

His Steadfast Love Endures

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[0 : 0 0] For a few moments this evening we'll turn to look at Psalm 107. We're going to be looking over really the whole of this psalm. We can read at the beginning and at the very end of the psalm.

Verse 1 it says to us, O give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever. And then the last verse, verse 43, it says, Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things. Let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord. So the psalm begins and ends with that theme of the steadfast love of the Lord.

And in between we find a number of different circumstances that people find themselves in in order to consider the steadfast love of God that doesn't change.

As time goes on, as the years go past and months and weeks, one thing that becomes apparent more and more, and we're reminded of more and more, is the variety of people around us and the variety of situations that people find themselves in.

[1 : 1 3] In one moment, there's a people who are celebrating and rejoicing. At this time of year, week by week pretty much, you'll see around the town or in different parts of the country as well, you'll see people getting married, special days, days of much joy and happiness, and you see that taking place.

And yet on the other hand, you'll see people on the other end of the spectrum who are going through such trials and difficulties, many that are so difficult for us to even try and contemplate for ourselves sorrow and sadness that seems to go beyond our imagination at times.

There's that variety of people and variety of situations that they find themselves in, the highs and the lows, and life is full of that.

But one thing I'm sure maybe all of you or many of you at least experience in the midst of life and all that comes our way, in all the changes and all the variety that we see around us, it's so good to know that there is something that doesn't change, that there is something that is always constant in the midst of everything that goes on, in every change, in everything that comes our way, that we can come to the Word of God and see that what doesn't change is this steadfast love of God.

A love that doesn't change because it is a love that's from the promise of God himself. Promises that you see running throughout Scripture. Promises that God gives from beginning to end.

[2 : 5 4] Great and wonderful promises that we can claim and cling on to in the midst of the highs and in the midst of the lows as well. That God is a God for his people.

That he has made that covenant promise. I will be your God and you will be my people. And in that we find a God who, these words especially, the steadfast love of the Lord.

How precious these words are and how important these words are for us, especially as we come to put our trust fully in the Lord.

To put our trust in him who is able to save. But in our experience in life, the Lord will bring us through maybe many different experiences, situations, in order for us to cry out for that help.

And to cry out to the Lord in that sense of, we need you. We need you in this situation, Lord. We can't do without you. And then as we come through that situation, as the psalm reminds us, we are encouraged and challenged indeed to remember the steadfast love of the Lord.

[4 : 0 8] And so as we look at this psalm together this evening, we see a variety of people in a variety of different situations. But they all have something in common.

You see the verses that are repeated throughout this psalm. We'll look at it as we're going through. But you see that in each situation that the people find themselves in, that the same words are repeated in every situation.

And the same constant in it all as well as the steadfast love of God. So there are both variables and constants in this psalm.

And that's what we want to look at together this evening. But before you come into these situations, the opening verses of this psalm make it clear to us, verse 1 to verse 3, that this is indeed a psalm of thanksgiving, a psalm of thanking God in the midst of everything.

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His steadfast love endures always. The foundation of our thanks is that steadfast love of God that endures.

[5 : 21] But there's that challenge to us straight away. O give thanks to the Lord. And it's the same challenge that you find in each situation that the people are in us will see as well.

But look at the vastness of God's work here. Look at where this steadfast love is seen. When you look at these opening three verses, in verse 3, gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

God's saving work is so vast. This steadfast love goes out through all ends of the earth, from north, south, east and west.

But you see also that God's work is so necessary. In verse 2, it says, let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He has redeemed from trouble.

The people of God are in trouble. And we as a people, we're always finding ourselves in that troubled situation. Different places we find ourselves in where we know we need the Lord.

[6 : 29] We need that Redeemer. We need that saving work of God in the midst of our lives. So we see how God's work is so necessary.

And we see there too, as you go back to verse 1, how God's work is so enduring. It's a never-ending love that He shows to His people.

The Lord, He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever. It is an ongoing love, steadfast love, that is there for His people.

So the psalm is a psalm of thanksgiving that is so broad and wide in its nature, in its distance, north, south, east, and west, in redeeming from the troubles of this world and in showing how enduring this love is.

It's a never-ending love. And after these first three verses, then you go in to see four different sections where it speaks about people finding themselves in times of trouble.

[7 : 34] And how in the midst of time of trouble, they're still able to thank the Lord for His steadfast love. There's a German pastor in the 1600s called Martin Rinkert.

And he lived and ministered in a very difficult time when there was war and conflict going on. And he was taking so many funerals in his experience that it was just never-ending.

He was burying thousands of people within a year. And yet in the midst of it all, he was still able to thank the Lord. And he wrote a hymn. And the hymn's title was Now Thank We All Our God.

And the first verse of it goes like this. Now thank we all, our God, with heart and hands and voices, whose wondrous things, who wondrous things has done, in whom his world rejoices, who from our mother's arms has blessed us on our way with countless gifts of love and still is ours today.

How he was able to see in the midst of everything that was going on, the wonder of God and the steadfast love of God that was the constant companion throughout all his days, even in the most difficult of experiences.

[8 : 54] And we maybe see that in our own lives as well. As we go through so many different experiences in life, we have that assurance as we trust in the Lord of his steadfast love that never changes.

So we're going to look at the four different situations that we see people in. And what we find is that they have a common thread in each one. You see in each one there is the problem, a different problem in each part.

Then there is the prayer. They cry to the Lord. And then you see that there is the provision that the Lord makes. And then finally you see the praise that they're encouraged to give.

And so the first thing you see is the problem. And you see this in the different sections. Verse 4 and 5, you see the first one there. Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them. There were those who have lost their way. There are those who have wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city.

[10 : 07] They were lost and they were in a desperate condition. And they were wondering to themselves, how are they going to survive? How are they going to get through this? And the word they wandered, the wanderers, it means to stagger.

So it shows there was this weakness. They were alone, they were weak, they were nearly gone. And so they are wandering, lost in this world.

And it's a reminder to ourselves of how we so often have found or maybe are finding ourselves in that situation as well. We're living in a world but we can feel lost in it without direction, without knowing just where are we going in our lives.

Many of us have either been there or maybe are even there just now. We're wondering just what is life about? We're not finding direction. We're not finding our way.

It reminds us of the story of the prodigal son in the New Testament who had left everything behind, taken the money from his father and wanted to go and live his own life.

[11 : 13] And he thought this is it, my freedom. And yet he finds himself wandering around in the waste, eating the food of pigs to survive and wondering how have I ended up here?

Is there no point and direction in my life? And so there's the wanderers here. We find the first problem, the people who are just lost and without direction.

The second one we see then is in verse 10. Another section begins there. 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.

They're prisoners. They're locked in. And again, you see just that darkness that surrounds them here. And what you find is it's because of what they've done themselves, because of the way that they have rebelled, as verse 11 makes clear.

They rebelled against the Word of God. And again, in our lives, who of us have rebelled against the Word of God? We've said, no, I will not listen to what the Word of God is.

[12 : 31] I don't need that Word. It's not for me. And we find ourselves thinking we've got freedom, but all it means is that we're in prison, that we're in darkness, that we're lost.

And it's all of our own doing. We feel that sense of being trapped. And so many things can make us prisoners in that sense in this life.

Jealousy and anger and maybe hurt in the past and unforgiving spirit, hatred towards either people, even the church. People turn against the church.

They have their own ideas and they spurn the Word of God and we'll be free from that, but you're never free. We're still in darkness. We're putting God away, but we're only ending up in darkness ourselves more and more.

So we see there another problem. And you see the third one in verse 17 and 18. Again, you see a new section there. Some were fools through their sinful ways and because of their iniquities suffered affliction.

[13 : 37] They loathed any kind of food and they grew near to the gates of death. Sin is at the heart of it all and we're reminded of that in this section.

Fools through their sinful ways. The fool says in his heart there is no God. That's sin to say there is no God.

And from there just leads to this downward spiral and life where sin just takes over our life. We think nothing of it. Sin just becomes a natural part of how we live.

But yet we are fools to go on living like that. Fools through their sinful ways. Then the fourth one you see, then the fourth problem is in verse 23 there.

Another section begins. Some. So it's always talking about these some. Different people in different situations. Some went down to the sea and ships doing business on the great waters.

[14 : 40] They saw the deeds of the Lord as wondrous works in the deep. And so it goes on. And in this experience, they end up reeling and staggering like drunken men in this storm.

They're overwhelmed by life, tossed about. And it's just the way life can sometimes leave us feeling like that. Overwhelmed in so many situations.

That it's just like a storm all around us as we were thinking about this morning. Instead of having that peace with God, there's nothing but trouble coming our way.

And without the Lord in our lives, without Jesus in our lives, we're just floundering around. We're being tossed around by the sea. And so we see there's four different kinds of people here.

Four different situations. Four different situations that we maybe have had in our own lives or have. We're wanderers. We're prisoners. We're the sick in sin. We're the overwhelmed by the storms of life.

[15 : 44] At the heart of them all is the sin of our hearts. The sin in this world that leads us down these paths away from God. There is the problem for us and indeed for the world.

But is there an answer? Well you see in all of these situations we find the answer. And the answer is prayer.

For in every situation you find here the constant is then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress.

That verse is repeated in each of these sections. It's there in each one. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he delivered them from their distress.

What is able to help in our situation today? We can cry out for help to friends to family even to strangers at times. We can cry out to the world to help us in all our different situations to give us the answers to all our different needs but there is only one who can help.

[17 : 02] And that answer is given to us in this psalm in the midst of the variety of people the variety of different problems there is only one answer and that is to pray to cry out to the Lord.

Now you notice it doesn't give the prayer to cry. All it says is that they cried to the Lord in their trouble. It may not be a long eloquent prayer it may not have much substance it may even just be a groan but it's directed towards the Lord towards the Lord who is able to help.

Prayer is that opportunity to speak to God who is able to help. And again you have given so many reminders through scripture of what crying out to the Lord means.

You have that great account in 1 Kings 18 when Elijah is there with Ahab and his people his prophets Ahab's prophets Elijah is just one man but he trusts in God and he puts a challenge before Ahab and all his prophets and say you cry to your gods and I'll cry to my God and see who sends down fire who is able to help in that situation and Elijah as they're saying to them keep crying maybe he's not hearing you maybe he's not listening just now but he will eventually and nothing comes because their gods are not able to help but Elijah's God our God he sends down fire he hears and he answers and that is the God that we cry out to today for ourselves or for others the one who is able the same as Paul speaks about in Romans chapter 10 he reminds us there that we are to call on the name of the Lord he says because if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead you will be saved why because he goes on in verse 13 to say for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved if we are truly calling out to God if we are calling out in our desperation that cry of faith they cried to the Lord in their trouble and he relieved them from their distress he is the one who is able to help we don't always see our need at times and there are many people living in this world and they're lost but they don't know it because they feel that everything is going fine everything is fine it'll be okay at the end you hear so many funerals now in the mainland especially where they play songs and Frank Sinatra as I did it my way that's so common now but that is the song that they sang

I did it my way but it's not the song of salvation as we were thinking of this morning and it's not the cry that we see we need here the cry that we need here is to call upon the name of the Lord not do it our way but to seek to do it his way that he would direct us Thomas Aquinas he once put it like this bestow upon me oh Lord my God understanding understanding to know the diligence to seek the wisdom to find the and a faithfulness that may finally embrace thee it's all about this coming to cry to the Lord in our trouble so we have the problem there are four different sets of people and situations but the prayer is there for us to see that the prayer is the same in every situation and it's the same that's true for us today we cry to the

[21 : 13] Lord in our trouble we ask him to help for he is able to relieve us in our distress to give comfort to give hope that's the third thing that we see but we see as they cry to the Lord the Lord makes provision for them in each situation we see that they could not help themselves they could not free themselves they needed a redeemer they needed someone to save them as it says in verse 2 let the redeemed of the Lord say so whom he has redeemed from trouble he needs to be the one who saves we cannot do it ourselves and this is the story of scripture from beginning to end that God is a redeeming God God is a saving God you see it when you go back to the Old Testament how he redeemed his people from slavery in Egypt even as we were looking at

Isaiah this morning it was the Lord that redeemed them when they were taken into captivity you see he does it for nations of people but you also see that he does for individuals as well you think of the beautiful story of Ruth and how she found a kinsman redeemer when she married Boaz a beautiful story but it's all about the wonder of a redeemer a redeemer for an individual as well as a wider people and that's the wonder of the redeemer that we have in Jesus Christ that he is the one who is

able to save us in our trouble as you see in each situation here the redeemer comes to their aid and he shows his steadfast love his covenant love that endures always you see it in verse 7 in that first situation he led them he led them by a straight way till they reached a city to dwell in he brought them to a place of security a place of safety after they had cried to the Lord you see it in verse 14 he brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and burst their bonds apart he freed them freed them from the prison that they were in and he's able to do that you see it in verse 20 he sent out his word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction they had been fools they had been sick in their sin but the word of God healed them the redeemer can heal you see it in verse 29 again he made the storm be still and the waves of the sea were hushed in every situation you see a different kind of peace being brought but it's always he has made it possible he has brought he has led them he has brought them out he has sent out his word and healed them he has made the storm to be still he is the one who is able he is the one who has made provision for his people and again that is true for us today as we cry out to the Lord now trouble what provision has he made for us for all who are lost in this world for all who are caught up in the sin of this world and maybe think there is no freedom for me in the midst of my sin there is no hope for me in the midst of my sin what has he done he has provided a redeemer he has provided a redeemer who is his own son Jesus Christ there is only one Christ has redeemed his people he came to save his people from their sins and that is the wonder of the steadfast love of God that God loved his people so much that he gave his own son the redeemer has come as the hymn writer puts it there is a redeemer Jesus God's own son precious lamb of God Messiah holy one there is a redeemer and the only redeemer of God's elect as the shorter catechism puts it is the Lord Jesus Christ there is our provision in the midst of all that is wrong in this world and all the problems that we have and all the cries that we offer out the pleas the prayer for help there is one who is able to help one who is able to save and that is Jesus Christ he is able to save his people from their sins and when we know that salvation when we know Jesus Christ as our redeemer where does that lead us to well surely it leads us to our final thing that we see here it should lead us to praise in all of these situations in all the four different situations again there is a constant in each situation he says let them thank the

[26 : 57] Lord for his steadfast love for his wondrous works to the children of men so that is the conclusion of each of these four sections all these different people who find themselves in different situations he is able to provide a way out he is able to redeem and then there is this call let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love you know so often people will say well I'm going to call on God for help as they face up to a challenge a difficult situation the Lord provides gives grace he gives help and so many people come through and they forget forget what the Lord has helped forget what the Lord has done it's like the parable of the ten lepers they were all healed but only one came back to thank the Lord and he said where are the others well they'd all gone their own way that's what this psalm is reminding us of as well as we are looking for help in this life as the

Lord provides graciously help to us well we're reminded let us thank the Lord for his steadfast love for his covenant love his constant love let us not forget what the Lord has done for us he has rescued us he has saved us through Jesus Christ is that not worthy of all our praise a call to thanks oh give thanks to the Lord for he is good his steadfast love endures forever that's the cry at the start it's the cry throughout let them give thanks to the Lord for his steadfast love for his wondrous works to the children of men it's the psalm as the hymn writer sees another hymn thank you oh my father for giving us your son and sending us your spirit till the work on earth is done thank you oh my father for giving us your son that we have a redeemer so the call is there to thanksgiving because his steadfast love endures always what is the most important verse in this psalm it's a fairly long psalm and it covers a lot of ground but what is the most important verse is there a most important verse well somebody said there is one writer said the last verse is the most important why well look at the last verse whoever is wise let him attend to these things let him consider the steadfast love of the lord why is that so important well it speaks to us about wisdom what is it to be wise the world will tell us so many things that are wise according to them but according to the word of god wisdom's beginning is the fear of the lord that doesn't mean just to run away scared from the lord it means to consider the lord to look to the lord to be in awe of the lord it's the one who is god over all and so it says here whoever is wise let him attend to these things that these are important matters these are important things in our own experience so that whatever situation we find ourselves in whether we are the wanderers whether we are the prisoners whether we are those who are sick in sin whether

we are those who are being tossed around in the storms of this life let us consider these things and let us see where our help is found it is found in crying out to the lord who is able to relieve us from our troubles to bring us out so it says let them attend to these things but then it concludes let them consider the steadfast love of the lord look on these things look on the lord and his steadfast love that is unchanging in all our lives he is there for his people he has promised that those who cry will be saved so we can come in confidence whoever is wise let him attend to these things let him consider the steadfast love of the lord let us let us consider the steadfast love love of the lord and see if he is not worthy of all our praise let us come and give thanks to the lord for he is good for his steadfast love endures forever let us pray lord we do thank you for your word and for all the truths that we find in them the promises that we see before us a new day by day that you are a good god who is gracious to his people that your steadfast love endures forever we pray to know more of that enduring love that you have shown so hear our prayers continue with us as we ask all in jesus name amen well we conclude by singing from this psalm that we've been looking at we sing the last three verses in the scottish psalter psalm 107 at verse 41 page 385 yet setteth he the poor on high from all his miseries and he much like unto a flock doth make him families and at the end whoso is wise and will these things observe and then record even they shall understand the love and kindness of the lord with these last three verses the tunas montrose we stand to sing up Amen. Amen.

After the benediction, I'll go to the main door. We'll close the benediction.

[35 : 26] Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.