

Tell His Wondrous Works

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[0 : 0 0] The following message was given at a Sunday celebration at Trinity Grace Church in Athens.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

! Sing to him, sing praises to him.

Tell of all his wondrous works. Glory in his holy name. Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.

Seek the Lord and his strength. Seek his presence continually. Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered.

O offspring of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones. He is the Lord our God.

[1 : 0 9] His judgments are in all the earth. He remembers his covenant forever. The word that he commanded for a thousand generations. The covenant that he made with Abraham.

His sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute. To Israel as an everlasting covenant. Saying, to you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance.

When you were few in number. Of little account and sojourners in it. Wandering from nation to nation. From one kingdom to another people.

He allowed no one to oppress them. He rebuked kings on their account. Saying, touch not my anointed ones. Do my prophets no harm.

When he summoned a famine on the land. And broke all supply of bread. He had sent a man ahead of them.

[2 : 1 2] Joseph. Who was sold as a slave. His feet were hurt with fetters. His neck was put in a collar of iron. Until what he said came to pass.

The word of the Lord tested him. The king sent and released him. The ruler of the people set him free. He made him lord of his house.

And the ruler of all his possessions. To bind his princes at his pleasure. And to teach his elders wisdom. Then Israel came to Egypt. Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.

And the Lord made his people very fruitful. And made them stronger than their foes. He turned their hearts to hate his people.

To deal craftily with his servants. He sent Moses his servant. And Aaron whom he had chosen. They performed his signs among them.

[3 : 1 4] And miracles in the land of Ham. He sent darkness. And made the land dark. They did not rebel against his words. He turned their waters into blood.

And caused their fish to die. Their land swarmed with frogs. Even in the chambers of their kings. He spoke. And there came swarms of flies. And gnats throughout their country.

He gave them hail for rain. And fiery lightning bolts through their land. He struck down their vines and fig trees. And shattered the trees of their country.

He spoke. And the locusts came. Young locusts without number. Which devoured all the vegetation in their land. And ate up the fruit of their ground. He struck down all the firstborn in their land.

The first fruits of their strength. Then he brought out Israel with silver and gold. And there was none among his tribes who stumbled.

[4 : 16] Egypt was glad when they departed. For dread of them had fallen upon it. He spread a cloud for a covering. And fire to give light by night.

They asked. And he brought quail. And gave them bread from heaven in abundance. He opened the rock. And water gushed out.

It flowed through the desert like a river. For he remembered his holy promise. And Abraham his servant. So he brought his people out with joy.

His chosen ones with singing. And he gave them the lands of the nations. And they took possession of the fruit of the people's toil.

That they might keep his statutes. And observe his laws. Praise the Lord. This is the word of the Lord. Let's go back to the start.

[5 : 25] Let's go back to the start. This is the refrain from a song entitled The Scientist.

By the British band Coldplay. I remember being captivated when the music video came out in 2003. It was what's called in filmmaking a reverse narrative.

All of the visuals were filmed in such a way that the lead man, Chris Martin, was singing normally. But all of the action was going in reverse.

So even though the lyrics of the song moved forward. The visuals went backwards. In order to reveal the story of how Martin ended up where he was.

So the video, it begins with Martin waking up while lying on an old mattress on a sidewalk in a tough part of town. It's really a jarring image when you first see it.

[6 : 26] And it makes you wonder, how did he get there? And this sets up this visual quest to understand what happened. And then the refrain kicks in.

Let's go back to the start. Well, there's a number of surprising twists in the video. And it eventually unveils this tragedy that makes sense of why Martin was lying on the street corner.

Tracing the story back to the beginning shed light on who this man was and how he got there. The only way for him to move forward with a sense of purpose was first to look back to where he came from.

We must do the same. Have you ever paused to ask, why are you here? How did you end up here in this small town at this YMCA with these people?

What are you doing? What are you living for today? What will you live for tomorrow? The only way for us to move forward with a sense of purpose is to take a moment.

[7 : 56] To look back at where we came from. Our psalm this morning echoes the invitation, let's go back to the start. This historical psalm that we're looking at retraces the places that we've just been.

It's a prayerful meditation on the events that took God's people into Egypt and then what brought them out. And even though it has no less twists and turns than Coldplay's mournful tragedy, our meditation this morning is far different.

It's been called a hymn of hope. It's intended to build us up, to build God's people in both the highs and the lows of life.

Going back to the start and this story does nothing but unveil joy and lead God's people to explode with praise and adoration for the one who's rescued us.

So I believe in a word, the main point for us this morning is remember the Lord's faithfulness to bring you into the people of God. So that you might live to worship him.

[9 : 06] Remember the Lord's faithfulness to bring you into the people of God so that you might live to worship him. We're going to break this into two points. We are a people with a purpose anchored in a person.

And we are a people with a past living for his praise. So first, we are a people with a purpose anchored in a person. The first five verses just explode with a call to praise.

And it uses a variety of action words. If you look at it, one after the other, the verbs build each one with a distinct expression. Oh, give thanks to the Lord.

Call upon his name. Make known his deeds among the people. Sing to him. Sing praises to him. Tell of all his wondrous works. Glory in his name.

Let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek the Lord and his strength. Remember the wondrous works that he has done. Right out of the gate and without warning, the psalmist is summoning the people to praise.

[10 : 13] And it's extremely fast-paced. It's like an alarm bell going off at the fire station. The firefighters already have all of their supplies at the ready.

They have a purpose. The purpose is rescue. There are many expressions of their job. Drive. Spray. Resuscitate. Crawl.

Carry. Lift. They only need to hear the call and they're ready to spring into action. And all of the action is rescue. Here, we have expressions of praise.

Give thanks. Call. Make known. Sing. Tell. Glory. Rejoice. Seek. Remember. It's all praise.

Each one with a distinct emphasis. But all together, they reveal the richness of the celebration of worship. But notice that these actions, they're not just standalone and arbitrary.

[11 : 17] They're not disconnected and free-floating. The object of the praise matters. I know a number of years ago, there was a hidden camera show that went to a beach during spring break and advertised a free Creed concert.

Now, at the time, the band Creed had already released three multi-platinum albums. And they had garnered a name for themselves touring the globe.

So, you could imagine the excitement on the beach at the thought of a free Creed concert. Oh, baby. A massive crowd gathers for this event.

Anticipation was in the air. Then the moment came when the emcee announced Creed and pulled the curtains back to reveal an old man with a squeaky voice and an out-of-tune acoustic guitar.

The sign of the stage clarified that this was indeed Creed. But Creed with a K, not a C. Chris Creed, to be exact.

[12 : 24] A self-proclaimed acoustic folk artist. The disappointment and the rage, you could say, among the crowd was massive.

Why? Why were they upset? The real Creed had earned a reputation over the years. They'd won a fan base little by little as they proved themselves.

And this Creed was a sham. Disappointment. Sorrow. Close enough is not enough.

The object of faith. The object of praise. The object of worship matters. In fact, the psalmist keeps directing all of our worship in a singular direction.

If you look at it, all the purposeful action of praise we are being called to cannot be understood detached from the object of praise. Every call to praise is firmly anchored in the Lord.

- [13 : 27] The Lord, the psalmist, is helping us work backwards. Here is your purpose. This is what you're called to do. Why do these things?

What animates everything that you do from here on out, one singular person? It's the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord.

The action of giving thanks demands an object. You must look outside of yourself with gratitude toward the one who has given you something.

Call. Call who? Call upon his name, it asks us. To call upon a name is to channel attention away from all other names to the one that can do something about your situation.

There is one name above all others to call upon. It's the Lord's. To make known. Make known what? His deeds among the peoples.

- [14 : 27] To make known his deeds assumes we are familiar with his deeds. It's this captivated retelling to those who have never heard. In this case, the peoples are the unbelieving Gentile nations.

All unbelievers. Those who don't know. Sing. Sing what? Sing to him. Sing to him. Words in themselves are just too flat. It's not enough for what the Lord deserves.

We are called to use the best words with the best melodies to give our praise more dimension and depth and dynamic. This Lord is worthy of our singing.

Tell. Tell of his wondrous works. Everywhere you go with every person you meet, rehearse the shocking words and deeds of the Lord. Glory.

Glory in his holy name. He is unlike any other. He's set apart. In your thoughts and in your actions, display the Lord as being spectacularly unique.

- [15 : 30] Your treasured possession. Rejoice. Rejoice. It calls us. Rejoice in seeking refuge in the Lord. Let your delight soar as you ponder the reality of having the Lord as your safe place. your protection from the assaults of the enemy. Seek the Lord and his strength.

Seek his presence continually. You seek the Lord's strength and presence not just one time, but continually for all of your life. It's a way of life. You seek to know him more and to find him more.

Remember. Remember. Remember the wondrous works that he has done. Miracles and judgments. These wondrous works, they're not magic tricks to be entertained by, but miraculous release for slaves.

So it's undeniable that the psalmist calls God's people to many expressions of praise here. And all of the praise is anchored to the Lord in such a way that it would be utter nonsense detached from his person.

- [16 : 50] The point that the psalmist is helping us see is that our purpose as a people is bound up in the works of God. It is a real story with real events resulting in a real family with a real purpose.

A few years ago, I attended a family reunion in Minnesota. And this was with my wife's mom's side of the family.

And it was fascinating to walk around and meet all these great aunts and great uncles and cousins. And they literally, they came from all over the country and in some cases from around the globe.

It was this just magnificent, diverse group of people, generationally, vocationally. But they came from all over in order to spend a few days simply to revisit their roots.

Perhaps for me, the most moving moment was sitting in this dining hall. Just packed with people while one of the great uncles played an audio recording of Elizabeth's great, great grandfather.

[18 : 02] And in the recording, he spoke in English with a German accent. And it was just this fresh reminder of their massive sacrifice to try and begin a new life in a new land.

And as we listened, I kind of scanned the faces, multiple generations resulting from the life and actions of this man and his wife that I was listening to.

So I just marveled as I thought about the moments that had occurred to bring about this room full of this man's offspring. In the unfolding of time, his sacrifice to bring forth life had eventually filled the entire room.

And literally around the world, these people fanned out. His family. To be gathered in that room was a reminder that we were a part of his family.

In a very real, tangible way, neither my wife nor anyone else in that whole room from that family would exist apart from the man we were listening to.

[19 : 19] This is what the psalmist is showing the people of God. All of these calls to praise are intended to help us meditate on the reality that the Lord acted definitively to make a people for himself.

The very reason you exist, he's telling them, is because of the Lord's action. Without these decisive moments we're about to look at, you would not exist.

I mean, just look at verse 6 and 7. Verse 6. Oh, offspring of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones, he is the Lord our God.

You see this just litany of titles there. Offspring of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones. He's calling them to look around at the reality that has been created because of the Lord's action.

He's saying, let's go back to the start. Do you remember hundreds of years ago when I brought old man Abraham outside and I said in Genesis 15, Look toward the heaven and number the stars if you are able to number them, so shall your offspring be.

[20 : 49] Look around. Offspring of Abraham, look around. This is his invitation. Where did you and the thousands of others come from?

How did this happen? Listen, oh, my beloved servant, my chosen ones, how did you get here? The psalmist reminds us, he is the Lord our God.

We exist because of our God. The point is that he made a covenant with them in his name. And when the Lord remembers his covenant, it means to act on it.

To be loyal to it, to bring it about. When the Lord makes a promise, he is faithful to bring it to fulfillment. The reason you exist is because he never left you.

The reason you are alive is because he made you a people for himself. Do you want to know who you are? Do you want to embrace your purpose with renewed vision and vigor?

[21 : 49] Let's go back to the start. Through many dangers, toils, and snares, I have already come. T'was grace that brought me safe thus far, and grace will lead me home.

In order for us to walk forward in confidence as his people, with a purpose, we must first look back at the past steps, riddled with dangers, toils, and snares, recognizing God's faithfulness in every impossible step.

We are a people with a past. Point number two. We are a people with a past, living for his praise. Now the psalmist wants to take us for a walk through time.

Not generally, but into specific moments to confirm the worthiness of his call to praise the Lord. Each moment is a testimony to the Lord's covenant love for his people.

He's pointing back at the record to build faith for what lies ahead. Well, when I served at an outdoor recreation camp, one of my favorite traditions was what's called the rock ceremony.

[23 : 17] At the end of a retreat, the campers would reflect on what God had done in their lives, and they would decorate a rock with scriptures or symbols to kind of serve as a memorial of their time at camp.

Then they would place the rock along a trail with other rocks from previous years. Both sides of that path is just filled with colorful expressions of God's faithfulness over the years.

And when you slow down to study each rock, you get a glimpse of how God displayed his faithfulness in a specific person's life at a specific time.

And so the walk itself really becomes this cumulative encouragement for weary pilgrims to keep trusting the Lord in their own lives. That's what it does.

And that's what the psalmist is up to here. He's inviting us to study the moments early on the path to remember what the Lord has done.

[24 : 21] So he draws our attention to specific events. You remember this? And he picks one up. You're a people with a past. Let's go back to the start.

So like a guide along this trail, he points us to four memorial rocks, if you will. So we'll pause long enough, just long enough, to make a few key observations as we continue to make our way forward on this trail.

If you look first at the patriarchs, this section 9 through 15, specifically if you look at verses 9 through 10, the psalmist draws our attention to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

He wants the offspring of Abraham, who he's talking to, to remember the succession of generations and all the hurdles that had to be jumped over in order for God's covenant to be upheld, in order for God to bring about his promise, it says that he allowed no one to oppress them.

Verse 12 says, while there were few in number, of little account, and sojourners, God acted on their behalf. And we see this again and again throughout the patriarchs' lives.

[25 : 37] At each moment, the covenant was susceptible to just collapsing, falling apart, the wheels coming off, God's promise seemed to always be on the brink of extinction, or to be fully immersed in the realm of impossibility.

Barrenness, jealousy, betrayal, family feuds, and those are just the problems inside the family.

Not to mention the dangers of sojourning without stability or power. Resources, God acted on their behalf again and again.

We see this throughout their lives. The point is to highlight how powerless and vulnerable the promise was in the eyes of a watching world.

Vulnerable. But the Lord was not anxiously watching Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He wasn't pacing back and forth trying to figure out how to make good on his promises.

[26 : 46] That's not what he's seen doing. No, the Lord was actively preserving them even in the face of the impossible. He was working on their behalf when they had no earthly power.

At every threat, both internally and externally, the Lord kept his covenant. And in this case, the Lord wonderfully preserved them from much physical suffering.

If you notice this, verse 15 says, touch not my anointed ones. Do my prophets no harm. But we must not view this season in isolation from the rest of Scripture or even the rest of the psalm itself and wrongly conclude that God's people are excused from suffering or that suffering is only reserved for those who are evil.

Don't think that. The very next memorial rock we pick up reveals God's, how God's people got to Egypt. If you look at it with me, Psalm 105, 16 to 17, shockingly says, when he, referencing God, when he summoned a famine on the land and broke all supply of bread, he had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave.

What happened in order for God's people to make their way to Egypt? God summoned a famine.

[28 : 32] God broke all supply of bread. God is depicted as the sovereign cause of the natural disaster that led to food scarcity.

And not only that, God is also held responsible as the one who sent a man ahead. How? He was betrayed by his brothers and sold as a slave.

So, so yes, God sovereignly protected the patriarchs by keeping them from some forms of suffering and loss, but God was also sovereignly orchestrating nature, food production, and the acts of sinful brothers, handing their own flesh over to the cruelties of slavery.

Why? God was sending a man ahead in order to keep his promise. His word would not fail. He made a promise to Abraham that in his offspring all the nations would be blessed.

God would deliver on his promise. But he would deliver in such a way that it was unmistakably God alone who could receive the credit.

[29 : 50] who else could be worthy to receive praise and gratitude and light of an unbroken chain of victories in every impossible circumstance again and again and again but God alone.

Not only that, but the Lord also has an eye toward transforming his people in the process. verse 19 it says the Lord tested him until what he had said came to pass.

The verb tested could be taken to mean that Joseph's bondage purified him in the sense that his testing prepared him to rule Egypt and maybe even to forgive his brothers.

could it be that God was not only preparing to save Israel by sending them to Egypt but he was also transforming Joseph through the crucible of slavery prison wrongful accusations could this suffering be the refiner's fire designed to burn away the dross.

Do you find yourself in the midst of an inexplicable season of suffering or silence? Do you feel like you're in prison with Joseph?

[31 : 23] What is God doing in your affliction? We see in Zechariah some of the Lord's design for this kind of testing.

Zechariah 13 and I will put this third into the fire and refine them as one refined silver and test them as gold is tested.

They will call upon my name and I will answer them. I will say they are my people and they will say the Lord is my God. You see the outcome of this test is that they would have deeper assurance that they belong to the Lord and that the Lord is with them.

The song How Firm a Foundation frames this wonderfully saying when through fiery trials thy pathway shall lie my grace all sufficient shall be thy supply the flame shall not hurt thee I only design thy dross to consume and thy gold to refine he loves us too much to leave us where we are even if it means suffering in silence for a period of time not only does God preserve the promise by bringing his people into Egypt he also providentially brings them out of Egypt God told Abraham in Genesis 15 13 know for certain that your offspring will be sojourners in the land that is not theirs and will be servants there and they will be afflicted for 400 years he told

Abraham that to let them know what was coming up so the Lord's word had been fulfilled we see in verse 25 he turned their hearts to hate his people to deal craftily with his servants as Walt so helpfully taught last week God and man can stand behind the same action with different intentions man can intend evil while God simultaneously means it for good so what's happening here Egypt turns against Israel and intends to exploit them for self serving purposes and at the same time God however intends to deliver his people we see the Lord's intentions expressed in Exodus 14 he says I will harden Pharaoh's heart and he will pursue them and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his hosts and the

[34 : 13] Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord and they did so and the result well just as the Lord promised just as he promised he executed judgment against Egypt's gods through his signs he humbled the pomp of the oppressors verse 37 says the Lord brought Israel out with silver and gold none among his tribes stumbled the unexpected underdog walked away with the spoils and every person was accounted for this is what God did the Lord made a way when there was no way and where'd they go from the most powerful kingdom in the world into the wilderness that's where they head next it's the next stone the God lifts up for us in verses 39 through 41 it says he spread a cloud for a covering while they're in the wilderness

God provides for them a fire to give light by night they asked and he brought quail and gave them bread from heaven in abundance He opened!

the rock and water! gushed out! flowed through the desert like a river they walked out of slavery into the wilderness now what Lord?

did he free you only to perish in the wilderness? no the very next thing that he does and what he has always done is provide and displays faithfulness bread from heaven water from a rock river in a desert so then we come to the crest of the trail in verses 42 to 45 the psalmist wants us to look back at the memories all taken together all of this was because God remembered his holy promise to Abraham it's not an ordinary promise but a holy promise set apart from the ordinary because it is God's word verse 43 he brought his people out with rejoicing and shouts of joy this what you're seeing here this is not just like a singular happy moment this is like the decisive announcement of victory at the end of a war all of the ups and downs of battle after battle along the way the final battle comes and it's won that's what this is the prisoner of war emerges from his cell the guards are gone he hears that the war is over his captors have fled tears of joy surge from his eyes all that is left for him to do is to join the caravan of victory and freedom and all that's left to live is thankfulness do you see the net effect of this walk along the trail of memories though these are distinct moments the cumulative!

takeaways that the Lord is faithful to provide for his people in order that they might live for his praise the people of God are indeed a people with a past the psalm culminates with a wonderful sense of being connected to the Lord's deliverance however we must continue to trace the trajectory of this family story Psalm 105 and 106 are both historical psalms they recount events in Israel's past but the two psalms are very different in their presentation Psalm 105 captures the unfailing acts of God while Psalm 106 captures the failure of God's people the very next song we are people with a past of God's unfailing action but we are also a people with a past marred by infidelity betrayal sin psalm 106 6 through 7 declares both we and our fathers have sinned we have committed iniquity we have done wickedness our fathers when they were in

[38 : 56] Egypt did not consider your wondrous works they did not remember the abundance of your steadfast love but rebelled by the sea at the red sea the people of God continued to falter and fail that's what happens next so what can we do how can we be saved there's good news and the good news is not that we finally got it figured out or just tried harder no the good news is that God acted for us again God his promise to Abraham was not complete the end of the psalm was not the end of the promise the goal was not merely to make it into the promised land but to be in the presence of God forever but no sinner could be in the presence of

God do you see the dilemma but God promised the ultimate offspring of Abraham Galatians 3 16 says now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring it does not say and to offsprings referring to many but referring to one and to your offspring who is Christ Christ Jesus when he was born fled with his family down into Egypt and came back up in the same way as the nation of Israel only he went into the wilderness and obeyed God perfectly Jesus said he is the bread that comes down from heaven whoever comes to him shall not hunger and whoever believes in him shall never thirst he is the ultimate rock on which to build our lives he is the cornerstone

Christ came to do what could not be done and he gave his perfect life at the cross for those who would place their trust in him so all who would receive him by faith might become the people of God!

Galatians hear this truth there is neither Jew nor Greek there is neither slave nor free there is no male and female for you are all one in Christ Jesus and if you are Christ then you are Abraham's offspring heirs according to the promise this is the crest of the trail we have the glorious vantage point to look back at the start and see all the memorial stones laid along the trail for centuries each one forwarding God's purpose each one declaring his faithfulness each one crying out for the praise of his people look look at what the Lord has done look look at what he's done for you for you you are a people with a past marred by sin but now you are the people with a past displaying God's wondrous works the

Lord is why we live the Lord has made us into a people for himself through Jesus Christ the Lord has done great things so what do we do in response Trinity Grace Church let's go back to the start oh give thanks to the Lord call upon his name make known his deeds among the people sing to him sing praises to him tell of all his wondrous works glory in his holy name let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice seek the Lord in his strength seek his presence continually remember the wondrous works that he has done may we be a people who respond to the Lord who is faithful with praise may God help us Father we pray that you will ignite praise in our hearts today whether we are experiencing wonderful joy filled moments or turbulence and pain and suffering

[43 : 34] Lord we are your people and you are our faithful God so Lord we entrust ourselves to you afresh today with a heart postured towards you with praise and thanksgiving let us worship you right now as we look back and we look forward to the rest of our lives in Jesus name we pray!

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