

The Christian's Response to Trouble

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[0:00] Please turn with me in your Bibles to Psalm 107, our sermon text for today.

If you need a Bible, you're welcome to take one off the back table and keep it as our gift to you.
Psalm 107.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble and gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their souls fainted within them. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He led them by a straight way, till they reached a city to dwell in. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man.

[1:10] For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things. Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons, for they had rebelled against the words of God and spurned the counsel of the Most High.

So he bowed their hearts down with hard labor. They fell down with none to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and burst their bonds apart.

Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man. For he shatters the doors of bronze, and he cuts in two the bars of iron.

Some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction. They loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He sent out his word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man.

[2:22] And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and tell of his deeds in songs of joy. Some went down to the sea in ships, doing business on the great waters.

They saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven, and they went down to the depths.

Their courage melted away in their evil plight. They reeled and staggered like drunken men, and they were at their wit's end. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven.

Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man. Let them extol him in the congregation of the people and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

[3:23] He turns rivers into a desert, springs of water into thirsty ground, and a fruitful land into a salty waste because of the evil of its inhabitants. He turns a desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water, and there he lets the hungry dwell, and they establish a city to live in.

They sow fields and plant vineyards and get a fruitful yield. By his blessing, they multiply greatly, and he does not let their livestock diminish. When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, evil, and sorrow, he pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes.

But he raises up the needy out of affliction and makes their families like flocks. The upright see it and are glad, and all wickedness shuts its mouth.

Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things, and let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Good morning.

Am I good? Too loud? Good morning. My name is Jordan. I'm one of the elders here at Shoreline, and I get the privilege of preaching through Psalm 107.

[4:42] I chose to preach this psalm because I believe that it would be a good word to any here who are experiencing trouble of any kind, which is probably most of us. But before I get into today's passage, I'd like to share a quick story.

For a little bit of context, I work full-time in defense while my wife works full-time raising, educating, and caring for our kids. We have children that range in ages from 3 to 12.

Nearly every Saturday morning, I experience a few fun interactions with one or more of my children when they call me mommy. Mommy. Why do they call me mommy, you ask?

Well, because they're so used to calling for mom throughout the week. It's what they yell out when they need something, when they want something, or when they're experiencing some sort of trouble. Mom, do you know what I'm talking about?

Mommy, I'm hungry. Mommy, he's fighting with me. Mom, come quick. Someone's stuck in a tree. Mommy, can you help me wipe? And on and on.

[5:44] And on Saturday mornings, when my children mistakenly call me mom, I often respond by calling them one of the names of their siblings and then helping them with whatever they need. By the end of the weekends, the kids seem to get it.

And rather than calling out for mom, they just call a generic mommy daddy. I'll take it. While this is a simple illustration, I believe it highlights a fundamental truth that the solutions to our problems come not primarily from a plan or a process, but from a person.

The more powerful, the more loving, the more consistent, the more knowledgeable the person, the better the solution he or she can provide.

For a kid, parents check many of these boxes. But where should we adults turn to when we experience problems that are bigger than we can solve? Psalm 107 will help us answer that question this morning.

And Psalm 107 will show us the character and the power of our God, and it will teach us to pray and praise our way through trouble. Just as a child's call for their mom is instinctual, so too Christians should instinctively call out to the Lord when we encounter any type of trouble.

[7:09] I wonder if that's your instinct today. Where do you first go when you face trouble? Do you turn inwards and double down on your effort to solve the problem? Do you go to mitigate the risk or to protect yourself and your family?

Or maybe you hop on your phone to figure out what the experts think? Or perhaps you try to escape the problem through entertainment, exercise, or mindless scrolling. While some of these methods are not bad in themselves, they can be a leading indicator of where our reliance truly lives.

The problem with all earthly solutions is that they lack the depth and the power to solve the true problems of life. And as we will see in Psalm 107, God is capable of solving physical, emotional, and spiritual problems simultaneously.

His solutions are comprehensive and they are eternal. Our action is simply to pray and to praise. I'll pray for the rest of our time.

And I'm a little nervous, I think. I'll pray for the rest of our time. Okay, I'm going the right direction.

[8:22] All right. I took one of Mike's presentations. And he must have had, like, extra clicks built in. So bear with me. I expected all of the slides to come up at once.

But I don't think we're going to get that today. So, all right. Dear Heavenly Father, Lord, we thank you for this time. Lord, we thank you for the power of your word. Lord, when we get to your word, we just see a depth that we can't plumb, Lord.

It is deeper. It is more comprehensive. It is in far many more dimensions than we can understand. But, Lord, I just, or that we can synthesize. Lord, I just pray that as we work through this text together, that your people will be encouraged by the goodness and power of your character.

In your name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. All right. So the main idea of today's sermon is this.

Since God is powerful, loving, and steadfast, the Christian can pray and praise their way through trouble. So we'll start at the beginning.

[9:30] The psalmist opens by directing us to praise the Lord. Some commentators believe that the occasion for this psalm was Judah's return from exile.

While some of the specifics of the text kind of map, I think it's, they map with Judah's history, I think it's faithful to recognize that this psalm also shows the character of God and describes the type of things he does for all those who are his.

God's steadfast and enduring love was true for the people of Judah, and it is and will be true for God's people for all of time. God's character is unchanging. His love is steadfast, unmovable. It is not deterred by circumstance or sin. If you are God's, then his love will endure. This psalm seeks to show us that, so that we might join in this eternal psalm of praise.

So the psalmist begins with a call to praise the Lord. He says, O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. For his steadfast love endures forever.

[10 : 34] Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. So thankfulness and praise is the primary call of this psalm. We see this call to praise introduced right here, and we're going to see it as a repeated refrain throughout the entirety of the psalm.

All in all, the psalmist calls us to thanksgiving and praise eight times, eight separate times throughout this psalm. But not only does the psalm tell us to praise, it gives us reasons to praise. So we see the reasons to praise. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. Because his steadfast love endures forever. Because he redeems his people from trouble.

And because he gathers his people for himself. So after introducing the main call of the psalm, and giving us several reasons to praise, the psalmist walks us through four different scenarios to help us see the power and love of God in action.

He then provides two lessons on how God operates. So we're going to work through each of those scenarios.

[11 : 44] So you'll see the four scenarios, verses 4 through 32, and the lessons, verses 33 through 43. We'll look at scenario one. Deliverance for the lost, the hungry, and the discouraged.

The psalmist writes, Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

He led them by a straight way, till they reached a city to dwell in. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men. For he satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.

Verses 4 and 5 indicate the trouble. Some were lost, wondering, and unable to find a place to dwell. They were hungry, they were thirsty, and they were discouraged. So discouraged that the psalmist says their souls were fainting within them.

This scenario could map alongside the people of Judah as they returned from exile. We don't know much about this return trip, but we know it took about four to five months.

[12 : 51] It would have covered about 900 miles. We know that it was filled with danger, and it would have covered some wilderness regions. Whether this was the original context or not, the point is clear.

God's people were wandering, and they experienced peril, hardship, and discouragement. I think what's really interesting about this is you see how their physical trouble produced an emotional and spiritual need.

They were lacking the physical necessities of safe lodging, food, and water. They were a people without a home and without a plan. They were weary, and they were stuck. They were lost physically and emotionally, and so they became spiritually discouraged.

Their souls were fainting within them. Their unmet physical needs produced emotional and spiritual thirst. Maybe you can relate to that today. Maybe you feel lost, unsatisfied, or discouraged.

Maybe you feel like you don't have a place where you belong. If this is you, please note the rescue that the Lord provides. When the people cry out, He rescues them by leading them to a city where they can dwell, a place where they belonged.

[13 : 58] He fixes their lostness by leading them. He cures their longings by satisfying them, and He removes their hunger by filling them with good things. In all these things, God goes above and beyond.

In the midst of physical lostness, He provides emotional fullness and spiritual satisfaction. Please note the tense change from verses 7 to verses 9.

Verse 7 is in the past tense. It recounts something that the Lord did. Verse 9 is in the present tense. It is something that He does now and continually. Friends, hold fast to this continuous work of the

Lord.

He satisfies the longing soul, and the hungry soul He fills with good things. This is a truth that we can cling to. God will lead us in the midst of trouble, and He can and will continue to satisfy the longing soul.

But before we move to the next section, I also want to point out, it's helpful to observe, God's rescue, though it was complete and it was abundant, they were lost, they were wandering, and God came in and satisfied and filled them spiritually.

[15 : 09] So it was above and beyond what they were experiencing. But it wasn't instant. It would have taken time for Him to lead them out of the wilderness.

The passage states that He led them by a straight way, which indicates a righteous, moral, and divinely guided path. Friends, if you feel lost and you are discouraged, and you have cried out to Him for help, please trust that He will lead you and that it may take time, even if it takes time. Please look to His word for guidance on how to follow His divine leading. He does not promise that His rescue will be instantaneous or flashy, but it will be effective.

And He desires to lead you to a place of satisfaction because this is the kind of God that He is. He is abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, and He redeems and gathers His people.

So because of His past works and because of His present promises, God's people can pray and praise their way through trouble, even when they're wandering. Move to the next scenario.

[16 : 20] In scenario two, we see that God provides deliverance for the rebellious.

Some sat in darkness in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and irons, for they had rebelled against the words of the Lord and spurned the counsel of the Most High. So He bowed their hearts down with labor.

So they fell with none to help. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and burst their bonds apart.

Let them thank the Lord for a steadfast love, for His wonderful works, the children of men, for He shatters the doors of brawn and cuts into the bars of iron. This scenario contrasts for the first one. This one tells us why the people are in trouble. The people were in trouble because they had rebelled against God and spurned His counsel. Because of their rebellion, they were humbled by the hard discipline of the Lord.

[17 : 24] Think about the people of Judah in captivity in Babylon. They were set in captivity because they failed to obey God's law despite His constant reminders. These were self-inflicted wounds.

God disciplined them exactly as He warned. Due to the rebellion, they had become enslaved and unable to rescue themselves. They were powerless to free themselves from the distress that they had earned.

Friends, chosen sin acts this way. The sin you choose will always want to take more and more of you. Sin always seeks control. And when you continually choose sin over God, you become enslaved as it gains more and more control in your heart.

You will eventually lose control and the sin will rule you. As the text states, the people also spurned the counsel of the Most High. In love, God had given His people counsel.

He had told them how to live. But they didn't care to follow. They didn't care to live in the ways. God made them. God made you.

[18 : 35] He knows what's best for you. And in His kindness, He tells us that. He told His people that. He gives us that instruction in the Word. But they didn't care to follow it. They ignored Him. And that wasn't just unwise.

That was actually spurning the God who had loved them and initiated a relationship with them. But these people, they chose to spurn Him by ignoring His counsel.

But despite of all this, He pursued them through a heavy hand of discipline. He said, what? He pursued them through a heavy hand of discipline. The text says that He bowed their hearts down with hard labor.

They fell down with none to help. He made their path miserable. And from this place of misery, they broke and they cried to the Lord. And then He delivered them.

This is amazing. We kind of expect, like in first scenario, the people were wandering, they were lost. We kind of expect somebody to help somebody who's lost. Right? But to help people that have

constantly ignored you, where you've lovingly reminded them, when you've put it in front of them and you've pursued them and pleaded with them, for them to ignore your counsel and just do whatever you want, we're like, fine.

[19:46] You can have what you've earned. Right? That's what our hearts want. But not God. That's not what God does here. No, He rescues them. When they cried out to Him, He delivered them.

He broke them out of slavery and brought them out from under the shadow of death. Friends, God's steadfast love is fierce. He will let you stumble and He will discipline you until your need is exposed and you cry out to Him.

But when you cry out, His fierce love will smash the bonds that hold you as He comes for you to deliver. Friends, if you are in slavery to a particular sin struggle today, or if you're actively ignoring the counsel of the Lord, explaining it away as not relevant to you, turn to Him.

Cry out to Him. He will rescue you. He will forgive you. He will draw you back in. Do not spurn Him by continuing to ignore His counsel. He is calling you right now.

Cry out to Him for rescue. Because of His steadfast love and faithfulness, God's rebellious people can pray and praise Him as a means of rescue to their self-inflicted trouble.

[21:04] Scenario 3, we see God's deliverance for the foolish. Some are fools to their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction.

They loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of hell. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. He sent out His word, and He healed them and delivered them from their destruction.

Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wonderful works to the children of man, and let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and tell of His deeds in songs of joy. Scene 3 describes the people who were suffering because of their own sinful foolishness.

While the people in the previous section were troubled by the intentional discipline of the Lord, these people were suffering due to the natural consequences of their own foolish choices. Their foolishness and its consequence had caused them to loathe a basic necessity of life, food, as they drew near to the gates of death.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and He delivered them from their distress. He sent out His word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction. I find the method of the Lord's deliverance really interesting here.

[22:24] It was not what I expected when I first read it. The text says that He sent out His word to heal them and never told us that they were sick, right, but they're loathing food. In their trouble, God delivers His people from the sickness of their own foolishness by sending them His word.

In their trouble, they had begun to loathe even food. So God sent them His word, which is spiritual food, to heal them and rescue them from the destructive path that they were on.

Have you ever been on a foolish path and you didn't even realize it? Foolishness can have that effect. Foolishness impairs our discernment and can cause us to stray from what was reasonable without us even realizing it.

Undoubtedly, the path of foolishness is sprinkled with sinful choices along the way, things that we say aren't that big a deal or aren't that destructive. This is the place that the people had found themselves in today.

Their discernment had become so impaired that they were suffering, stuck, and unable to stomach that which was healthy and good. Maybe you've been in a place like this before.

[23:30] I think maybe a helpful way to illustrate this is with food. I mean, there's a bit of a food analogy already, but we all know that we should eat healthy, right? We know it's better for us to eat healthy, but oftentimes, unhealthy food is more convenient, cheaper, and tastes better sometimes, right?

And so, and also, like the consequences of eating unhealthy is like delayed. It's small and it's delayed, right? And so then, you know, we just go for the unhealthy food because it's what's easy, it's what tastes good, you know, and then all of a sudden, we look back and we're like, I don't like healthy food anymore, you know?

We were choosing unhealthy over healthy and now, we only like unhealthy food and we can't even stomach that which is healthy. We're like, vegetable is gross. You know, that thing tastes like cardboard.

You can't have that cereal that doesn't have sugar in it, you know? And we get to this point where, you know, we have, we have been on this path for so long that we can no longer discern or stomach that which is good.

And I think foolishness can work that way in our lives. We can, we can fill our minds and our hearts with a, with a certain thing, a certain perspective and we slowly drift away from what is good and we don't even realize it.

[24 : 47] And in this place, God's people need rescue, right? They were, they were turned around, they didn't know how to get out of their own way and so the Lord came and rescued them and he sent his word, right?

He sent his word specifically into their foolishness to heal them, right? And so if you're a place in life and you feel bogged down and you feel unsure of what to do and you know there's been some like sinful pattern and some influences in your life that, that, that aren't helpful but you're not really sure how to untangle it all, right?

Cry out to the Lord, right? He sends his word to heal. You have his spirit, right? And he can use his spirit to connect his word to the thing that will heal you, right?

And so, focus a little bit on this because I think we can all get in these areas of our lives where we, we have lost the path of faithfulness and not even realized it, right?

There's so many influences on us, right? And we feel the effects of it, you're like I'm agitated all the time or I'm too angry but I don't know why, you know? And it's like we're stuck and we get in these cycles, right?

[25 : 55] God can break those cycles. We can call out to him for help and he can deliver his word to our hearts to heal us of those things. So cry out to him today.

Admit that you're lost in your foolishness and that you need his help. And this kind of word coming to heal as we're mapping across the history of Judah, right?

In Nehemiah 8, the people had come back from exile. Ezra reads the word and the people are reformed and they're changed, right? And so as we're kind of comparing this as a praise of the post-exile people, we see the word healing that nation as it worked through all of them through the preaching of Ezra.

because of the steadfast love of the Lord, even those suffering because of their foolishness can pray and praise their way through trouble. All right, I think I need to speed up a little bit, everybody. All right, deliverance from the fury of nature. Scene 4. Some went down to the sea in ships doing business on the great waters.

[27 : 11] They saw the deeds of the Lord for his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy winds which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to the heaven, they went down to the depths, their courage melted away in their evil plight.

They reeled and they staggered like drunken men and they were at their wit's end. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storm be still and the waves of the sea were hushed.

Then they were glad that the waters were quiet and he brought them to their desired haven. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wonderful works to the children of men. Let them extol him in the congregation of the people and praise him in the assembly of the elders.

In this final scenario, the people of God are on a ship at sea when they are thrown into the stress of a massive storm. The storm caused their courage to melt away and put them at their wit's end.

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storm be still and he brought them to a place of safety. This, of course, made the sailors glad and they responded by praising the Lord and telling others of his deliverance.

[28 : 15] In this scenario, the Lord is showing us that his power and love extend into the realm of nature and its dangers. Verses 24 and 29 show us that God has power over the storm.

Its ferocity is a display of his power and by his power the storm is calm. Why then did God send the storm? The text doesn't say.

But it did become an opportunity for the people to see the steadfast love of the Lord and to praise him for it. Imagine if you were there. All of a sudden you were engulfed by a massive storm. The storm was so big that all your strength, experience, and skill became useless.

You realize this and you panic as your courage melts away. Then you cry to the Lord for help and bam, he helps. The storm calms, the winds that once threatened you now take you to safety.

How palpable would the power and steadfast love of the Lord feel to you in that moment? The God who is so powerful to calm the raging storm heard your little plea for help and rescued you.

[29:21] Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love and for his wonderful works to the children of men. This scenario should give all those who are experiencing trouble from the physical world hope.

God is stronger than nature. It bends to his will. You can cry out to him and he can help. He can heal and he can rescue. So we've been mapping this alongside the post-exile Israelites but I cannot find a scenario where those Israelites on their journey from Babylon back to Jerusalem would have crossed a sea.

But this story maps very well with some future Israelites who were in a boat at a sea in peril. We see this story in Matthew 8 with Jesus and his disciples on the sea.

The disciples are in this storm. Jesus is asleep. They're fearful. They wake him up and Jesus instantly calms the storm and they wonder and they say who is this that even the wind and the waves obey him?

And this way and others we see that the rescues of Psalm 107 give way to a greater rescue. In scenario one we marveled that God did more than rescue them from their wandering.

[30:49] He also satisfied and filled them. Jesus does a similar ministry. In Luke 19.10 Jesus tells us that he came to seek and to save the lost.

Jesus does more than rescue his people from the wilderness. He seeks them out and provides them an eternal rescue. And Jesus does more than give them a city to dwell in. He provides an eternal home with his people.

John 14.2-3. In scenario two we marveled at the generosity of God to rescue his rebellious people who had become enslaved to sin.

In the early stages of Jesus' ministry as recorded in Luke 4 Jesus reads from Isaiah 66 referring to himself. He says the spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and the recovering of sight to the blind to set at liberty those who are oppressed to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Jesus came both to proclaim and to secure liberty for the captives.

[31:52] In Psalm 107 God rescues his rebellious people from the slavery of a foreign power. He removes his hand of discipline and he breaks their bonds apart. This was a foretaste of the slavery breaking work of Jesus.

Jesus frees all rebels who trust in him by breaking the power of sin for them. As 1 Corinthians 5.21 tells us for our sake he God made him Jesus to be sin who knew no sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

He took our sin on the cross where he suffered for it enduring the full weight of God's wrath for our sin. This resulted in Jesus' death but death could not hold him and our sin did not defeat him.

After three days he arose in complete and utter victory. In victory he smashed the bonds that held humanity rendering both sin and death powerless for all those who trust in him.

The truth of God's steadfast love and faithfulness gains a fuller expression as we see Jesus suffer and die for those who had rebelled against the rule of his father.

[33:02] Let us praise the Lord for his steadfast love for his wonderful works for the children of men. This is a little bit off script but what I've been thinking about here is we have our problems and they feel big.

But when we kind of fold back human history and we look at this this was a point in time where these people were experiencing problems but God is doing this work and he's setting up this work for Jesus who's solving eternal problems.

We see problems in two dimensional Jesus is solving them in 5D or whatever that would be. Over time in every realm of life physical emotional spiritual for all of eternity relational he's doing this problem solving in a far more complex way than we could ever fathom.

We get glimpses of that when we see this text of 107 mirror what Jesus is doing and him providing a bigger and greater rescue. It's just really amazing. I want that to be hope for you guys.

The thing about our problems when we face them they seem really big. They can consume us but when we step back and we look at what God has done on the universal scale for all of his people for all of history it gives us perspective and it gives us confidence in our God.

[34:27] And so another thing God gives us promises as in his word and we hold on to those promises and we see some of those promises here.

He'll satisfy us, he'll fill us, right? But he also works in ways that we don't expect, right? We don't always expect the way that he's going to solve the problem or fill us or satisfy us.

Sometimes he disciplined the rebellious ones so that they would return to him, right? And so his work is really complex and it's bigger than we can kind of figure out at the moment, right?

And so in our momentary troubles, we're trying to figure out the pieces and we're just not capable of that. We hold on to those promises. But what do those promises link back to? The giver of those promises, right?

And so what Psalm 107 is trying to do is point us to the God who is steadfast and loving and unmovable and powerful, right? So we want to hold on to the person behind the promises, the person who's working out problems in 5D.

[35:38] And so we'll get more into that, but it just comes like when you start to see everything linked together in scripture and how God is working so many things at once, it's just an amazing thing and it's a really big help to us when we face our troubles and they seem confusing and big.

I don't know where I'm at, but scene 3 also gives way to the greater work of Jesus who is the divine word sent as the wisdom of God to be our righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.

So he is the living word given to heal us from our foolishness. He rescues us from the consequences of our foolishness by being the wisdom of God for us. He is the divine word sent to heal us, sanctify us, and redeem us.

Okay. So we'll move from these four lessons, or sorry, I don't know which way this thing goes.

Okay, we'll move from the four scenarios to two lessons. So I'll read lesson one. God turns things upside down. He turns rivers into deserts, springs of water into thirsty ground, a fruitful land into a salty waste.

[36:57] Because of the evil of its inhabitants, he turns deserts into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water, and there he lets the hungry dwell, and they establish a city to live in. They sow fields and plant vineyards and get a fruitful yield.

By his blessing, they multiply greatly, and he does not let their livestock diminish. So when everything feels lost and hopeless, God changes everything. He does it for the good of his people. Who would expect a desert to turn into a pool of water? Nobody. But this is the work God is happy to do. He opposes wicked and frustrates their efforts while simultaneously providing for his people. by his blessing his people multiplied greatly. Is this not akin to what Jesus did on the cross?

Through the cross, he blessed his people while simultaneously defeating our enemies.

What was victory for his people was a death blow to their enemies. He did what nobody expected and he turned things upside down. He made a way for us to have access to the living water of the Holy Spirit, turning the desert of our hearts into wellsprings of life.

[38:07] Isaiah 66 says, he came to proclaim the good news to the poor and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. So lesson one, God turns things upside down for the good of his people.

Lessons two, God raises up the needy. When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, evil, and sorrow, he pours out contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless waste. But he raises up the needy out of affliction and makes the families like the flock. The upright see it and are glad, and all the wicked shuts its mouth. Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things. Let him consider the steadfast love of the Lord. In this section, again, we see that God turns things upside down to raise up his people and to put down their oppressors.

When his people are diminished and brought low through oppression, evil, and sorrow, he pours out contempt on princes and raises the needy out of affliction. So how does this faithful and loving God operate?

Well, he supports his people and he judges wickedness. When this happens, the righteous rejoice and the wicked are silenced. This, my friends, ought to be motivation for you to never stoop down and join in the wickedness of others.

[39:18] Yes, you may have to endure trouble at the hand of others who have evil intentions, but you need to remember that God opposes oppressors and raises up the needy.

May we be wise and stay on the right side of righteousness as we wait for his perfect judgment. So, in a few points of application, in verse 43, I really love verse 43, it says, whoever is wise, let him attend to these things.

Let him consider the steadfast love of the Lord. So this psalm closes with a call to meditate on the steadfast love of the Lord. The wise are called to attend to these things. So as we close, we'll attend to these things with a few points of application.

I also encourage you as you go home to think about this, to consider how the steadfast love of the Lord impacts your daily life and what implications it has on how you live and what you think.

Here's a few that I came up with. One, God is the solution. I was alluding to a little bit of this earlier. Psalm 107 encourages us by pointing us to the character of God.

[40 : 26] In this way, the psalmist points us past our problems to a person. The psalm opens with a call to thank the Lord because he is good and his steadfast love endures forever.

And it closes with a call to consider his steadfast love. The psalmist is pointing past our problems to a person. And the person that we are being pointed to is the God of the Bible.

He is powerful, loving, and reliable. He leads, satisfies, frees, teaches, and rescues. He is for you, and because he is for you, you can always have hope.

He turns deserts into pools of water. He raises up the needy and blesses the hungry. Anchor your perspective on the character of God. He is bigger than your problems.

So treat him that way. Treat him that way by thinking more about him than you think about your problems. Consider him to be bigger than your problems. Seek to spend more time meditating on his character than you spend meditating on your problems.

[41 : 28] Friends, I know that can be hard, but it is good. The universe does not revolve around your trouble, neither should you. The universe bows to the will of its maker, who happens to be your father and your friend.

In the midst of trouble, the Christian can fall. This is just an observation. In the midst of trouble, because these are kind of wisdom applications, right? In the midst of trouble, the Christian can fall off the path of faithfulness by looking more at their problems than they do at their Savior.

Point number two, cry out to the Lord. Some problems eclipse life and demand your attention.

These are the types of problems that are described in Psalm 107. In the midst of intense trouble, the people of God simply cry out.

This is a cry of desperation. It is a cry of faith, a cry of humility, a cry to the only one who is able to rescue. So while Psalm 107 is pointing us past our problems to a person, it also recognizes that the upheaval some problems bring.

But even here, the psalmist is pointing us to God. You may not be able to consider the character of God in the thick of it, but you can still cry to him. Think of the sailors in scene four.

[42 : 44] They were not in a place of mind to think. They simply cried out in terror, and the Lord rescued them. A desperate cry is a Godward action, and it should become the instinct of every Christian.

So Christians can fall off the path of faithfulness by not quickly and desperately crying out to God in the midst of their trouble. Application point number three, discern your role.

As we walk through each scenario in Psalm 107, one thing stands out clearly. God is the rescuer, and we are the ones who are rescued. In each scenario, we see that God is the doer, the rescuer, and man is the receiver of rescue, and the one who returns praise.

This is a simple concept, but a profound one. We are needy. God is the provider. This is a profound concept because our natural tendency is to think of ourselves as self-sufficient.

We think that we can solve our own problems. We think we should be able to solve our own problems, and this is true to a point. God has given us reason, strength, and intellect. However, the bigger the trouble you find yourself in, the more apparent your need for him becomes.

[43 : 54] This is something the psalmist is trying to illustrate today. When faced with deadly threats, we find the limit of our self-sufficiency. Realizing this truth is actually a gift.

It is a gift because our God loves to help, and our God is pleased to rescue. All the people in these scenarios do is cry out for help. When we face low-level problems, we can begin to believe in our own self-sufficiency, but when we face deadly threats, our only option is to cry out for rescue.

I think another really interesting thing here is we don't oftentimes even know what our problem is. We see this with Jesus.

He's saving us from things that we didn't even know we need saved from. And so I think as we mature, we kind of just rip that band-aid of self-sufficiency off, and we get that habit of going to him quickly and often when any kind of problem comes up.

He does equip us in ways to deal with problems. We have his word, we have others, we put our minds to it, we pray for his help, but our dependence lies in him.

[45 : 09] And he knows, and he can help us. So I think Christians can fall off the path of faithfulness by failing to recognize their own neediness, and so they turn to God in a half-hearted, self-strong type of way.

Final application, I've said it a few times, pray and praise your way through trouble. Because God is good and powerful and loving, the Christian can pray and praise their way through trouble.

Prayer cries out to the God who can and does help. Praise puts it all in perspective. Friends, when you face problems in life, big or small, remember to pray and praise.

This will encourage a faithful and Godward focus in the midst of your trouble. May prayer and praise become the instinctual response to our instinctual response to life trouble.

Thank you.