

Guest Speaker

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[0 : 0 0] All right, if you have your Bibles tonight, we turn to the book of Psalm. Psalm 107 is good to be at Vision Baptist Church. If you're visiting, you're very welcome.

And if you're disappointed in the message, it's okay, because I don't preach here very often. I'm a guest. Well, I'm not really a guest, I'm a member, but I'm not here very often. But it's good to have, we have the Awana children, there's some of them here, so that's great.

And so we're excited to be in the book of Psalms. And we're looking at a great psalm. You know, when you're a preacher, sometimes you wrongfully have this view of the service that we've got to get the preliminaries out of the way so that we can get to the preaching, which is really insulting to the music people who put a lot of effort into it.

But the psalm that we're reading tonight is going to instruct us basically to do what has been happening through the praise and through the singing.

So it's nice to know we've already been putting the message into practice here in the service. And I hope maybe if Chris can be prepared to lead us, I think, at Amazing Grace at the end, because I think it'll be appropriate.

[1 : 0 9] But let's read, if we can, the first nine verses together of Psalm 107. Oh, give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endureth forever.

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gather them out of the lands from the east, from the west, from the north, and from the south.

They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way. They found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

And then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them out of all their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men. For he satisfies the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

[2 : 1 8] Let's pray together this evening. Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can gather together tonight. Thank you that we can open up your word, and be reminded of your goodness.

God, we pray for Pastor Trent, as he is away preaching to church in South Carolina, for Pastor Greg in New York. We pray, God, for others who may be traveling and away from our fellowship tonight.

But God, I pray you'll bless our time in your word. And I pray that we would see how important it is that we praise you, for you are truly a good and a merciful and a God whose mercy never fails.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Last week, our psalm was Psalm 106, and it was the last psalm in the fourth book of Psalms.

So the book of Psalms, which we know is 150 chapters, is actually originally five different books. So we finished the fourth book, and now we're in the fifth book. And we finished last week, Pastor Trent preached a psalm of repentance.

[3 : 25] If you notice with me in verse number 47 of Psalm 106, there's a prayer there that says, Save us, O Lord our God, and gather us from among the heathen to give thanks unto thy holy name and to triumph in thy praise.

So here there's a prayer for salvation and for regathering. And very likely, this was a prayer that was prayed during the exile of the nation of Israel when they were carried away captive.

And they're far from home, and they are spread out, and they know that only God can bring them back. And so they pray for regathering. Well, when we come to Psalm 107, there is an exhortation to give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his mercy endures forever.

And then it says in verse 2, Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gather them out of the lands from the east and the west, from the north and the south.

So very likely, this was now after the regathering, after God has miraculously brought them back into the land. And he says, We prayed for deliverance.

[4 : 35] And God did deliver us. And God did redeem us. But now we need to pray. And we need to praise. And we need to thank God because he has brought us back. You know, it is quite embarrassing at times how seldom we pray to God for help.

But it is probably even more embarrassing how less frequent we praise God for helping us. And so this is a psalm about thanking God and praising God.

Certainly for the nation of Israel, they had much to thank and praise God for. But we as well have much to praise and thank God as well. It talks about redemption here in verse 2, which was, you know, bringing them out of the land.

But we have been redeemed, haven't we? We have been purchased. We were enslaved to our sins. We were redeemed by the blood of Christ. 1 Peter 1, verses 18 and 19 says, For as much as you know that you are not redeemed with corruptible things as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ as of a land without blemish and without spot.

And so just as Israel had much to praise and thank God for, we have much to praise and thank God for because of what Jesus Christ has done for us. He shed his blood on the cross to pay for our sin and we should praise and honor him.

[6 : 00] And that's what we've been doing already in the service. So what we're going to do now is we're going to go on into the psalm. We're going to see some different examples where people were delivered, where people were, where God intervened in a situation that had no solution other than God.

And I think it won't be hard to see that there are many applications to us today. So let's look at our first example. And this is found in verses 4 to 9.

And if you're taking notes, you can write down. Number one, we should praise the Lord for delivering us from our aimless and empty wanderings. Look at verse number 4.

So then he goes on and he says, they wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way. And it's really helpful if you could use a bit of imagination here. So you're imagining people wandering in a wilderness in a solitary way.

There's no one around. It's desolate. They can't find a city to dwell in. They're hungry. They're thirsty.

- [7 : 06] And they are about to give up. Their soul's fainting in them. So they don't know where to turn and they don't know what to do. They have nothing to eat.
- They have nothing to drink. They can't find anyone. And they're about to despair. But then they cry to the Lord in their trouble.
- And he delivered them out of their distresses. God intervenes. And God leads them forth by the right way.
- Shows them where to go. And he brings them to a place to dwell. What a beautiful picture of deliverance. We think about the nation of Israel as they wander.
- We think about, we're even thinking about Hagar when she was cast out and abandoned. And each of us in our lives probably have found times where we are wandering and we're moving, but we're not getting anywhere.
- [8 : 05] We're just like going in circles. And we may be eating, but we're never full. We may be drinking, but we're never satisfied. And we are searching and we are longing and we are looking and nothing can satisfy.
- But then hopefully you've got to the point where you recognize you needed to cry unto the Lord. And he heard our cry and he delivered us out of our distresses.
- You know, maybe you're here tonight and you might have, you know, food, you might have a place to live, but you can identify with that longing, that hunger, that sense of homelessness, of not really knowing where you're headed or what you're doing or what will bring satisfaction.
- Cry unto the Lord because he will deliver you out of your distresses. And if he has, then verse eight, God through the psalmist says, and this is going to be repeated four times in this psalm, oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men.
- For he satisfies the longing soul and he lifts, he fills the hungry soul with goodness. From searching and longing and hunger and thirsting and not knowing where to go to satisfied and filled and at home, God is the one that makes a difference and he says, if God's made that difference, then we ought to praise him.
- [9 : 49] We ought to glorify him. And if God has done that at any point in your life, then let's praise him. Let's magnify him. Let's honor him. Let's exalt him. Wouldn't it be great if men would praise, it's almost like a plea?
- When you have children, and my children are well past all this, but when you have children, they always want to know what the next meal is. You're eating breakfast, like, what's for dinner?
- And you're like, we haven't even finished breakfast. We haven't even got the lunch. You know, well, I was going to put on the British accent. It wouldn't have worked very good. You know, I was going to say, mommy, what's for breakfast tomorrow?
- That worked okay, I guess. You know, you're like, I'm not sure what I'm even, where I'm heading with this. We're having so much fun with it. You know, yeah, you're like, why don't you be grateful for what you're eating right now?
- You know, and it's like, God is saying, you know, I know you have needs today, but would you just stop and praise me for what I've done for you every day of your life to this point?
- [11 : 04] Oh, that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, his wonderful works to the children of men. So, we should praise the Lord for delivering us from our aimless and our empty wanderings.
- He sets us on the right path. He gives us a home and he fills our souls. Then secondly, we see in verses 10 to 16, we should praise the Lord for delivering us from the bondage of our sin.

And several of the songs, you know, we're singing about this, alluding to this type of thing here. But in verses 10 to 14, we see another example. So, notice verse number 10 here.

He says, such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. So, you're imagining someone sitting in absolute darkness with the shadow of death.

Think of somebody maybe on death row. Their only future is death. Death like a shadow is hovering over. They're bound, they're bound in affliction and in iron.

[12 : 09] The reason, verse 11, is because they've rebelled against the words of God. And they are condemning the counsel of the Most High.

So, it's a self-inflicted bondage. It's a self-inflicted death, or sorry, darkness. And it's a, in a self-inflicted future where death is looming.

Therefore, he brought down their heart with labor. They fell down. There was none to help them. So, they've rejected God. They've rebelled against his word. And now God is, is putting this under this yoke of bondage.

What hope is there for someone in that situation? But, verse 13, then what did they do? They cried unto the Lord in their trouble and he saved them out of their distresses.

Great thing about God is when we cry to him, he saves. When we call to him, he saves. And once again, for someone who's in bondage because of their own sin, their own rebellion, when they cry to the Lord, the Lord delivers them out of their distress.

[13 : 21] He brings them out of darkness and out of the shadow of death, and he breaks their bands in sunder. Now, one of the very possible historical references that this could be referring to is King Zedekiah.

at the end of 2 Kings, the end of 2 Chronicles, the king of Judah is named Zedekiah. And Nebuchadnezzar has surrounded Jerusalem.

And, you know, it's a very tense moment. And the prophet Jeremiah says to King Zedekiah, you need to surrender. If you don't surrender, it's going to be really bad for you.

You need to surrender. And time and again, the prophet says, this is what God wants you to do. And time and again, Zedekiah refuses. And so, what ends up happening is just as God says, the siege succeeds, the people are taken.

King Zedekiah's sons are killed in front of him. And then they blind him. And so, the last thing he sees before he has taken a prisoner is his own children being slaughtered in front of him.

[14 : 29] And now he's in a prison cell. Now he's in absolute darkness. Now he is in great bondage. And I cannot imagine how difficult that must have been.

And it's very likely it's a reference to this. But God says, even in a situation like that, those who cry to the Lord can and will be delivered. And the king, in a sense, represented the nation.

And that nation that looked totally desolate and totally hopeless, God would bring them back. You can actually go to, because I live in London, we can go to the British Museum and you can see a cylinder in a British museum called the Cyrus Cylinder.

And on the Cyrus Cylinder, King Cyrus has decreed that nations should be allowed to go back and rebuild their cities and restore the worship.

It doesn't mention Jerusalem on it, but it is evidence that what would happen 70 years later, God would allow them to do. And nobody would have dreamed that that could happen. So, God is saying, I'm the one that hears the cry in the deep and the dark bondage.

[15 : 38] And you know, maybe in your life you feel like Zedekiah, you feel like the person referenced here. All around you is dark. Death is shadowing over you. Your bondage may very well be due to your own rebellion against the words of God in some way.

Rejection of God's word does bring bondage. But faith in an obedience to God's word brings freedom. The word of God is what sets us free. And if we will cry to the Lord, then he will save us.

If you will cry to the Lord, he will save you. He will bring you out of darkness and out of death. He will break your bands asunder. He sets the captives free. And that is such a wonderful thing.

So if he has done that in your life in some way, not just for salvation, but in other areas, maybe some sin in your life, maybe some difficult circumstance where you have felt a prisoner in bondage and God sets you free, then wouldn't it be great if we would praise the Lord for his goodness?

Wouldn't it be great if we would praise him for his wonderful works to the children of men, for how he broke the gates of brass and cut the bars of iron and sunder? Many, quite a few years ago, we had a lady come to our church in Northern Ireland who was in very bad, she was in bad bondage to alcohol.

[17 : 08] She was very suicidal. She was in bondage to false religion. She was, you know, just, it was really one of those situations when we didn't really know what to do. Um, and, uh, we tried to do what we could do and it didn't make much of a difference.

It didn't seem like. Then we moved away to England, went back to Northern Ireland several years later and she wrote, um, Terry, she said, I'd like to meet up with you and it was like a changed lady. She was so excited.

She had gotten, she actually had made a profession of faith while we were there but we didn't see a lot of, a lot of, uh, outward fruit but there was definitely a deliverance that God had done in her life.

It was beautiful, uh, to see the change that God had made. That's what God does and that's what God wants to keep doing to deliver us from the lies of Satan, to deliver us from sin.

He is a delivering God and we should praise him for delivering us from the bondage of our own sin. Then thirdly, we should praise the Lord for delivering us from trouble caused by our own foolishness.

[18 : 14] Now, um, I'm not sure why I was this, why I was this way, maybe I stood on this way, I don't know but when I was growing up I liked to take things apart.

Maybe it was because I was homeschooled and we didn't have a TV. I don't know. You know, I'd take it apart but I couldn't get it back together and I spent quite a few stressful moments, you know, thinking I've got to get this thing, this tool back together for my dad gets home where I am in serious trouble.

Um, you know, so, I have done a lot of foolish things. Um, just, I, you know, I actually, I, not that I enjoy doing foolish things but it has given me a lot of good sermon illustrations over the years.

Um, but, being foolish, the problem with being a foolish is it's usually quite painful. Any of the kids ever done anything painful?

Yeah? We won't ask you to share or show you the, we won't ask you to show the scars but, uh, I'll tell one on Grant since I always have to tell one on Grant but, well, it's kind of on Terry actually so, when Grant was younger uh, she was cooking and she had Grant sitting on the, the counter right by the oven, you know, and, uh, there's like, uh, the, uh, range there.

[19 : 35] Um, some of the, is it stovetop? Some of the terms are a little different here in this country. Um, so bear with me as I adapt. And he just put his hand down on it like, ooh, bright, shiny thing, you know, and, and burn his hand, you know.

So, we just blame Grant for all of that. Terry had nothing to do with that. But being, being a fool is painful. And I have, I have much worse stories on myself. I should tell stories about myself, not my family.

That's, that's foolish. Foolish move. Ha ha ha ha. That was foolish. I'm gonna regret that. But notice verse 17. Fools, because of their transgression and because of their iniquity are afflicted.

So, this is a self-inflicted problem. They're, they're, they're in such a bad state that they're unable to eat. So, it's like a sickness is now on them.

They draw near to the gates of death. But they have no one to blame but themselves for their own foolishness. And yet, verse 19 says that when they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, he saves them out of their distresses.

[20 : 50] Aren't you glad that God saves fools out of their own foolishness? I am so thankful thankful because all of us, if we're honest, we wander in to a pit of sewage or we wander straight in to something that everybody knows from time immemorial is not a good idea.

And we're like, I can make it on my own. I can, I don't have to read my Bible. I don't have to pray. I'll just figure this out because that's who I am. And, and it's like, speaking of dumb things, I remember I was out in Northern Ireland one time doing outreach and I'm looking around to give leaves and I walk straight into a light post.

I mean, I, I hit my forehead on it and it was so hard, like the pole was like shaking. And the only thing I thought about was did anybody see that? Not like, you know, should I go to the hospital or something?

But we walk straight into it and everybody's looking like you're an idiot. There's no way I'm helping you. You should have seen that coming. But not God.

We cry out and he saves us. We serve a very good and a gracious God who doesn't give us what we deserve. He sent his word and healed them.

[22 : 06] He delivered them from their destructions in verse number 20. And so if God does that in our life, verse 21, wouldn't it be good that men would praise the Lord for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men?

Wouldn't it be good if we would sacrifice the sacrifices of Thanksgiving and say, thank you God that you have been so good to me. I'm going to serve you. I'm going to live for you.

I am going to tell others, verse 22, I'm going to declare your works. Why are we here? Why do we give an offering? Why do we share the gospel? It ought to be because we're so overwhelmed with his goodness.

We want to sing. We want to give. We want to go. We want to live every moment for the one that rescued us. That is a life of praise to God for his goodness.

And then number four, verses 23 to 32, we should praise the Lord for delivering us from terrifying storms. So then we have another example. And this is, this is kind of different.

[23 : 12] This is the imagery of a ship. So it talks about people who go down to the sea in ships. They do business in great waters. How many of you like being on ships or boats or that you like being out, you know, fishing?

How many of you don't like it so much? It doesn't suit your constitution so much. It makes you a little bit queasy. I'm probably more on this side over here. I remember taking a ferry from Morocco one time and right before we boarded, we had a lot of pizza and, you know, pizza stayed put, but it was close.

It was very close. So I wouldn't do well on a ship, but these, he says, talking about the sailors, they see the works of the Lord and his wonders in the deep.

You know, if you're a farmer, if you're a fisherman, if you're someone out on the seas and the oceans, you know about powerful nature. You know about powerful things.

You know about forces beyond your control and even, you know, people don't believe in God. If you're more involved in that type of world, you're aware that there are forces out there.

[24 : 23] They see the works of God. They see his wonders in the deep. They see how he commands and raises the wind and lifts up the waves and how when the boat is mounting up to heaven and then plunging down to the depths, how even the hardest and the hardest sailor's soul will melt because of trouble.

Remember Jonah and the sailors on the ship, they're terrified. They reel to and fro. They stagger like a drunken man. They are at their wit's end and they're out in the far depths of the deep where there's no coast guard, there's no one that can come to their rescue, but if they cry to the Lord in their trouble, he can bring them out of their distresses.

He can make the storm a calm, he can make the waves to be still and they will be so glad when they're brought to a quiet place and to their desired haven and they're grateful and one of the things about this is, you remember when Jesus calmed the storm and here in Psalm 107, it's God that's doing this and can you understand why the disciples would be like, what manner of man is this?

He's doing the very things that God does in Psalm 107, but that's kind of a side note, but then we go on and see that he says in verse 31, oh that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, for his wonderful works of children of men.

This section reminds me of John Newton, the guy that wrote the song Amazing Grace, which we sang tonight. John Newton grew up in a Christian home.

[26 : 04] He was, his mother was a Christian and she taught him the Bible, but then she died when he was seven years old. His dad wasn't a believer and John ended up at 11 years of age going off to sea in the Royal Navy.

He didn't like it. He rebelled. He deserted. He actually became a slave himself for a time. Then he worked on a slave ship. Then he captained a slave ship. And then eventually he left all of that and became a preacher of the gospel and a proponent of the abolition of slavery.

But one of the things that made a difference was he was off the coast of Ireland and terrible, terrible storm that even a blasphemous, sinful sailor like John Newton was so terrified that he began to cry out to God and say, you know, if you will save me, I will live for you.

And they made it out, barely. In London, Derry, Northern Ireland, there's a church there where apparently John Newton went and all of this inspired the hymn Amazing Grace.

So a storm that turned a hardened sailor, a wicked, blasphemous person into a believer in God, he says here, God is the one that can work in those situations and God is the one that can deliver and God is the one that can deliver you.

[27 : 34] And if he has delivered you and he has brought you through a terrifying storm, a storm that might have melted your soul, you get some news, you go to the doctor, you get a phone call and you feel almost drunk with fear, you feel like you cannot stand and you don't know where to turn and this storm is taking you up and crashing you down.

But God's probably brought many people in this room through terrifying things. Let's praise him. Let's praise the Lord for his goodness and his wonderful works and let's exalt him in the congregation of the people.

So there's like a corporate aspect. So singing songs of praise to God is exactly what we ought to be doing. And you know, when it comes to singing, we always think about, well, I'm not a very good singer and whatever, but you know, we're singing for the Lord and the Lord loves to hear us praise him.

And then number five, we should praise the Lord for everything he does. So the last section is more just like hitting some highlights, but if you look with me in verse number 33, we should praise the Lord for everything he does.

What are some of the things that he does? Well, in verse 33, he turns rivers into a wilderness and water springs into dry ground, a fruitful land into barrenness because of the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

[29 : 06] Sometimes God takes blessings and good things and shrivels them up. Sometimes God brings chastening into our life, but it's not a bad thing.

It's not a bad thing. It can be a blessing. Then sometimes he brings blessings we don't deserve. Verses 35 to 38, he turns a wilderness into a standing water and dry ground into water springs.

What we thought was a wilderness, now there's water everywhere. What was dry is now there's springs there. He makes the hungry to dwell.

That they may prepare a city for habitation and sow the fields and plant vineyards which will yield fruits of increase. He blesses them also so that they are multiplied greatly and suffers not their cattle to decrease.

Whatever's going on in your life, praise God. If there's problems, praise Him because it's teaching you to trust Him. It's molding character in your life. If there's blessings, praise Him because you don't deserve it and I don't deserve it.

[30 : 11] Every day should be a day of praise. Every day should be a day of thanks. Verses 39 to 40, again, they are minished and brought low through oppression and affliction and sorrow.

He pours contempt upon the princes. He causes them to wander in the wilderness where there is no way. We should praise Him when He brings us low, when He humbles our pride. And then we should praise Him when He lifts up the humble.

Verse 41, Yet He sets the poor on high from affliction and make them families like a flock. It doesn't matter what God's doing in your life. A time of blessing, a time of famine, a time of humbling, a time of exalting.

Praise Him. God is at work all around us. So look at verses 42 to 43. The righteous shall see it and rejoice and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

Who is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord. The question is, are we righteous enough to see it?

[31 : 18] The righteous will see it. You know, so often in our lives, we pass things by and we, we, things go in front of our eyes but we don't see it.

It's kind of scary because sometimes it happens when you're driving. You're like, I have no, I do not remember, I do not remember driving wherever you're going. You know, you're just like in the zone. Amen, Benjamin?

You know? You know? You know? And, or, you're like, I didn't know that was there. And I think in life that is the way it is.

Most of the time we're not righteous enough to see it. We're too self-absorbed, we're too, we're too wrapped up, we're too proud, we're too whatever.

We don't see it. We don't see where there's an opportunity to praise God. We just focused on what, what we're missing or what we're lacking or what we're wanting rather than saying, I see it, God.

[32 : 18] I see the blessing. I see the, I see the, the thing I can praise you for. Thank you, God. Thank you for what you do. You know, the Bible says that everything gives thanks. That's really difficult.

But if you look enough, there will be something to thank God for. But we gotta see it. We have to observe, we have to be wise and righteous enough to recognize there's a God in heaven and he is at work and he's worthy of our praise, whatever is going on.

Even they will understand the love and kindness of the Lord. So let's come back to verse number eight. Maybe if the musicians, I'd like to, we'll close in prayer and then if we could sing that amazing grace song at the end, I think that'd be really nice.

But verse eight, repeated several times in this song, oh, oh, and that implies that a lot of people, a lot of men don't, but oh, that men would because a lot of men and a lot of women don't, but oh, that they would praise the Lord for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men.

Heavenly Father, God, we bow in your presence tonight and we acknowledge that, first of all, God, you have been so very good to us and so very merciful to us, Lord, and we have found ourselves in prisons of our own making, troubles of our own foolishness.

[33 : 51] We have found ourselves in storms that just came upon us at times, maybe not of our own making. We have found ourselves in dire straits and yet, Lord, when we cried to you, you delivered us.

And God, we want to praise you. We want to magnify you. We want to ask for your forgiveness for not giving you the honor and the glory you deserve. But God, as we sing this last song to you, amazing grace, how sweet this sound that saved a wretch like me, I pray that you'd be honored and glorified Lord, I pray if there's someone here tonight who maybe has been searching and longing and wandering, but they've not found you, they've not cried out to you for salvation, God, I pray that they would do that tonight.

They would call upon your name. They would be saved through believing in Jesus and his death and his burial and his resurrection. Lord, for the Christian who may be here who thinks that you've forgotten them, thinks that there's no hope, God, I pray they would cry out to you.

And God, I pray we would all praise you and honor you for all that you are and all that you've done. In Jesus' name we pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Let's pray. Let's pray.