

God's Saving Remembering

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 0 0] The book of Psalms and Psalm 106, tonight we're looking at verses 4 and 5, another passage where we find the word remember used.

We've looked at five or six of these already throughout the scripture. Tonight we're looking at these verses 4 and 5. Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people.

Help me when you save them, that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory with your inheritance.

Psalm 105 and Psalm 106 are very closely tied together. They're twinned in a way that shows, firstly, God's faithfulness, which is mostly what you find in Psalm 105, God's wonderful works, God's faithfulness seen in them.

And then Psalm 106 is mostly about God's covenant, people's unfaithfulness, and the way that they so often rebelled against him. And yet, through it, there is that same note of God not utterly rejecting them, and God coming to bless them as he heard their cry so many times.

[1 : 1 9] And in this Psalm 106, which confesses the past history of the people, and even as the psalmist writes, there is obviously still much wrong in the people he belongs to.

And so he cries to the Lord in verse 47, Save us, O Lord, our God, and gather us from among the nations. So it's really a psalm about God's patience, God's faithfulness, God's continued availability to them in his overtures of his grace and his mercy, as that was conveyed to them through what he spoke through the prophets and others down through the course of their history.

And so you find that the psalm really combines the people as described by the psalmist, but also in these verses 4 to 5, his own individual circumstances within the lot of the people as a whole.

And while that is a prayer for himself in verses 4 and 5, that itself reminds us that as individuals, we actually belong, as we saw this morning, to a covenant people who are in a relationship with God through the gospel.

So that when you find things, especially in the book of Psalms, that are addressed to the people that Israel were in covenant with God, there are so many of these, if not all of these things, that we can take to ourselves personally and appropriate to ourselves and make personal to ourselves.

[2 : 5 7] When you find prayers individually as well mentioned, then you can extend that to the whole of the church. Such as here, Remember me, Lord, when you show favor to your people.

It's an individual prayer. It's a prayer for himself as a person, as one of that number of people. And yet, obviously, you can extend that in your own thinking as you pray that God will remember his church, that you'll remember the people that bear his name, that he will remember them in the same way as here, that he will show them favor in the ways that are mentioned.

So again, that reminds us of one of the advantages, indeed, of the great advantage that we have in belonging to God's people. Because while it doesn't actually obscure our individuality, and it doesn't actually give us in any way to think that our individuality and individual needs are not important, that they get lost amongst the whole throng of God's people, if you like.

That's not the case. Our individuality is not lost. And yet, we form a people where, as individuals, we have such a great advantage of being united to others in the same circumstances and with the same relationship in covenant to God as we ourselves have.

That's the advantage, again, of belonging to the church and how thankful we should be tonight that we are God's church in the world, that we belong to that number, and that we belong as a people in the world to whom God is still extending so many favors, so many blessings.

[4 : 47] And yet, we can pray tonight that God will remember us as he will remember ourselves individually with the favor that he is promising to his people.

So, the prayer, first of all, for God's favor. And then he gives us, secondly, three reasons for wanting God's favor or why God's favor is important to him.

And these are in verse 5. He says in verse 4, the prayer for God's favor, Remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people. Help me when you save them. And then he gives three reasons, so that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen one.

Secondly, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation. Thirdly, that I may glory with your inheritance. It's a preacher's dream, isn't it, really, these two verses, because they just divide themselves so wonderfully.

And you can find your various bullet points, if you like, in them, because that's just how they're set out. So easy to follow, and yet so rich in the content and all that's set out for us in them.

[5 : 54] Where is this? What about this prayer for God's favor? First of all, remember me, O Lord, when you show favor to your people. Now we'll need to go into the meaning of some of these words in the Hebrew text of the Bible, which the Old Testament was written in.

And we have lots of helps nowadays to help us understand something of the meaning of these words and the various different shades of meaning that you find that helps to give such additional insight into the kind of teaching that they contain.

Well, this word, favor. Remember when you show favor to your people, it's a word that really means literally goodwill. Now you know what goodwill is?

It's used generally in an ordinary sense as our goodwill towards other people, where we not only do not intend them any harm, but we intend to do the best for them.

Our goodwill is that which is extended to people irrespective of their situation, where we actually intend and where our mind and our purpose and our aim is to do them good.

[7 : 07] And that's the word that's used here of God's goodwill, goodwill. He extends his goodwill to his people, and that goodwill is the means by which, or the background, if you like, to his mercy, to his compassion, to the various ways in which he practically shows help to them.

You can read through the psalm. You don't need to go much further than that. You see the different ways in which God extended goodwill towards these people. If God's goodwill had not been extended to them, they would have been destroyed.

They would have been left by him. He would have left them in the desert, other than his goodwill was directed to doing them good. And that's what you see here in this word as well.

Remember me, Lord, when you have show goodwill to your people. When your goodwill is extended to them, Lord, remember me. Remember me personally within that goodwill that you show to your people.

And when he's saying, remember me, O Lord, he's really picking up this great theme of remembering that you find elsewhere.

[8 : 14] We've seen some of them already, as we've said, and as you know, in various passages of the Bible. And it reminds you of all of these passages, which when you bring them together, shows that this remembering is such a rich thing as you call upon the Lord to remember.

There's so much within his remembering. There's life, there's favor, there's so much blessing and so many details within that blessing. Forgiveness and acceptance and help and counsel and guidance.

Everything that's within that goodwill of God that he channels towards us in the gospel. That's what the psalmist is praying for. That's what he gives ourselves here to use as our own prayer. You can go in before God every morning and you can use this prayer meaningfully every morning.

One of the good things about the Psalms and other parts of the Bible is that when you find it difficult to pray as God's people do at times. When your heart really can't find the words adequately that you really want to put before God to express to him how you are and how you feel and how you see your situation and how you would want things otherwise to be.

Well, you go to the Bible's prayers and you take them and you say, Lord, I cannot express it better than this myself. Remember me, Lord, in your goodwill to your people.

[9 : 29] You see, that's the blessing and the benefit and the advantage of belonging to the church of God so that when these things come up in our lives that make difficulties for us in the providence of God, you don't have to wonder where am I going to find some guidance?

Where am I going to find some words that will help me with my situation? You go to the Bible, you go to the prayers of the Bible, you go to the likes of this passage and you say to God, Lord, remember me, please remember me with your goodwill, with your favor to your people.

And it reminds you, as we said, of some of the other great prayers for remembering. Even at the cross of Christ, there is that cry from beside him, from that malefactor that was crucified with him that had been along with his other companion railing against Christ, blaspheming against the Lord, but who came to experience change in his heart and therefore in his attitude and in his view of this Jesus until he said, Lord, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

There are very few prayers that are as rich in their content as these words, Lord, remember me. Because when the Lord remembers us, then everything we need is within that.

That's really what the psalmist is saying. The goodwill of God toward his people, the goodwill that's expressed even in the likes of Romans and chapter 8, for everything works together for good towards those who love the Lord, those who are called according to his purpose.

[11 : 18] it works for their good. They're co-working the difficulty and the easier parts of life. They are working together, he says, for good.

Why? Because God only has good in his intention for his people. You will search the Bible in vain for any evidence that God has any malice towards his people, that God intends to do them harm ultimately, even in the things that you find expressed in difficulties in providence, in trials, in persecutions, even in the fact that sometimes God's people are put to death for what they believe.

Never is that an indication that God's intention is to do them harm because everything works together for their good.

Do we believe that tonight? It's not the easiest thing at times sometimes to believe. Maybe you're here tonight and some troubles or other in your heart, in your mind, in your home, in your own life personally.

Maybe you have questions over things if not in your own life or your family life that you see in the world. Maybe you've asked questions even today about how can God be kind?

[12 : 43] How can God really be true? How can he be faithful when such things happen as happened to some people and even to ourselves at times?

Well, here is God, the good God, the God of goodness, the God who is good, the God whose goodwill extends towards his people.

Remember me, O Lord, when you show that goodwill within your goodwill to your people. When it says when there, it doesn't mean when in the sense of just now and again.

It means that within your goodwill, which is constant toward his people, he wants to be included in that. He wants to be remembered in that. And then he goes further saying, help me when you save them.

Now, here's another great Old Testament word. It doesn't come across as well in the translation there, help me, because the word help there, again in Hebrew, is the word used for visit.

[13 : 50] Visit me. It's a great Old Testament and New Testament word because, again, it's filled with so much meaning, so much spiritual meaning and vitality for us because it's one of the things that you find God described as doing in the Bible.

He visits His people. And you see, the visit of God is not just a visit now and again. It's not the kind of casual visit where you drop in for a chat and then you go and you don't see the person perhaps for some time after that.

When God visits His people, it's a visitation that's so filled with meaning and with action that He always does something and He leaves something behind. You think, for example, of how God spoke in Genesis chapter 50 through Joseph, Joseph coming there to the end of his life just preparing for his own death.

A remarkable passage in the Bible where he says to his brothers there and to the others that are gathered there, I am about to die but God will visit you.

He's thinking ahead to the Exodus. He's thinking ahead to hundreds of years after that moment when God will come and visit His people.

[15 : 09] When His visitation will show His care for them powerfully, dramatically as God from time to time does. His goodwill is ever directed towards them but in that goodwill there are times when His visits are remarkable in power and remarkable in intent and deliverance for them.

And of course you find in Exodus chapter 3 God Himself really there as it were explaining to us what Joseph actually meant by he would visit his people in Genesis 50.

Joseph said, I'm about to die but God will visit you and bring you up out of this land to the land that He swore to Abraham, Isaac and to Jacob.

And in Exodus 3 you'll find that event just about to happen as you find there Moses coming to be brought as a leader of the people and in chapter 3 verses 7 to 8 then the Lord said I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt I have heard their cry because of their taskmasters I know their suffering and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land a land flowing with milk and honey I have come down to bring them out of that bondage and to bring them into what I've promised them that's what God does in His visitations He comes with deliverance to His people and He comes to bring them onwards towards their inheritance what happened in your own conversion in your own coming to know the Lord you tonight here who know the Lord personally for yourself who amongst the covenant people of God have been visited by God what happened

He visited you He came to you He dealt with you in power He entered into your life He entered into your heart He changed your thinking He turned you around He gave you words of confession and of a prayer seeking the Lord's forgiveness and acceptance He visited you what do you find in that great song of praise of Zechariah the father of John the Baptist you remember he was struck dumb he was without ability of speech for such a while and when it came to the naming of the child he was asked though he couldn't speak what the child would be because the people thought he's going to be named surely after his father or after somebody like that but his father particularly and John the Baptist father Zacharias wrote no he will be called John and as soon he has written that the Lord removed his dumbness his inability to speak and he then spoke that great song of praise to God where he blessed the Lord and said blessed be the Lord who has visited his people because you see it was all about a preparation for the coming of Jesus for whom

[18 : 28] John the Baptist was going to be the forerunner the preparer of the way and Zacharias knew that and this is what God had laid upon his heart though he couldn't up to then express it now he realized it more than ever before outburst this great song of praise this great hallelujah to God God has visited his people what is the coming of Jesus Christ what is the birth of Jesus in this world what is it that people will be thinking about in a few weeks to come if they have the mind to think beyond material things they'll be thinking about God visiting his people a visit like no other a visit that wasn't just a dipping in and out of our human experience because the word that Jesus is the word that was with God became flesh and dwelt among us he took our nature and our crisis of sin and our sin itself and he took it not so as just to visit us and take it for a little time and then disappear he took it in visiting us permanently that's what the psalmist is praying for visit me when you save them when you come with your visitations for their deliverance for your remembrance

Lord visit me in other words that's what your prayer should be and that's what my prayer should be tonight because here we are as God's covenant people under the gospel as we saw this morning and we're thinking about God visiting his people we're thinking about God's visitation to his covenant people in general terms in that sense of it but here is the individual within that generality within that people saying Lord when you come to visit your people please don't leave me out of it have you prayed that prayer yourself is that a prayer you recognize is that a burden of your heart you recognize is that something that you realize and recognize is already within yourself is that your desire tonight is that something that your heart and mind is set upon under the gospel as you are now under the gospel is it your prayer as you're hearing this as you think of God's visitation to his people is it not your prayer and my prayer tonight as we very just very keenly think of these words

Lord don't leave me out please remember me visit me with that salvation when you save them what a great prayer what a wonderful remembering God remembering savingly or God's saving remembering as we could entitle our study this evening and then he enlarges on that briefly in the three reasons that he gives for wanting God's favor why does he want God to remember him what is it more particularly within that remembering or within that visitation that he's concerned about well first of all that I may look upon the prosperity of your chosen one now that word prosperity is related very closely to God's goodwill as we saw in the word favor because prosperity really means again good we mentioned that word from Romans 8 that everything works together for good well here he's saying that I may look upon the good of your chosen ones you see he realizes that

God has his people out of all the people in the world Israel are his covenant people he has chosen them out of all the people of the world to give them this great advantage of having this God as their God of having the scriptures of having God's teaching given to them through the prophets through Moses through others what advantages what great advantages Israel had above all peoples which is why they so often sang about that and you know it was another of these great passages in the Bible that we find in the Old Testament you remember Moses and he had this desire that God would show him his glory it's quite an amazing thing in itself a man who knew God so well that he would ask the Lord in Exodus and chapter 33 please show me your glory glory after dealing with the presence of

God God said this very thing I will do for you have found favor in my sight and I know you by name Moses said please show me your glory how was God going to show his glory how can we see the glory of God can you actually see the glory of God well God says I'll do that I will make all my goodness pass before you and I will proclaim before you my name the Lord and I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy now you have to take that with you into the next chapter chapter 34 where you find early in the morning Moses rises he goes up to the mountain as the Lord commanded him and the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the

[24 : 27] Lord the Lord passed before him and proclaimed remember this is the answer to the prayer Lord please show me your glory the Lord passed before him and proclaimed the Lord the Lord a God merciful and gracious slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness keeping steadfast love for thousands forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin and so on that's where you see the glory of God we're not saying that's entirely where the glory of God is situated but for us as a people where we're in this life in this world through all our difficult experiences different experiences day by day where are we going to see the glory of God how can we come to appreciate that glory of God how can we follow the psalmist here and where are we going to look for the answer to the prayer remember me Lord so that I may look upon the good of your chosen well God is saying here is my goodness look at my goodness it's in my mercy in my forgiveness in my patience in my steadfast love everything that he mentioned there in Exodus 34 these are the great elements of God's goodness of God being good and God manifests his glory in manifesting his goodness that's a remarkable thought but it's true sometimes perhaps we think the glory of God is just a bright light that we can't understand much of and indeed the glory of God and the glory of Jesus is brought before us in the Bible in terms of a brightness of light and a brilliance that nobody can capture in words adequately and even as Paul found in the way to Damascus that you cannot look upon directly but here's the great thing for us tonight in the gospel you are actually seeing the glory of God you are looking upon the glory of God in a wonderful forgiveness and mercy and acceptance and faithfulness and long suffering and patience that's demonstrated by God through the gospel that's what he's saying that I may look upon the goodness the prosperity of your chosen ones the good that belongs to them and when he says look upon he doesn't mean just look upon it from a distance what he's talking about as we saw is not being left out of this blessing and when he's included in this blessing when he's remembered by God then he says

I will look upon I will actually experience and I will participate in this good that you do to your people that I may look upon the good of God's people secondly that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation you know tonight we have so much to rejoice so much to be thankful for with gladness of heart these two words rejoicing and gladness come again from the same root in Hebrew and all the way through the Old Testament and in the New as well we have so many expressions so many passages that express to us the uniqueness of this rejoicing the uniqueness of this joy for example Psalm 33 verse 12 where you find the psalmist they're expressing which nation

Lord is like your people where is there any other nation like this where is there any other people that are so blessed as your people are and tonight that unique gladness is ours there are things in this life that causes pain some of you know that much better than I do you've met with it you're maybe going through it even right now and sometimes it's difficult to lift up your eyes and think in terms of gladness or of rejoicing but what this is really telling us is that here is something which really comes above our personal circumstances in life it's something in fact which belongs to us come what may it's something that God himself is demonstrating is the unique property and possession of his people the fact that they are his people the fact that this is what he has made them to be let me he says rejoice remember me so that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation are we tonight glad to be the church of God do rejoice that we are the church of God

I'm not talking about Stornoway Free Church important though that is to us but the church of God that we form a part of this church visibly as you see it in the world this church that gathers to meet to praise the Lord this church that serves God in the world this church that's burdened for the gospel this church that has so many advantages from God in the gospel is there a gladness tonight about our souls that we are part of that do we really appreciate the blessing that God has already given us in actually belonging to this church of God well he says Lord remember me so that in remembering when you come with your visit when you come to revive my soul that I will rejoice in the gladness of your nation when we go home tonight let me try and let you try as you pray to

God to sincerely thank him with as much rejoicing as you can find in your circumstances that you belong to his church that you belong to this people that carry his name even if you find your own life and I find my life so very far short of the quality that it ought to have as a Christian as a person who belongs to the church never mind that for the moment deal with it as you must deal with it but don't leave out the element of rejoicing and praise with thanksgiving the gladness that ought to be ours and you know that makes us feel all the more for those who are not in the church not just those who are on the fringes but those who are not at all interested in being in the church of God or being part of the church of God in this world because to evangelize in the name of

[32 : 05] Jesus means that among other things you think of the brilliance the richness of your position as already part of that church and what you do when you think of others out there that are not part of it tonight you say Lord I appreciate so much of what you have given me and of where I am in relation to your church that I really really must remember prayerfully and practically others so that I can if at all possible influence them to come and be part of this wonderful wonderful privilege also so that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation let's try and show gladness that we belong to God's church and when people ask us why do you always seem so happy why do you never seem as if things are just completely on top of you although sometimes of course it may not be possible for us to have that expression of joy and gladness but by and large let's try and convey our happiness to belong to God's covenant gospel people and to convey to others how much we appreciate what it means to belong to this church that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation that I may finally says that

I may glory with your inheritance well the word glory is the same as the word that begins the psalm in Hebrew praise it's the word hallelujah maybe sometimes we're a bit too afraid of that hallelujah and a bit too afraid of expressing our hallelujah we shouldn't be I know it can be so significantly overdone and it becomes a kind of shallow expression at times though you don't want to judge anybody but you know that there are times when there are so many hallelujahs through a service you find it's really just a habit for some people but here is the psalm saying hallelujah to the lord and here is the psalm saying lord remember me that I may hallelujah with your inheritance that I may have my hallelujah that I may express my praise in your inheritance with your inheritance that's a word that's translated in the new testament very often by the word boast remember

Paul's expression as he wrote to the Galatians God forbid that I should glory or that I should boast save in the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ what's he saying there God forbid that I should have my hallelujah elsewhere but situated four square on this cross of Christ and what he's saying by that is not just simply there is no cause for hallelujah of this kind anywhere else he is saying that but he's actually also saying having the cross of Christ foundational to my life has filled my life with a hallelujah it has given me this hallelujah as the main expression of my life this praise this hallelujah to God that I may do it that I may hallelujah with your inheritance and there's something quite remarkable about that we don't want to have no time really to go into it at the moment but the word inheritance itself is so rich in the use of the

Bible makes of it you know that an inheritance is something that's passed on after somebody has died or passed away their possessions whether it's land or property or money whatever that inheritance is passed on it becomes somebody else's possession you have an inheritance inheritance in a spiritual sense in what Christ has bought with his blood that spiritual inheritance that is eternal life that is heaven in all its fullness that I may hallelujah with your inheritance that I may have a part in that inheritance your inheritance he says to God there's the remarkable thing God has an inheritance if you like God has purchased an inheritance for himself he paid the highest price possible for this inheritance that would be his own property was paid at

Calvary was paid in the death of Jesus and what inheritance did God purchase by the death of his son his people his redeemed people that I may glory with your inheritance with your people with your people as your inheritance but in fact there's something even more remarkable I'll close with this not only are his people God's personal property and his inheritance but in the ultimate sense in heaven and glory and likeness to Christ and in the fulfillment of our chief end which remember includes not just to glorify

[38 : 06] God but to enjoy him forever the remarkable thing there is that God himself is the inheritance of his people what is our salvation ultimately it is our enjoyment of God to his glory his people are his inheritance and he is theirs that's why in the psalms as well as in psalm 16 for example you can find the psalmist saying God is of my cup the potion and my inheritance do you have such a remarkable thing in your own grasp this evening you may ask well how do I get the title deeds to that inheritance very simply it comes to you through faith in

Christ it is yours through faith in Christ you don't need to purchase it you can't anyway you don't need to pay for it God has already done that you can't create it it's impossible for any human creation but it's there already and that's the beauty of belonging to the church under the gospel because God is saying to us in the gospel here is an inheritance I'm offering it to you indiscriminately everyone of you in the visible church of God it is yours 100% if you take it by faith and obedience to Christ let's pray Lord our

God we ask that you would fill us with a greater sense of wonder and praise at the inheritance that you give to your people at the way that you bring us to participation and partaking of it and possession of it even while in this life you put us in possession of it although you will bring us into its full possession and enjoyment in heaven we thank you Lord that these things are so real that they are real to your people by faith and by trusting in your word as those things that they see visibly are to them in this world we give thanks Lord that you remain with us in your forbearance and faithfulness and long suffering toward us forgive us we pray for our lack of rejoicing with your inheritance forgiveness forgive forgive us for our lack of faithfulness to you forgive us for everything

Lord where we come short and act amiss in relation to being your people help us to be all the more grateful that you continue to be our God receive our thanks now we pray for Jesus sake Amen Let's conclude our worship this evening singing Psalm 106 these verses that we've been looking at Psalm 106 in the Sing Psalms version on page 140 and we'll sing verses 1 to 5 Praise the Lord the Tunis Ottawa praise the Lord extol his goodness for his love endures always praise who can tell his mighty actions or in full declare his praise blessed are those whose way is right acting justly in his sight when you show your people favor then O Lord remember me help me when you come to save them let me know prosperity joyful with your chosen race joining them in giving praise these verses as we stand to sing in conclusion praise the

Lord extol his goodness for his love endures always praise who can tell his mighty actions all in full declare his praise blessed are those who spread his fight acting justly in his sight with your chosen grace joining them in giving praise and will today go again this evening now may the grace of the Lord

[44 : 05] Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always Amen everyone can repeat