

Psalm 107

The overwhelming emphasis of the 107th Ps revolves around reasons why the redeemed should give thanks and praise to the Lord. I don't know why it is but for some reason (the obvious reason would be our overwhelmingly self centered sin nature) we have a tendency to take things for granted and way too few have any real sense of gratitude toward the goodness of God in our heart.

In Luke's gospel Ch 17 you find the Lord there passing through Samaria and Galilee, and as He passes through a village 10 lepers come out to meet Him and as they see Him from far off they begin to yell, "Jesus, Master have mercy on us!" Then He tells them to go and show themselves to the priests and as they make their way they're cleansed. One of them realizing he was cleansed returned to Jesus praising God in a loud voice and he fell on his face at the feet of Jesus and was giving Him thanks. The man happened to be a Samaritan, he wasn't even of the house of Israel and here he was praising God and thanking Jesus for His goodness, His mercy and His lovingkindness on his behalf. We read, "*So Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?'" Luke 17:17-18 So often that's just the way it is, about 9 out of 10 people tend to take God's goodness for granted. Yet when we consider His grace and His mercy toward us we should be stirred to *thanksgiving* and *praise*. God desires that we be thankful.*

Vs1-3

Notice we have the exhortation concerning both *what* we're to do, and *why* we're to do it. 1st of all what are we to do? We're to, "give thanks to the Lord." The word means to "praise" to "laud" or to "give thanks," it's the will of God for you in Christ Jesus. Not only does God desire that we should be conscientiously thankful, it's His will for you in the Lord. Remember these Vs? 1 Thess 5:16-18, "*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*" There seems to be such a mystery that surrounds "the will of God" well, you can know this for sure; it's *God's will* that you and I should be thankful.

Why? #1 Because *He* is good, it's hard to find a good person in this world, as a matter of fact it's impossible to find one because the truth of the matter is that there are none that are righteous, there are none who does good, no, not one. There is only 1 who is good and that is God and for that we should be thankful. I'm so thankful that God is *good*. Can you imagine the outcome of our eternal fate if God were perhaps more in line with the mythological deities of perhaps ancient Greece? If He were cruel and sadistic, unkind, with a certain satisfaction found in tormenting mortal men... Listen, give God thanks for He is *good*.

Let that serve as an anchor point for your soul when your world is crumbling down around you. It'll help to stabilize you in an otherwise unstable world. Read again Ps 73 and be encouraged, be anchored in the fact that God is good, because sometimes we can get confused on that issue when our circumstances don't seem so good. But it's critical that we seek to maintain the *eternal* perspective which is ultimately the point to which Asaph came in that psalm. This world, and the things in it are at best passing away, like a flower in the field.

But God has a plan for you that will serve your good for eternity, He's thinking beyond this world temporarily, He's mindful of your state eternally. He knows the thoughts He thinks toward you, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. #1 God is good, His mercy, or His "goodness" (it could've been translated) endures forever.

Also we should note in passing this phrase, "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." The idea there is that we have a certain obligation to declare the goodness of the Lord. A lot of people have a lot of things to say about God, they think He is, a "kill joy" a guy who's looking to squash them in judgment, yet who will stand to declare the goodness of God? "The redeemed."

"Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy." That's #2; why are we to be thankful, why are we to declare His goodness? Because He has *redeemed us* out of the hand of the enemy. Of course redemption speaks of a purchase, of a price paid to bring something out of its current state into your possession, your status; your state prior to Christ coming into your life was that of slavery. Slavery to sin and ultimately to Satan, because if you don't serve God than ultimately you're enslaved to the enemy. But God has so loved you that He's given His only Son *for* you, the price of your redemption, of my redemption was the broken body and shed blood of Jesus Christ He paid the penalty of death that we might reap the reward of everlasting life, freedom *from* and the forgiveness *of* sin.

Now obviously the interpretation of these things (with in the context of the psalm) belongs to the nation of Israel, but it makes for obvious application to all of us whom God has redeemed. Notice, "from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south;" again with regard to Israel the point is that God re-gathered His people from wherever they were scattered all over the earth. As for you and me we understand that God has redeemed for Himself a people from out of every tribe, every tongue, and every nation. Is the Lord Israel's God? Absolutely, is He their God exclusively? Absolutely not, He's redeemed His own from the east and the west, the north and the south, in Christ there's neither Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, no distinction or difference, we're all one in Him.

Vs 4-7

Few things here quickly; again the history lesson here is obvious with regard to the wilderness wanderings of the nation of Israel. But it has application equally to you and me; it's kind of an interesting phenomenon, and I don't know any believer who's ever been exempt from it. There just seems to come a time in every believers journey through life whereby having been delivered from the chains of sin (redeemed) that they enter into a time of struggle inwardly, of difficult opposition spiritually and it's "wandering in the wilderness" type of season in their life.

It's a time of learning to walk by faith and not by my feelings, and it's normal to a degree to go through a time like that in your life, it's tough but God is teaching you, equipping you for even tougher times ahead. You'll learn that He's faithful to you, that He'll never leave nor forsake you, but often times people really struggle in that time and will many times falter in the flesh during that time. (Even as the children of Israel failed time after time during their days in the wilderness).

However here's the deal, the children of Israel spent 40 yrs in the wilderness, but to go from Egypt to the Promised Land straight ahead by foot it was only an 11 day journey... "What are you saying Jeff?" I'm saying that what could've been an 11 day journey wound up lasting for 40 yrs because they couldn't come to a place whereby they simply trusted God to do the work and make a way for them where there was no way. The same it seems holds true in the lives of *many* believers today, what's meant to be a relatively brief learning curve in your walk and relationship with the Lord whereby you're learning to walk by faith and enter into a life led *by* the Spirit, in the power *of* the Spirit becomes a life time of struggle, waxing and waning, faltering and failing. Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him and He will direct your paths.

The 2nd thing we notice here is that God loves us enough to allow us to come to the end of ourselves, to that place that leaves us hungering and thirsting for more, to that place whereby our soul faints with in us and we cry out *to* Him and find deliverance *through* Him. He loves us enough to allow us to exhaust all of our options, however long that might take until we realize that nothing in this life satisfies and as we cry out to Him, He show Himself faithful to us and delivers us out of our distresses.

Which brings me to the 3rd thing; God gives us direction and purpose in life. He "leads us forth by the right way." We've been learning Sunday mornings of those who *forsake* the right way and go astray. God will lead us, He will guide us by the right way, that is through the instruction of His word by the power of His Spirit. From wandering and lost to be led by the right way; what's the appropriate response to such goodness, to such grace and mercy?

Vs8-9

Be thankful to the Lord for all that He's done, for His goodness and His wonderful works, He's satisfied your soul, and filled your soul with goodness. He's responded to your hunger and thirst for righteousness by "filling you." Remember Jesus said, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, For they shall be filled.*" Matt 5:6 I love the fact that God feeds the hungry and satisfies the thirsty, the longing soul. Jesus said, "*I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*" John 6:35

Vs10-14

Note that what brought the bondage, what brought the affliction in the 1st place was rebellion against the word of God and the despising of the counsel of the Most High. Vs 10 tells us that they sat in darkness, in the shadow of death, bound in affliction and irons. Vs 11 tells us that it was because there was rebellion to the word of God. From that we can gather the obvious can't we? If walking in obedience to the word is to walk in light and life; than rebellion *against* the word, a despising *of* the word is darkness and chains, affliction and irons.

Yet once again we see that God loves us enough to allow us to reap the ramifications of our ways, our heart is brought down with labor, there's no more rest for our soul. Notice, "They fell down and there was none to help." Why is that? Because none but the Lord *can* help; and when you rebel *against* the Lord you're on your own, there's no one to help. Oh that we would realize, that we would recognize the fact that outside of the Lord there is nothing, and no one.

He alone has the words of eternal life; no matter how hard it gets, no matter how bad you may think it is, where else are you going to go? Outside of Christ there's only chains, darkness, afflictions and irons.

Vs13-14

God takes us out of darkness and brings us into light. Again we read were Jesus said, "*I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.*" John 8:12 He breaks the chains of sin that have shackled us and frees us to walk in the liberty with which He has made us free. As a matter of fact we see a 3-fold work of God in our lives there in Vs 14, it's light, life and liberty, brought out of darkness, out of the shadow of death and He breaks our chains. Light, life, and liberty.

Now, do you a the pattern developing here? Throughout this psalm we see a pattern of sorts. A patter of rebellion, rejection, bondage and affliction; then there's a desperation, a turning toward and crying out to the Lord followed by deliverance from our distresses and a breaking of our chains.

What can we do with respect to these things, how should we respond to such overwhelming mercy and goodness?

Vs15-16

Praise the Lord He has set you free! Notice the words like “broken chains” “broken gates of bronze” “bars of iron cut in two” when God purposes to deliver you it doesn’t matter how “bound” you may be or with what kind of strength you’ve been “hemmed” in by, for God it’s nothing. Bars of iron, gates of brass can’t keep God out from His people, and neither can they keep them in when their time of deliverance is upon them. God makes ways where there is no way, He’s able to deliver, “Is there anything too hard for Me?” says the Lord, the answer is a resounding and emphatic “No!” God is able to deliver you when you cry out to Him.

Vs17-20

Look at Vs 17; the one who walks in his own ways, persisting in his iniquity is a fool and is afflicted. It causes your soul to abhor all manner of food which in turn draws us near to the gates of death. What does that mean? You remember the scripture, we quoted it Sunday, “... *man shall not live by bread alone; but man lives by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.*” Deut 8:3 Jesus said that He was the bread of heaven come down to man and that if anyone would partake of that bread he would live forever. Here’s the point; sin will cause us to lose our appetite for the word of God. You’ve heard the phrase that this book (the bible) will keep you from sin and sin will keep you from this book; and when we’re not being spiritually nourished we’re dancing on death’s door. So many times people think that the forbidden fruit is always the sweetest, therefore they think that the reason sin brings destruction is because it’s arbitrarily forbidden when in reality sin is forbidden because it will invariably bring destruction.

Then we see the pattern again in Vs 19, we cry out in distress, God comes in His faithfulness to deliver; and notice what it was that delivered them from their destruction, what it was that brought healing and wholeness to their souls. (Vs 20) “He sent His word...and healed them.” How important is it that we learn what it means when Jesus said, “If you abide in Me and My *words* abide in you...” God can heal our hearts with but a word, and so often it’s His word that heals our hurting and wounded heart.

The psalmist said, “*This is my comfort in my affliction, For Your word has given me life.*” Ps 119:50 God sends His word and heals us, delivers us from destruction. Prov 14:27 “*The fear of the Lord is a fountain of life, To turn one away from the snares of death.*” The goodness of God, the lovingkindness of God toward man, what can we do, how can we respond to such overwhelming grace and mercy?

Vs21-30

I just want to draw a couple of things out of this section. Notice that there are times when God will send storms into our lives, “He commands and raises the stormy wind which lifts up the waves of the sea.” The result is a reeling to and fro, a melting of the soul because of the trouble and the turbulence. Why? Why would God “shake things up” sometimes in our lives? Because we can get so comfortable that we cease calling upon Him, we hit cruise control and don’t really rely upon Him and that’s unhealthy for us... Sometimes the only thing that will bring us to our “wits end” is the storms of life and when we reach the end we cry out to God; then God is free to intervene and deliver us from our distress. We find ourselves fresh on our faces before Him once again, cultivating that relationship with Him again.

I was talking with someone the other day about the fact that we seem to not really rely on the Lord, or draw near *to* the Lord when things are calm in our lives. But when the storm breaks loose, we bury our faces in the floor and cry out to God; and really that’s where we need to be all along rather than settling in the dregs. In the book of Jeremiah we find where God said of Moab, “*Moab has been at ease from his youth; He has settled on his dregs, And has not been emptied from vessel to vessel, Nor has he gone into captivity. Therefore his taste remained in him, And his scent has not changed.*” Jer 48:11 There’s been no change because things have been “good” for him, nothing has *stirred* him in such a way as to sense the need for there to be impurities removed from him. God wants to change us, to keep us moving and maturing, yet sometimes in calm times we begin to settle into the dregs, so God will “shake things up.”

Something else we see in this section is no matter how great the storm, how great the distress God is greater than our distresses and is able to calm the storm that’s broken loose in our lives. He’s able to quiet the *tempestuous times* and guide us to our desired haven, that place of rest which of course is found in Christ.

Vs31-38

Again 2 things I would say about this particular portion. #1 God will deal with wickedness turning rivers into wilderness and fruitful land into barrenness, why? Vs 34, “For the wickedness of those who dwell in it.”

#2 God delights in and blesses righteousness, He turns a wilderness into pools of water, dry land into watersprings. He makes the hungry dwell there and blesses them abundantly.

Vs39-42

All this is another way of saying that whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. God resists/brings low the proud, but gives grace to the humble. The one who sows to the flesh will of the flesh reap corruption but the one who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life.

Vs43

Whoever is wise will observe these things... Will observe what things?

The things we just went over, that God delights in the humble, He blesses the righteous but brings low the proud, that you can cry out to Him and He will be there for you, that God's word will bring healing and wholeness to your soul. You will observe or take heed to the fact that to walk in your own ways, after the longing of your own heart is foolishness, that to rebel against God's word equals only darkness and being bound in affliction, but to heed God's word equals light, life and liberty.

Give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, He's satisfied your soul with good things and quenched the thirst that was found in the deepest recesses of your heart. Draw near *to* the Lord, discern the lovingkindness *of* the Lord and be wise...

Prayer Points:

God teach our hearts to be hearts of thanksgiving and genuine gratitude. We don't want to consider Your goodness, Your lovingkindness, realize that we've been cleansed and then like the other 9 lepers not take the time to fall on our faces before Your feet and just thank You. Teach to observe, to heed these things and be wise, we thank You for redeeming us, for giving direction and purpose *to* us, and for satisfying our souls with good things. We praise You that You are good and Your mercy endures forever.