

Exodus

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[0 : 0 0] Well, this morning's theme is not change, but there is some change that's actually happening this morning. And as we continue on with this sermon series as the story of the gospel through the Psalms, one of the things that you'll notice is that in your bulletin it says that the title of this is Exodus.

And there's no doubt that this psalm comes from a book in the Psalter that begins back with Psalm 90 and ends with Psalm 106. And that whole section could be classified under the name of Exodus.

But I think this psalm in particular would be better titled Redemption or the God who is our Redeemer. And so there is one change. The other change is this.

You'll notice that this reading actually took or text took three readings this morning. Our first, our middle, and our last reading. So this sermon is going to be three times longer than usual.

No, I'm just joking. It'll only be twice as long as usual. Only 45 verses. And if you think it's going to be hard to sit through a sermon that's twice as long as usual, well, it was pretty hard to make this whole text about twice as long as it usually is.

[1 : 2 0] So it could have been four times as long. But anyway, let's have a look at this under this big theme of really actually the God who remembers his covenant with us.

This psalm could easily be a sibling of the psalm that comes before it. 104, and that was preached at the beginning of this sermon series. And that big theme was the God of creation.

And after the God of creation, of course, there's this redemption that's necessary because of the fall. And so these could be siblings. They might actually even be triplets.

Psalm 104, 105, and 106 really go together and make a unit, even though they weren't all written by the same author.

But anyway, we look at this psalm, and this psalm actually is a description and a declaration of who God is and what it is that he does.

[2 : 1 7] There are many kind of psalms. We know that half of the psalms actually are complaints. People making their petitions to God about how things are going the wrong way. And they come out of that praising him.

But there are other psalms that aren't complaints that are like these. They're quite descriptive, and they're declarative of who God is. And this is quite actually unique by comparison with the other ancient Near Eastern poems.

Many of those ancient Near Eastern poems don't actually declare who their God is, but just describe who he is. And Psalm 105 begins with this exhortation or this command, you would have noticed.

Nine times, we're actually told what to do. And I wonder how that sits with you. Do you like, at this stage of your life, being told what to do?

At our stage of life, if we're honest then, we have to admit we don't like that. Who are you to tell me what to do? But this is an exhortation to more than middle-aged or late-staged people.

[3 : 25] It's a command to the whole people of God. This exhortation is striking. It's compared to the other ancient Near Eastern religions. Because it does the very thing that the other ones don't, which make this great declaration of who God is.

In the form of a poem. A prayer. It's a hymn. And sometimes it's actually easy to forget that in this proclamation of the good news of Jesus Christ.

That this is actually Israel's prayer book and hymnal. It's not just including petitions, but it's full of the praise of God.

And we can lose that when I stand up here or someone stands up here and preaches this. But the best prayers and the best hymns actually are preachable.

And that's what this is. It's a hymn that preaches. It's a hymn that praises God. Well, the main message of this prayer to this people is to seek and to remember that the Lord is their Redeemer.

[4 : 36] We see that in verses 3 to 5. That's why I started the service today the way that I did from Matthew about knocking, seeking, and asking. Look at verses 3 to 5 with me.

And if you're not there, turn to page 504. It runs like this. Seek the Lord and his strength. Seek his presence continually.

Remember the wondrous works that he has done. His miracles and his judgments that he has uttered. This whole idea of seeking the Lord comes through very strongly.

Now, I had a friend who recently died. And we remember him as we do at funeral services or memorial service. And he had this kind of funny way of stating things in the only way that he could.

They were kind of like parables. They weren't wisdom. But for example, let me give you a few of them. After he retired, he worked as much as he did when he was actually not retired.

[5 : 37] And so he would say things like, you know, I should get a job. Because then I can apply for a holiday. Some of you can relate to that. Some of you can't yet.

But then he had this other saying. And he would say, you know, it's not that I don't remember. It's just that I forget sometimes. And you would kind of say, well, wait a minute.

Isn't that actually the same thing? Well, the key discipline or practice in Psalm 105 is that we are to remember. And more specifically, we are called in verse 5 to remember our Redeemer.

God is our creator, as we learned a couple of weeks ago. And last week we learned that God is the lawgiver. But he's also our Redeemer. And we need reminding the importance, this imperative, to remember our Redeemer.

And this is really easy to miss. And not just forget. Beginning with verse 1, in nine different ways we're told to worship the Lord. If you look down with me again, Psalm 105, page 503.

[6 : 45] Give thanks. Make known. Sing to him. Tell. Glory. Seek. Seek. Seek. And then remember.

Nine different ways we're actually told to worship the Lord. And we're exhorted to ascribe this worth-ship to the Redeemer. And three of those, of nine words, are actually to seek.

The last word of worship, though, is to remember. Verse 5. Remember the wondrous works that he has done. The word erupts, again, like a volcano of grace in verse 8.

This time the subject changes. Though, it's not about us remembering. In verse 8 we find that he is the one who remembers his covenant forever. So, we remember, and that's an act of worship, because he is the one who remembers.

And we may forget, but our Lord remembers his covenant promises with creation. This covenant that he made came forth like a command. Before the Lord's command to Moses, he commanded his will to Abraham.

[7 : 56] And in verse 11, we're given God's own commanding declaration. What will God remember and not forget? The land of Canaan.

Well, this is how and where this prayer begins. With the remembering Redeemer and in the land of Canaan. Verse 11. So, let's go back to Canaan, where we learn and laud this Redeemer.

Going now to verses 12 through 22. In these 11 verses, the psalmist remembers the Redeemer's work. A Redeemer is one who gives value or worth to his subjects.

And that is what we see in this section. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are of little or no value. Verse 12 describes this family as few or little and wanderers.

Not of great value, actually. Yet, the history of Israel, that was a name formerly known as Jacob, seemed to catch the eye of the Lord.

[8 : 59] Abraham had no future. And perhaps because of that, the Lord says, well, let's see what I can make of this man, of this family. You know, kind of like what he made of dust.

So, we're given this bird's eye view in verses 12 to 15 of Genesis. And actually, it's Genesis chapter 12 through 41. So, 30 chapters are all crammed in to seven verses.

Three generations of preserved and purposeful sojourners. And they're called the Lord's, and get this in verse 15, anointed ones. I don't know what you hear when you hear that, but I actually think of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Now, that's value added by the Lord to these people, anointed ones. This is a redeemed people by a redeemer. Imagine the value a redeemer gives them by grace to call them anointed ones.

You know the anointed one, but they're being called anointed ones. And this people's value is in the Lord alone who redeems them. On to verses 16 and 19.

[10 : 12] They comprise the bringing of Israel to Egypt by Joseph. The destination is all directed by the Lord. And the Lord sent ahead a man named Joseph. Joseph, therefore, was a sent man.

He was actually a missionary. And we think of missionaries actually in the New Testament, and then Acts, and then the rest of Christian history. But here's a man who was a missionary.

Not to be confused, though, with a Messiah. He didn't come to save his people. Again, God placed value on a far from perfect man in Joseph for God's purpose. His whole purpose was to make sure what he commanded by his word came to pass.

And there was a great test of Joseph, as it is with anyone that the Lord sends into a kind of alien culture. Joseph was a redeemed man from prisoner, as you know, to prince.

Joseph knew his true redeemer. On to verses 20 to 22 then. The purpose of the Lord, who is the redeemer, is then revealed. Though Joseph faced terrible adversity, redemption was not in the power of his own great skills of administration, or being an executive kind of overseer.

[11 : 33] It's not that Joseph ended up second in command like a governor general. There is this big surprise in verse 22 for the whole purpose that God sent him as one who redeemed him, for the purposes of a redeemer.

And as we look down at verse 22, we see that it was to restrict evil, and to tell the greatness, to teach the greatness of the Lord. But how do we do that?

Moving from Cana here to Egypt then, we learn the importance of recollection in redemption. If we are to remember our redeemer, we are to recollect.

So verses 23 to 36 then. Remembrance isn't just a matter of calling to memory the past. The psalmist recollects the work of his redeemer here.

Once Israel landed in Egypt by the sending of Joseph ahead, the Lord needed to send another missionary, or two in this case. In this case, it was Moses and Aaron.

[12 : 38] Look down with me at verse 26. It says, He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen. They were both chosen by the Lord.

And notice that these two leaders, while from the same people, were very, very different people. One was raised and reared in the dominant culture, and the other raised and reared in the oppressed culture.

The latter were a forgotten people. But the Lord remembered his covenant and these people. So the psalmist recollects for us the work of the Lord.

The Lord is the God of history, and he acts within it for his purposes. And the psalmist, or so the psalmist, recollects those specific acts. Eight miracles in all, if you can call them that.

And I just wonder, actually, I think about these miracles. Has anyone prayed for this kind of miracle in your life? I wondered if those signs seemed like miracles to the Israelites.

[13 : 40] We all pray for miracles. Health, relationship, peace. And someone will give thanks today for peace and freedom to worship. And that's a pretty big miracle.

But there was not peace in Egypt at this time for the Israelites. But there was a sign then that resulted in their freedom for worship. Except that's actually not what the psalmist recollects.

All the other miracles were in some ways forgettable. They were natural disasters. We would, in some ways, just soon forget those kinds of disasters. Though these ones were supernatural disasters.

But the final one came just a little bit too close to home. Who couldn't remember and not just recollect something like that? All the firstborn were struck down, says verse 36.

Pharaoh commanded at the beginning of Exodus that the nextborn die. But the midwives spared the males.

[14 : 43] And the Lord would not spare the first Egyptian males. But don't be mistaken, this isn't some kind of prid quo quo. Sorry, some kind of quid pro quo.

The miracle was God spared the Israelites' firstborn sons. And as you know, he wouldn't spare his own firstborn son. This is all to say that the worship of the Lord is to remember by way of recollection.

The work of the Lord that points to him. Praise of the Lord doesn't require the most recent recollection of the Lord's work, I think this is actually saying to us. We live in a culture that's the victim of the present.

You know, the tyranny of the urgent. Praise and glory of God, though, isn't just the declaration of things that are happening right now. It's the declaration of everything that he has done, is doing, and will do in the future.

You know, oh God, our help in ages past, our hope from years to come as the hymn goes. The Lord makes himself present to us in this way.

[15 : 51] When we praise him, he inhabits the praises of his people. When we praise, he's with us. We're not just kind of pretending when we're here. When we do that, he's here right now. And so this is not some kind of vague recollection of the Lord, but a concrete act of God to deliver his people from what binds them, imprisons them, slaves them.

How much more is true worship the recollection of God to deliver us from our own slavery to sin? Through the concrete covenant faithfulness of Jesus' death on the cross.

Sometimes I wonder if more shouldn't happen during worship. Do you ever kind of wonder that when you sit here? I mean, shouldn't there be something more? Shouldn't something actually happen?

But then I think there's nothing more that needs to happen than to turn towards the Lord and recollect through our ears and through our eyes our imaginations, that sanctified imagination, in the saving grace of his Son, an only begotten Son.

So that's the redemption of God. That's the recollection of him by way of remembrance. But does that actually go far enough? I think the psalm suggests something more or in addition to this.

[17 : 09] The psalm's remembrance starts in Canaan, you remember? Then they move to Egypt. But now actually they come back to Canaan. However, remembrance is not mere returning to the past.

Remembrance is renewal. And so when you hear that word, you might notice the word new in it. But the return to Canaan isn't something brand new.

Now we live in a cult of the new, the innovative, you know, the next thing. But we're served well if we're reminded that there is nothing new under the sun.

About the only thing worth declaring new is the mercies of the Lord, which are new every morning and great is his covenant faithfulness. So in verses 37 through 49, they prove the Lord's covenant faithfulness.

And he doesn't renew his covenant with his people, but he delivers on it. He declares it, in fact. And we're invited to declare the same. And when he delivers on his covenant promise with his people, then they and we are renewed.

[18 : 21] So the psalmist declares the grace of God in showing us how far the people have come. Geographically, they actually haven't come that far. But they've traveled a really long way.

Do you sometimes actually feel like that? You haven't actually come very far. But you've had to travel a really long way just to get there. I don't mean that kind of literally.

As we think about holidays and leaving this place and going a long way and coming back and, well, we're back actually where we started. We thought we might actually get away from something. But we always come back to that.

Well, it's actually different in this case. Israel traveled a long way out of their way. But the distractions sometimes and the distance were not all lost.

It was for theirs and our discipleship. Discipline. Well, did you hear all that the Lord did for this people from the Egyptian exodus to the Canaan entrance?

[19 : 23] Because the whole point is to demonstrate in verse 42, look down with me again, that he remembered his covenant promise. It's really important that we remember.

But even when we don't, the Lord doesn't forget. The Lord remembers like a husband of his wedding anniversary, like a father of his child's birthday, or like a nation and their dominion day.

And only when the Lord remembers, it's much more than flowers for a bride or presents for a child or parades in municipalities. The Lord renews his people.

He renews us through his relentless pursuit of us. He renews us through his presence that he promises with us. And when the Lord does this, he's renewing us by being right here.

His essence. Revealing his name to us. Letting us know that he's right here. Right now. And only then can we do what we're exhorted in the beginning.

[20 : 34] And this is back to verses 3 and 4. Three times we're exhorted to seek him. Seek the Lord and rejoice. Seek the Lord and his strength.

And seek his presence. When? Occasionally. When I feel like it. When things are going really bad. Well, no. It says, seek the Lord's presence continually.

Did you notice that last bidding? The pleading of the Lord. Seek his presence. The Lord is so gracious because when we seek his presence, he renews us with his presence.

Well, in many respects, our psalm ends in the same place that last week's ended. If you remember part two of Psalm 19, it was about revelation.

The whole psalm was general and special. First part about creation. The last part about God's commandments. The whole purpose of today's psalm is to bring us again to this one point.

[21 : 39] We remember the Lord who remembers his covenant. And when we recollect, then we're renewed. So that we keep the Lord's statutes and observe his laws.

That's what the second to last verse says. And that is the mark of God's gospel people. It's not legalism or salvation by works. But the statutes and laws of the Lord point us to Jesus Christ.

We are saved by grace through faith in the only one who kept the statutes of the Lord and preserved his laws, keeping it perfectly.

And by grace through his death, so too can we as his people. And so we return to where we started, which is to seek the Lord and know that as Jesus said to a seeker at a well, but the hour is coming and now is here where the true worshipers, those who praise, those who glorify, those who rejoice, those who give thanks, those who seek the Lord, well, those true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

For the Father is seeking such a people to worship him. Brothers and sisters, let's seek the Lord. And I speak to you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

[23 : 02] Amen.