

Give Thanks For Deliverance

Bible Background • PSALM 107

Printed Text • PSALM 107:1–9, 39–43 | Devotional Reading • PSALM 68:1–6

Aim for Change

By the end of this lesson, we will EXPLORE the importance of having a relationship with God, the Deliverer, PLACE value on the role of giving thanks to God, and PRAY for those who need God's deliverance.

In Focus

"Thank You, Heavenly Father," Dorcas said as she rested on the gurney. Dorcas was so weak she could barely raise her voice above a whisper, so she whispered. It was difficult to collect her thoughts after the emergency surgery, but the one thing she knew was that she was grateful to be alive. Since that morning, she had been gasping for air as if she had run a marathon, even though she hadn't exerted herself more than she would have at any other time.

Even so, it wasn't until Dorcas had lunch with her best girlfriend Sylvia, and her back started hurting, that she called her doctor. When Dr. Patterson heard her description of how she was feeling—like the air was being squeezed out of her from her upper back—he told her to go to the hospital ASAP! When she came to the hospital, her neck was in terrible pain and she didn't understand why. It seemed like within moments of entering the doors, Dorcas was in an operating room.

Dorcas was woozy now, and could barely focus on what the emergency room physician was telling her—about the cardiac arrest she had suffered, about the symptoms that women can have that men don't, about the arterial blockage that was uncovered and removed, about the stent that was put in. The only thing on Dorcas' mind was "Thank You, Heavenly Father," and she said it again and again. What stories can you tell about when the Lord has delivered you from great trouble or hardship?

Keep in Mind

"And he shall judge the world in righteousness, he shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness." (Psalm 9:8, KJV)

Words You Should Know

A. Right (v. 7) *yashar* (Heb.)—Straight, upright, correct

B. Filled (v. 9) *mala'* (Heb.)—Overflowing, made complete

Say It Correctly

Asaph. AY-saff.

Korah. KORE-ah.

KJV

Psalm 107:1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

8 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

39 Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.

40 He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.

41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.

42 The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

43 Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

NLT

Psalm 107:1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good! His faithful love endures forever.

2 Has the LORD redeemed you? Then speak out! Tell others he has redeemed you from your enemies.

3 For he has gathered the exiles from many lands, from east and west, from north and south.

4 Some wandered in the wilderness, lost and homeless.

5 Hungry and thirsty, they nearly died.

6 "LORD, help!" they cried in their trouble, and he rescued them from their distress.

7 He led them straight to safety, to a city where they could live.

8 Let them praise the LORD for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them.

9 For he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

39 When they decrease in number and become impoverished through oppression, trouble, and sorrow,

40 the LORD pours contempt on their princes, causing them to wander in trackless wastelands.

41 But he rescues the poor from trouble and increases their families like flocks of sheep.

42 The godly will see these things and be glad, while the wicked are struck silent.

43 Those who are wise will take all this to heart; they will see in our history the faithful love of the LORD.

The People, Places, and Times

Composition of Psalms. The songs in Psalms were written over a period of 1000 years by various authors including prophets (Moses), kings (David and Solomon), and Levites (Asaph and the sons of Korah). The first psalm composed is Psalm 90 and was written by Moses around 1400 BC after leading Israel out of Egyptian bondage. One of the last psalms to be written was Psalm 89, authored by Ethan around 400 BC after Israel returned from Babylonian captivity. Psalm 107 is most likely written after the Israelites' return from exile as well (v. 3).

Background

Psalm 107 voices examples of God's steadfastness. Written when the Israelites were permitted to return and resettle in their homelands of Canaan, they were likely filled with excitement, having endured the onerous Babylonian exile. No longer in captivity, the Israelites had been redeemed. They were experiencing true freedom coupled with the ability to finally worship God for His ongoing steadfastness toward them. Some believe the setting of this psalm is at a festival in the Temple in Jerusalem.

What prompted the writing of Psalm 107?

At-A-Glance

1. Praise the Lord (Psalm 107:1–3)
2. Love in Action (vv. 4–9)
3. Recognize God's Steadfastness (vv. 39–43)

In Depth

1. Praise the Lord (Psalm 107:1–3)

The psalm begins by admonishing everyone to give thanks and praise because their period of exile was finally over. The psalmist extends an invitation for all who have been redeemed to give thanks. His reasoning behind such a praise break: the Lord is good, and His steadfast love endures forever. Even though the Israelites had been in enemy or Babylonian territory, God rescued them. Dispersed throughout the four compass points—north, south, east, and west—now they could reassemble out of those foreign countries and return to Canaan. Therefore the psalmist admonished the Israelites that this was enough to offer thanks. They know firsthand how good God has been.

Why must we learn to always give thanks to God, regardless of our situation?

2. Love in Action (vv. 4–9)

The psalmist takes the reader on a picturesque journey to showcase God's steadfast love. First, he highlights God's goodness to a group of weary wanderers crossing through the desert. Lost, famished, and parched, they resign to do what costs them nothing: pray. This prayer is spoken four times in the psalm, a refrain that should come more quickly to the lips of all God's people (vv. 6, 13, 19, 28). They cry out to the Lord and He not only hears them, but also delivers them out of their distress. Then, He provides them with a direct route to a safe city where they could settle, Jerusalem. God is good to them. Their every need is supplied. The same God who leads them also feeds them! The Israelites give thanks to the Lord for His steadfast love and His wonderful deeds toward them.

How do we show God we love Him through our actions?

3. Recognize God's Steadfastness (vv.39–43)

As the old adage goes, "What goes up must come down." The psalmist concentrates on the reverse angle of God's providence. Those who rise despitely will be humbled. By "oppression, affliction, and sorrow" (v. 39), humiliation is guaranteed. Those who exalt themselves and demean others will be brought low themselves and will wander aimlessly in waste. Equally, they will see the lowly advance in all ways over them. Those who were once afflicted will be rewarded with deliverance far away from evil's way. God will aid them in establishing families of their own, which is viewed as the ultimate blessing during biblical times (Exodus 1:1–21; Psalm 127:5). The haughty will be made silent and envy their good fortune. This is one example of God's divine providence. He does this to convince the wise to heed and to rely on Him. His steadfast love is for all who are willing to rely upon, repeatedly call on, and abide in Him.

In what ways has God shown His steadfast love in your life?

Search the Scriptures

1. Why should the Israelites offer thanks and praise to God (Psalm 107:1–3)?
2. Why is it important to understand affliction does not last forever (v. 41)?

Discuss the Meaning

Ecclesiastes 1 tells us there is a time for everything. It is important for believers to know that affliction does not last always. After years in exile, the Israelites were delivered. What a reason to praise God! Why is it important to have a relationship with God, the Deliverer?

Liberating Lesson

In a world where confusion and calamity reign, our hopefulness is oftentimes deflated. Imagine spending 30 years in a 5-by-8 foot cell for a crime you did not commit. That was Anthony Ray Hinton's story. With all evidence showing his innocence, Hinton was still jailed for a double-murder. It was not until he connected with Attorney Bryan Stevenson of the Equal Justice Initiative that his plight changed. They were able to prove the evidence against Hinton was

incorrect. Hinton persisted in his faith and was awarded complete exoneration. His reunion with his family was filled with shouts of, "Thank you, Lord!" Remain resilient and thankful!

Application for Activation

Prayer is one of the most powerful and effective resources believers have. From a monetary vantage point, though, it costs us nothing to execute. Pray for individuals who need deliverance. Like the Israelites, God can deliver them too, even from self-made troubles. From an addiction, abuse, or an attitude, God can set any form of captive free. If a relationship or re-dedication is required, believe for an encounter with Jesus, the ultimate Deliverer. Identify one person, whether you know their name or not, and pray for God's deliverance.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

More Light on the Text

Psalm 107:1-9, 39-43

1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever.

Expressing thanks is a popular theme of the Psalms; therefore, it is no surprise that the line "Give thanks unto the LORD" is common throughout the Psalms. However, in Psalm 107, the psalmist begins his song of thanksgiving with the one letter word, "O" that serves as an exclamation to strengthen the following imperative.

As an exclamation, "O" focuses the hearer's attention and elicits excitement as it prepares the worshiper for what is coming next. Further, "O" intensifies the command for the worshiper to "Give thanks unto the LORD." Even though it is a command, the expectation is that the giving of thanks will be voluntary, sung with intensity and intentionality. The thanksgiving is to be expressed equally with lips of praise and with lives of gratitude because of who God is. He is Yahweh, the eternal, covenant-keeping God. The use of the name Yahweh (translated as "the LORD") was this psalm specifically praises God for keeping the covenantal promise: "That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place (from Jeremiah 29:10).

Is there a promise from the Lord that you are waiting on? Do not give up! Do not be discouraged! Instead, "Give thanks unto the LORD," in advance, because He is Yahweh, the covenant-keeping God who will surely do all that He has promised. It does not matter how long it has been. You can rest assured that He will fulfill every promise He has ever made. It is indeed sufficient to give thanks just because He is the Lord, but the psalmist is compelled to declare two additional reasons why giving thanks is right and proper: 1) Yahweh is good. Tov (TOVE) is the Hebrew word for good and means kind and upright; and 2) Yahweh's mercy, His khesed (KHEH-sed), His compassion and forgiveness, endures forever.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

Next, the psalmist becomes more specific in his call to give thanks. God is a redeemer. To "redeem" (Heb. ga'al, gaw-ALL) is to buy back property that was sold or a person who was enslaved. In reference to the Lord, the redeemed are those whom God has bought back from bondage and slavery, as He did with His people Israel when He brought them out of Egypt (Exodus 6:6), and when He delivered them from captivity in Babylon. Because of what the Lord did for Israel, it was mandatory, as the redeemed, not only to sing praises of thanksgiving "unto the LORD," but also to declare it openly so that all nations can know about God's redeeming power. That is exactly what Job did. When he was going through his trials, he declared, "I know that my Redeemer liveth" (Job 19:25). So regardless of the situation you may be going through, you too can declare it, tell it, shout it, and sing with passion: God has redeemed you before and He will again.

3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

God redeemed Israel and brought them back to the Promised Land, the holy city, Jerusalem, from the foreign lands where they had been scattered and held in captivity (Psalm 107:3). Christians today can rejoice that the Lord will ultimately bring all of His redeemed people from all the nations, and gather us all together in the place He promised and prepared for us, the New Jerusalem. In that day, this is the song that will be sung: "Thou art worthy... for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation" (Revelation 5:9).

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. 5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. 6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

The testimony of Israel's redemption begins with the problems they faced as they traveled, articulating their deep distress. Not only were they lost and homeless, but they were also so hungry and thirsty from wandering in the wilderness, and they almost died (107:4-5). Their distress initiated their prayer (v. 6).

The answer to their dilemma was to cry out to the Lord for help. The phrasing in verse 6 is repeated three other times in the psalm, making a notable refrain (vv. 13, 19, 28). The need for this prayer is the same for us today. Regardless of the situation, the Lord is faithful and trustworthy, so He invites us to “come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need” (Hebrews 4:16). That is the privilege of God’s people. Even if the cause of the distress is brought on as a result of disobedience, God remains faithful even when we are not (2 Timothy 2:13). However, if disobedience is the reason for the distress, then repentance is required.

7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. 8 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! 9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

Then the psalmist describes the means of their deliverance. God led them forth by the “right” way. That word right is the Hebrew word *yashar* (yaw-SHAR) which also means straight. He led them in a straight path, in direct contrast to the aimless wandering that led to their distress. This straight path not only guided them to a place of safety, but to a city and a dwelling place where they could thrive. Imagine the relief this gave them, like a person who had been living on the streets being taken not to a temporary shelter, but to a house for their very own!

The joy of this deliverance bubbles over as praise for what the Lord has done. This verse, like v. 6, is also found four times in this song and is followed by a statement summarizing the purpose for the praise (vv. 8, 15, 21, 31). In this particular circumstance, the Lord is to be praised “for he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness” (107:9). The Hebrew here is deeply poetic. “Satisfieth” (Heb. *saba’*, saw-BAH) is often used in the context of food, but it is paired with the “longing” soul rather than the “hungry” soul, a twist making the hearer take greater notice of the words and remember them. The word “longing” (Heb. *shaqaq*, shaw-KOK) is sometimes used in connection with food and drink, but more often refers to eagerness, running, and roving. This recalls the Israelites’ wandering from which God saves them. He has satisfied their wanderings. The hungry soul is filled (Heb. *mala’*, maw-LAW), a word with shades of meaning to show they are filled to overflowing and made complete.

39 Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. 40 He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.

In these closing verses of this song of thanksgiving, the psalmist contrasts two groups of people, the rebellious (vv. 39–40), and the redeemed (v. 41). Verse 39 emphatically declares that the rebellious are “brought low” or impoverished through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. Not only that, but they also decrease in number (KJV: “minished”). Even their princes, the wealthy, and upper class are judged by the Lord who causes them to “wander in the wilderness” (v. 40). Here we see a direct reversal of the righteous with the unrighteous. As God’s faithful people are brought in from wandering the wilderness, the unjust are forced from their positions of power and sent to wander the same trackless wilderness.

41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.

Next, the psalmist makes the dramatic comparison, declaring how the Lord deals with the redeemed. First, “he setteth the poor on high from affliction” (107:41). In other words, the Lord rescues the poor from their affliction, setting them in high positions of authority and protection so that further trouble cannot reach them. Second, he “maketh him families like a flock,” so that the families of the poor increase like flocks of sheep. This is in direct contrast to the rebellious who decrease in number (v. 40).

42 The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. 43 Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

In his concluding two verses, the psalmist drives home the fact that because God is faithful and gracious to His people, “the righteous shall see it, and rejoice.” They will shout out loud, as they were encouraged to do in the beginning of the psalm (v. 2). On the other hand, the wicked shall “stop her mouth” and be silent (107:42). In their shame and humiliation, they will have nothing to say, neither in their own defense nor in praise to God. They know they cannot argue their case before the righteous God, but they also still do not bend to the will of God.

Finally, if we are among the wise, we “will observe these things” and “shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD” (107:43), giving Him the praise that is due unto His name.

Daily Bible Readings

MONDAY

Delivered from Hunger and Thirst
(Psalm 107:1–9)

TUESDAY

Delivered from Darkness and Gloom
(Psalm 107:10–22)

WEDNESDAY

Delivered from Storms
(Psalm 107:23–32)

THURSDAY

Delivered through Jesus Christ
(Ephesians 1:3–14)

FRIDAY

Delivered from Sin
(Ephesians 2:1–10)

SATURDAY

Delivered and Reconciled
(Ephesians 2:11–22)

SUNDAY

Delivered by God's Steadfast Love
(Psalm 107:33–43)