

40 Days of Gratitude

SESSION 1: 11/27/2022

THANKSGIVING FOR GOD'S DELIVERANCE

PSALM 107

MAIN POINT

Today's topic from the pulpit will be the power of gratitude. However, this lesson is slightly different. This lesson will cover: When we acknowledge our need and come to God desperately seeking His grace, we will find Him ready to help us in our need.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

Share about a time when you had to ask for help in completing a task or solving a problem.

Is it difficult for you to ask for help from others? Why or why not?

We live in a culture that values self-sufficiency. We like to think that we can solve any problem and accomplish any task through our own strength, wisdom, and power. Life, however, has a way of proving such notions wrong as we face problems or tasks that we cannot solve on our own. Our truly deep need can either drive us to despair or drive us to God. Thankfully, when we acknowledge our need and come to God desperately seeking His grace, we will find Him ready to help us in our need.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 107:1-3.

Psalm 107 was probably written shortly after the Israelites were allowed to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city and the temple after the Babylonian exile. The Psalm begins with a call to Israel to give thanks to the Lord for the salvation He provided them before citing four unique dire situations from which God redeemed them.

What attribute of the Lord does the psalmist command his readers to give thanks for? How might forgetting this attribute of God keep us from being thankful?

What keeps you from being thankful to God? What are some practical ways we might cultivate thankfulness in our hearts toward God?

Frisco First Baptist Church is giving away 40 days of gratitude journals. We are hoping the practice of expressing daily gratitude will impact our relationship with

Jesus and one another. Please take a journal spend a few minutes every day reflecting on at least one thing you are grateful for, and write it in the journal.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ PSALM 107:4-32.

Look at verses 4-5, 10-11, 17-18, and 23-27. What four situations does the psalmist recount? What do each of these situations have in common?

Why did God allow these people to face such dire situations? Why might God allow us to face similarly difficult circumstances?

Each of the four situations the Psalmist recounts feel hopeless. The people are utterly lost (vv. 4-5), imprisoned (vv. 10-11), deathly ill (vv. 17-18), and surrounded by a deadly storm (vv. 23-27). God allows us to face dire circumstances so that we might come to the end of ourselves and realize that He is our only hope. It is only when we realize that we cannot save ourselves that we turn to the only One Who has the power to truly save.

How did the people's sin contribute to their affliction (v. 11,17)? Why is it sometimes difficult for us to admit that our sinful actions have contributed to the afflictions we face?

Who 'bowed' the people's hearts with labor (v. 12)? Who was the source of the great storm that caused the sailors distress (v. 24)? What was God hoping to accomplish in the hearts of the people?

In both instances, the people were guilty of rebelling against the Lord (v. 11; 17). God showed them kindness by confronting them with earthly consequences for their sins. In so doing, He was moving them to repentance which would have an eternal impact in their lives. While not all the affliction we face is due to our own sin, any time we face affliction, we should pause to consider whether there is sin in our hearts that is keeping us from delighting in God.

How do the people in each of these situations respond (v. 6,13,19, 28)? What does their response tell us about their understanding of their predicament? What does it tell us about their faith in God?

What does these people's desperate cry for mercy tell us about their faith in God? How might crying out to God in desperation show Him honor?

In verses 6, 13, 19, and 28, the people's response to their affliction is the same, they cry out to God for mercy. This demonstrates that they understand their spiritual bankruptcy and their inability to save themselves. We honor God when cry out to Him in desperation because such prayers demonstrate that we believe God can save us and that He is our only hope.

How does God respond to each of the four groups of people who cry out to Him for mercy (vv. 6-7,13-14,19-20,28-29)? What has God delivered you from?

How does the psalmist encourage each of these people to respond to the deliverance God provides (vv. 8-9,15-16,21-22,28-29)? How should we respond to the deliverance God has provided in our lives?

Read Psalm 107:39-43 and Luke 18:39-43. Based on these two passages, what makes the needy (v. 41) more likely to receive God's

grace than princes (v. 40)? What makes the tax collector in Luke 18 better positioned to be justified before God than the Pharisee?

The psalmist ends Psalm 107 with a challenge to “consider the steadfast love of the Lord” (v. 43). How has God demonstrated His steadfast love for us through Christ’s sacrifice on the cross?

The needy, like the tax collector, realize that their only hope of salvation is that God would show them grace. They knew that they had done nothing to deserve God’s favor and they thus admit their need for God and cry out to Him for help. Both the needy in Psalm 107 and the tax collector in Luke 18 give us a picture of what it means to cry out to God for eternal salvation. Following Christ requires that we repent of any notion that we can fix ourselves spiritually and work our way toward God through our own efforts. We must acknowledge our dire circumstances and our desperate spiritual condition and look to Christ who died on the cross for our sins. By looking to the cross, we will be reminded that God’s love is free and endures forever!

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

Would you describe your prayers to God as desperate? What might need to change in order for your prayer life to align with the heart of those who cried out to God for mercy in Psalm 107?

How might we guard against praying pridefully like the Pharisee in Luke 18:11? How might you cultivate a heart of humility before God when you pray this week?

What are some practical steps you might take to be more mindful of God’s steadfast love for you?

PRAYER

Thank God for demonstrating His steadfast love for us through the cross of Jesus Christ. Pray that we would be mindful of our desperate sinful condition before Him and that we would cry out to Him for mercy as we become more aware of the sin in our lives. Pray that God would help us repent from the pride that is keeping us from a deeper relationship with Him and cultivate, in our hearts, a more humble and dependent faith in Him.

COMMENTARY

107:1-2. Steadfast love (Hebrew *chesed*; ‘covenant loyalty’) is a key word in this psalm, reinforcing the Lord’s unconditional love, the basis on which He intervened on behalf of His people. The concept of redemption (Hebrew *goāel*; ‘redeem’) is brought up in verse 2 and relates to blood vengeance exercised by the Lord upon the Enemy. Verse 3 refers to the return of Israel from exile (see Isa. 42:10-13; 43:5-7).

107:4-5. While the wilderness normally implies the wanderings following the exodus, the context suggests the exiles journeyed through the Syrian-Arabic desert. The exiles were unable to assimilate into the culture and lifestyle of their captors, anticipating the Lord's rescue at any time. Hungry and thirsty is a dual reference to physical hunger and thirst as well as the absence of organized worship (see Amos 8:11).

107:6-9. The opening sentence in this section is repeated in verses 13,19,28. God's people continually sought the Lord's intervention from adversity and danger. The psalmist envisioned a homeward procession led by the Lord. Salvation should result in testimony and praise. God's wonderful works on behalf of Israel ultimately benefitted all humanity in Christ (see Gen. 12:3). Verse 9 expresses God's response to the hunger and thirst of the exiles (v. 5).

107:10-16. Those who dwelt in darkness and gloom; prisoners in cruel chains recounts the terrible fate of those who were removed from social interaction with the community. When they repented, He saved them. The Lord rescued those who were restrained with chains and irons (v. 10).

107:17-20. These verses summarize the fate of those who suffered debilitating illness as a result of their disobedience and guilt. Verse 20 demonstrates that the Lord's word healed the diseased and saved those who were close to death (see Isa. 57:18; 65:19-20).

107:23-26. The terminology and rhythm of this section mimic the up-and-down movement of the waves. The Lord exercises sovereign control over the fierce sea (see Matt. 8:26-27). God's powerful Word brings all things to pass (see Isa. 40:6-8; 55:8-11).

107:27. The sailors actions are compared to those of drunken men (see Prov. 23:29-35). The Hebrew term *hagag* (reeled) normally describes celebration and dancing. Their skill was useless could be translated 'their wisdom was confounded.'

107:29-30. The psalmist recounted the Lord's deliverance of the sailors described in verses 23-28.

These verses present us with four different pictures of dire predicaments that the Israelites found themselves in (vv. 4-9, 10-16, 17-22, and 23-32).