn't seen for a while. We're looking forward to it. Maybe some of you think the minister has been a while since he's come.

I wish he would give me a visit. Well, fair enough. We want a visit that hasn't come. And when it does come, we're delighted. We're glad.

There's something in his response. Oh, great. Maybe someone comes who's very positive and lifts up our spirit.

[14 : 12] We've been low and we're revived and refreshed by the visit. Well, you see, this is the way it was for these exiles. They wanted God to visit them in exile to make himself known to them.

To encourage them. To reassure them. To take away that sad gloominess that hang upon them the not knowingness.

There's an interesting psalm we seldom sing nowadays. When I was a young Christian it was sung quite often by Babel's streams we sat and wept when Sion we thought on in midst thereof we hanged out harps the willow trees upon.

For our persecutors required a song of us and we said Oh, how the Lord's song shall we sing within a foreign land.

they couldn't they couldn't sing the Lord's songs in exile the way they could at home. And there they were feeling they had not used the light they were given and they were in a sorry state.

[15 : 29] Well, we're here today like that, aren't we? Even the minister has to say he hasn't used the light he's been given as well as he might have. I hope there's no one here who thinks they've used the light God gave them perfectly consistently.

Oh no. We have sinned and come short. We can identify if we're honest we can identify with the Samaritan we have sinned with our fathers.

Too long we've been the workers of iniquity. I don't say we've made idols and worshipped them but we've not used the light God has given us the light of the gospel as well as we could.

We've not meditated on his word as much as we should. And I suggest to you that each in his own measure here today ought to be able to say that we have sinned and come short.

We have not used the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ as well as we ought to. And so we're back to square one.

[16 : 45] Oh visit me with your salvation. Bring afresh to me the glories of your salvation.

I remember somebody saying some time ago I need to think hard about it but I remember it was said very vividly it was about a gospel sermon an evangelistic sermon and somebody was complaining that so and so always had a gospel sermon at one end of the day meaning an evangelistic sermon.

And the reply was this Sinners needed and saints love it.

Saints love it. Tell me the old old story of Jesus and his love.

Sinners need it. They need to hear it often until they are altogether persuaded under the grace of God to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to them in the gospel.

[18 : 02] Remember me visit me oh Lord with your salvation and I submit to you that sinners love the old old story. I discovered just the other day that a chap in the Danunan Strakhar congregation of which I'm intermoderate as you know he's got to be treated for cancer and I discovered just in talking to the session clerk about him getting his phone number and so on that he knows a chap called Jackie Ritchie now what happens to be I know this fellow Jackie Ritchie he's a great evangelist maybe not a Calvinist I grant but a really good old fashioned evangelist and I remember listening to him in Gardenston a few years ago and he was full of these entreaties to people to come and enjoy the salvation of God in the Lord

Jesus Christ calling them to come to him softly and tenderly Jesus is calling calling O sinner come home come home come home you who are weary come home O visit me let me put the words in your mouth visit me O Lord with your salvation verse 5 that I may see the benefits of your chosen that's a little unclear to us because when we think about see it means you're seeing me I'm seeing you to see means to experience to experience for oneself that's what the word behind this means O taste and see that's the word experience for yourself that the Lord is good that I may see that I may experience the benefit of your chosen ones that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation of your people that I may glory with your inheritance in other words that I'll be one of them and that I'll know it

I've said to you not so long ago it was the rabbi that was searching for that but he couldn't ask Jesus the straight question what must I do to be saved he flattered Jesus or tried to by saying rabbi we know you're a teacher come from God because no one can do the miracles you're doing except God is with him Nicodemus except a man is born again he cannot see he cannot experience in here the kingdom of God and says the psalmist oh visit me with your salvation that I may see that I may experience the benefits of your chosen and may it be therefore as we leave this that we would be glad to take up this prayer and to take it seriously and to bring it before the

Lord wherever we are at in our experience if it is to know more of his salvation more of what the benefits are more of the experience of God himself remember me oh Lord with the good pleasure you have toward your people visit me with your salvation that I may experience the benefit of your chosen ones that I may rejoice in the gladness of your people and glory in their inheritance amen amen to the world going to Y