

A City That Brings Deliverance

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[0 : 00] Psalms. And we read at the beginning there, it says, Oh, give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for a 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 and the north and from the south.

Now, you see at the start here, it says book five. There are five books in the Psalter, in the book of Psalms.

And this is the closing book from 107 through to 150. But there is a link running through Psalm 105, 106 and 107.

And many people think that the same hand wrote these three Psalms, although we find Psalm 107 in a different book.

[0 : 59] We find actually, when you see in verse 47 of Psalm 106, it says, Save us, O Lord, our God, and gather us from among the nations.

And then we find in Psalm 107, an answer to that, that 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 and from the north and from the south.

So we can see that very strong link that's running through the Psalms. Psalm 105 is a Psalm that looks at God's promise in giving his people the land.

That's really what the Psalm is about, and it's telling the promise that God is giving, that he's going to give the land to his people. And we know that every promise of God was fulfilled.

It tells us in the book of Joshua that there didn't fail anything of all the good things that God had promised. Every word was fulfilled. And so it'll be in our experience as well.

[2 : 08] And then Psalm 106. Sadly, you would expect Psalm 106 to be telling of how well the people lived in the land. Psalm 106 begins well, but you would expect that after God giving them the land and giving them so many provisions and blessings, that Psalm 106 would be telling about how faithful and well God's people lived there.

But it isn't. It highlights their rebellion and their faithlessness over and over and over again, to the extent that God is handing them over to the nations.

And we know the history of that, of how they went into exile. But then Psalm 107 is looking at the wandering of God's people, and God is going to bring his people back home.

That's what it is. And you know, in many senses, that is a picture of our own Christian life, of where God sets out the promise of what we receive in Christ.

And of how, when we receive Christ, everything that he has promised us, all the rest and the peace and the satisfaction and the joy, all that, it's true. Not a word has failed.

[3 : 31] And I'm sure over our lives, we would love to write out that we have been faithful and we've walked with the Lord every single day. But sadly, so often, like Psalm 106, over it there are so many of our failings, our wanderings, our rebellions, our shortcomings.

But God doesn't leave us. And that's what he does. He gathers us again. And that's what we find in this Psalm, in Psalm 107. And really, what it's saying here, the Lord is kind of saying to his people, look, it's time to come back home.

The wanderings need to stop. I'm going to bring you back. And God does that with you and with me as well. Many times he stops us in our tracks when we're wandering away.

Sometimes we don't even realise we're wandering. There's a wandering gene within us. We're so prone to stray. And sometimes it can happen so subtly.

And sometimes it's an ongoing, because I don't believe that anybody sets out to backslide. I don't believe any Christian says, you know what, I'm going on a wee period of backsliding. That doesn't happen.

[4 : 43] But what does happen is that we begin to drift. Might start with not reading the word as attentively as we used to.

We might find that our disciplines are beginning to go. And little by little by little, we find ourselves beginning to wander. To the extent sometimes we wander quite far off.

But God is a way of stopping us. And in a spiritual sense of saying enough is enough. Putting his hand around us and saying, time to come back home.

Time to get right again with me. And you know, that's one of the wonderful things is where we see the patience of God. That over and over and over again we try him.

But he still comes after us. And he takes us back. And so the beginning of this psalm begins with praise. He says, praising and giving thanks to God for his steadfast love which endures forever.

[5 : 43] Give thanks to the Lord, it says, for he is good. God is good. Everything about the character, the nature of God is good. Everything that God does is good.

Even when we don't understand it. God cannot do but what is right and what is good. God cannot do but what is good. And we realise that all the good that we have in our life comes to us from God.

Because we're told that every good and every perfect gift is from above. And when we look at our own lives, you know, far too often we're so slow to really to stop and to think about what we have.

Even the very place that we live. Just the freedoms that we enjoy here. The safety, the community, all these things, these are providential blessings from God.

God gives us so much. And every day we get up and every day we have the strength and the health to do. We've got to remember that his mercies are new every morning.

[6 : 51] It is because of his steadfast love and because of his mercy that you and I got up today.

And that we're here tonight. And we must never forget that. That all that we are and all that we have comes back because of God's love to us.

And of course the main theme of thankfulness, there are so many reasons for thankfulness. But on this one it says, it's talking really of his redeeming love. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

And as we know that's what the Lord has done. He has redeemed us. To redeem is really to buy back what is yours.

The kinsman redeemer in the Old Testament was a relation who would pay off the debt of some member of the family or some relation that couldn't pay it.

Or pay them out of slavery. Well that's what Jesus did for us. Because we were bankrupt. God was demanding a payment from us we couldn't give.

[7 : 52] Not one of us had the payment to give God. But God made provision. That's why Jesus is called the redeemer. Because he has paid for us and done for us what we couldn't do for ourselves.

And that's why the gospel is offered without money and without price. Because there is no price to it. The payment has all been taken care of.

And so Jesus is the great redeemer. And so every day we ought to give thanks to God for what he's done for us. Where he has taken us from.

Where he has taken us to. And the cost that is involved. And it tells us then that gathered from all the lands. You know it's one of the things a shepherd does is gathers his flock.

That's what a shepherd is always doing. Is out gathering. There are specific times of gatherings as we know. But a shepherd, a good shepherd. Of many of the.

[8 : 53] He's got many different involvements with sheep. But one is gathering. And that's what the Lord Jesus as a good shepherd. He is in the business of gathering.

You're here tonight. Because of the good shepherd's gathering. And we've gone all over the place. North, south, east and west. Our straying has taken us everywhere.

And you know his love. Is so extraordinary. Because you know when the Lord. Began to work in you. Or even before the Lord began really to work in you.

You think of the number of times. The number of occasions. When you received a gospel invitation. Whether it was from the pulpit. From reading.

From another person speaking to you. And the number of times. That you said no. Or not yet. Imagine. If God said.

[9 : 52] Is that your final answer? Can you imagine if the first time. That the Lord gave his invitation through his word. To you. To me. And we'd said.

No. Or leave it till later. And the Lord said. All right. But he didn't. He goes after us. He goes after us. His love is such.

That. In that covenant love for his people. He doesn't take no for an answer. And he breaks down the walls of our resistance. And in the end. He makes us willing.

To receive. And to accept him. As saviour. And so. It's amazing. How extensive. As we see this. This search is. Because.

As I said. We have a straying gene. All we like sheep have gone astray. Turned everyone to his own way. Sometimes we think it's only the. That when it talks about all we like sheep have gone astray.

[10:53] That it is. Simply those who are. Without Christ. But straying sadly. As we said. It's part and partial. Of our Christian experience as well.

Remember in Psalm 119. The last verse. And when you go through that Psalm. You read about this. Amazing Psalmist. Who is talking of his love.

For God's statutes. For God's law. For God's testimonies. And of how they are his delight. Day and night. And yet. And yet in the last verse. He says. I like a lost sheep.

Went astray. Your servant. Seek and find. Not talking about somebody else. Talking about himself. The servant. Your servant. Seek and find.

And we've all been there. And we've all cried that. And asked the Lord to. To take us back from. From our straying. And so we find here.

[11:50] That. The Lord. As he begins. When he. If we take it back to. When the Lord. Does first. Reach into us. And begin to. To touch us. With his love.

One of the things. That he does. Is. He begins to show us. How empty. This world is. Because before that. We loved the world. And we're happy in the world.

The world loves its own. The Bible tells us that. The world loves its own. And that's why. When a person becomes a Christian. Sometimes his barrier.

Comes up straight away. Because the world. The world. Sometimes is confused. By the Christian. But there was a day. When we were at home in the world.

The world was everything to us. But you know. When the Lord. Begins to work in our heart. The sparkle. Of the world. Goes out.

[12:46] We begin to realize. That the satisfaction. And the pleasure. And everything that we got from it. Isn't there anymore. And we're looking for something deeper.

Something. Something that will reach right down. Something that will. Satisfy into the very depth. Of our being. And we discover. That we can no longer. Find it. In the world.

And so the Lord is saying. He's gathering. From all the lands. From north. South. East. And west. And some wandered. In desert ways. Finding. No way to a city.

To dwell in. And they were hungry. And thirsty. Their soul fainted. Within them. And it's when we're in that state. Of. Not finding anything. We find that Jesus.

Is the bread of life. We find that the water. That he gives. We find that the water. That he gives. Springs up. An eternal. Well of. Refreshing within us.

[13:41] So that. Here we find something. To. To alleviate. That hunger. That. We can't find a satisfaction. In. In the world. And so we find that.

The Lord. Is the one. Who. Who begins to work in us. But even there. Sometimes. We begin to. We begin to. To wander again.

And so we find. In verse six. Two of the most. I suppose. Two of the most. Common experiences. Throughout the Bible. And in our own life. They cried to the Lord. And he delivered them.

From their distress. That's what the Lord does. Where he. Where we cry. And the Lord. Deliver us. And we find. And when you go through the Bible. You will find. That.

Spoken about so often. We sang in Psalm 34. This poor man cried. God heard. And saved him. From all his distresses. And then we read in verse seven.

[14:39] It tells us. He led them. By. A straight way. Or a right way. And that is. That is. The way the Lord. Will take us. In this right way.

Way. Now. You know. Even. As I said. Even us Christians. Sometimes. The world. You know. The world we live in.

Is incredibly. Powerful. The whole structure. Of society. The whole. Pool. And spirit. Of the age. Has a deadening.

Impact. Upon us. And we. We would. We make a mistake. If we don't realize that. Those of you. Who are ever privileged. If there are any here. To have lived.

Through a revival. Or. Experienced revival. Times. Know that it's not like anything. I haven't. And I would love to. And those who have.

[15:35] Always see that. Those who were converted. In a revival. Have an extra. Like a. A spirituality. A spark. About them. Throughout their life.

It's different. They're always different. To other Christians. I've always noticed that. That those who. Came to know the Lord. In a revival. But in revival.

Times. There is an impact. Not only on those. Who are converted. But also. On the community. And it's. At these times. As a Christian.

There's a. Those who are already. Christians. Are revived. And so many. Are converted. But. In the day. That we're living in. We feel that.

God's spirit. Is being withdrawn. More. And more. And more. And the more. That God's spirit. Is withdrawn. The harder. It is for us. Because.

[16:30] The worst thing. God can do. To a people. Is to give them over. To themselves. And you know. That seems to be. What's happening. Little by little. That we've been given over.

More and more. To ourselves. I'm talking about. That nationally. And so. It's hard. As a Christian. It's difficult. Because. The world.

Is an incredibly. Deadening. In fact. In a sense. We have to work. All the harder. As Christians. But thankfully. The Lord. Doesn't leave us there. He still comes back.

And he leads us. By the right way. And on that way. There are many. Ups and downs. And the one thing. As you look back. Over your Christian life. It's very different. To what you expected.

When you started. I'm sure. When you started out. And when you came to know. The Lord Jesus Christ. And persuaded. Of his interest in you. And his love to you. And you thought.

[17:25] That it would be. Straightforward. But how many. Twists. And turns. And temptations. And trials. But you know. When we arrive.

In glory. We will say. When I was young. I used to do a lot of. I was years and years ago. A lot of hill walking. And climbing. And in that.

When you were. Climbing. Or hill walking. A lot of us. You know yourself. There's a lot of groans. And grunts. And as you're going up. And down. A lot of struggles. But.

You could say. Ninety nine. Times out of a hundred. When you reached the top. There was often. Oh my word. And. It's not only. The view.

Was amazing. But your perspective. On everything. Had changed. Everything looked different. From the top. And the struggle. To get up there. Was worth it.

[18:20] And you were saying. My word. Well you know. That's just like. A little picture. Of what it will be. When we arrive. In glory. It's only then. That our perspective. On all that's been. Of life.

Will have completely. Changed. And we'll be. In completely. In keeping. With the mind. And the will of God. And we will see. That everything. Was right. And everything.

We went through. However difficult. And painful. That it was. For our own good. And for the glory. Of God. And so. The Lord. Is leading us.

Every step. On this right way. And the Lord. Is a purpose. For each and every one. Of us. As he takes us out. And we didn't. Start out. By chance. God took us.

He led us. Just as he did. With Israel. In the. In. From Egypt. God took them. And he led them. Along the way. Now along the way. They had. All kinds of different. Experiences.

[19:16] Some of these experiences. Were harsh. And difficult. And painful. And some were good. There was a time. Remember. They were hungry. Thirsty. And they stopped. At the waters. The wells.

Of Elam. And they'd be all saying. As they drank there. Oh my word. Oh. This is great. But that wasn't. Why they were taken. Out of Egypt. It wasn't.

To go to the wells. Of Elam. That was just. One of the things. Along the way. And so it is. For you. And for me. As we're taken. Along the way. Whatever experience. We go through.

However wonderful. Or whatever communion. Or whatever fellowship. Yes. It's wonderful. But that's not. The ultimate reason. That God has taken us out. The ultimate reason.

Is to take us. As it says. To this city. This city. And that's what it says. He led them. By a straight. Or a right way. Till they reached a city.

[20:10] To dwell in. To abide in. To be there. Forever. And you know. When we reach that city. All our wanderings.

Will be over. In this world. Where pilgrims. And strangers. You know. If you're away from home. And if you've got a busy time. Away from home. And you're away for quite a while. You know. You're saying. Oh. I'm longing to get back home. Or if you've had a really. Really busy day. You say. I've longed to get home. Get my feet up. Well in a sense.

That's the picture. That we have here. All our wanderings. And all our struggles. Are over. When we get to that city. And again. When we get to that city.

Our labors. Will be over. Our labors. We're told. Their works. To follow them. But there'll be a rest. From all our enemies. It's hard to imagine. All these enemies.

[21 : 04] Within us. Which are often. Far worse. Than the enemies. Without. We'll. We'll. We'll have a rest. From. All our struggles. With sin. All the lusts.

All the force. And power. Of the world. All the batterings. And bruising. Of Satan. A rest. From all these things. A rest.

From sorrow. It's hard to imagine. This world. Where there's. So much heartache. So much pain. So many sorrows.

Nothing on the horizon. Ever to trouble you. Rest from death. No graves. In glory. Isn't that wonderful?

Death here is always devouring. The grave is always hungry. No graves. No death. In glory. Everlasting. And perpetual rest. And it's no wonder the psalmist.

[22 : 02] Begins by saying. Oh give thanks to the Lord. For he is good. For his steadfast love. Endures forever. And it's because of that. Steadfast love. That endures forever.

That he goes out. And he pulls us back. And he's done that. For every single one of us. Because we've all wandered. We've all strayed. We've all gone.

Our own way. So often. But as we said. He is so patient. His steadfast love. Will never give up. And he's leading us.

More and more. Towards that. Heavenly city. And it won't be long. Until we'll all be there. So. May we have that.

Through thanksgiving. In our heart. To the Lord. Let's pray. Oh Lord. Our God. We give thanks. For. The way. You take us. On that journey.

[22 : 58] Step by step. And sometimes. Sometimes we feel. We're. We're going forward. As of two or three steps. And sometimes. We feel. We're going backwards. Sometimes. We feel like.

As we're just going to sing. That we reel. And stagger. That our. Our way. Is so wayward. But Lord. We give thanks. That at the end.

Of every section. That we read. Through this. Psalm. Whether it's. Through the wandering. Or whether it's. Through being. Imprisoned. Or whether it is. Through illness.

Or whether it's. Through storms. At sea. The end. There is deliverance. And there is. Thanksgiving. And oh Lord. Our God. Then we pray. That you will bless us.

And help us. Each and every one of us. And grant us your grace. We pray your blessing. Upon everybody. In need. Tonight. And we pray. For health. And for strength.

[23 : 51] For recovery. For your goodness. And mercy. To accompany us all. Every day of our life. Forgive us our sin. We pray. In Jesus name. Amen. We're going to conclude.

Singing from. Psalm.