

God's Enduring Loyal Love  
(Psalm 107)

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The Psalmist calls the redeemed to thank the Lord for His enduring loyal love. In spite of God's grace, Israel still sinned. In spite of Israel's sin, God still poured out His grace. As a result, God is worthy of our praise.

Introduction

What kind of people do you not like to be around with? For me, I do not like people that complain and grumble, but are not willing to provide a solution. They tend to blame someone else and are not willing to take on personal responsibility. They complain about their professor or teacher; they complain about their supervisor; they complain about their spouse; they complain about their in-laws. Not only do they complain, but they are not willing to listen to your suggestions to resolve the problem.

What kind of people do you want to be around with? For me, I like those that have a grateful heart. They appreciate what they have instead of complaining about what they do not have. They thank you for large things as well as small things that you do for them. They give you the benefit of the doubt and not jump to judge you.

As God has blessed me with children, Ellie and I worked hard to teach them to have a grateful heart since they were babies. I wanted my children to express their thankfulness to others that blessed them. In the same way, God also wants His children to learn to have a grateful heart. This leads us to our passage this morning in Psalm 107. The psalmist is calling the redeemed to give thanks. Before we jump into this passage, I would like to give you some background.

Context- This psalm points to the time of the return from the Babylonian captivity. God has chosen Israel to represent God well. He promised in Deuteronomy 28 that if we obey Him, He will bless us. However, if we disobey Him, God will curse or discipline us. What is interesting is that Moses allocated 14 verses describing how God would bless them if they obeyed the Lord. However, there are 54 verses describing how God would curse them if they disobeyed the Lord. There is a long list of negative consequences that would fall upon the Israelites. There were different levels of disciplines. One of the most serious disciplines is when God would scatter them and they would go into captivity as slaves to another country.

Although God sent prophets to warn his people of their sins and exhort them to turn back to the Lord, they still sinned. Therefore, God had to discipline them. Because of their continuous rebellion, they went into Babylonian captivity. Jeremiah predicted that they would be in captivity for 70 years. That is a long time. It is like serving a 70 years prison sentence. One would be a very different person when they are let out of prison after 70 years.

Here the psalmist speaks to the Israelites as they leave their captivity after 70 years and go back to their homeland. It is a time to look back and to look forward. Have we learned from the past so that we can move forward properly? Definitely, it would be unwise to make the same

mistake over and over again. This reminds me of the verse in Proverb 26:11, “As a dog returns to it vomit, so a fool repeats his folly.”

ILLUSTRATION: When I was in middle school, my parents got us a dog. It was a boxer. He looked really mean, but he was a very gentle dog. I loved my dog, but there is one thing that I could not stand is when he got sick and vomited: he goes back to eat it. That is the grossest thing I have ever seen. If we have had a terrible experience, we would not want to go back to it. However, we tend to go back like my dog. It is critical that we learn from our past and not keep making the same mistakes. The Psalm reminds them of what they had done, what God has done, and how we are to respond.

#### A. Call for the Redeemed to Give Thanks

In verse 1-2, the psalmist is addressing the redeemed of the Lord. Usually, when the word redeemed is used in the O.T. it refers to someone that is in slavery and he has been bought with a price to be set free. The Israelites had been slaves under the Babylonians for 70 years. Now, they were set free to go home.

May we not forget that we have been redeemed from the bondage of sin. Although we have been condemned to eternity, God has bought us with a price. (2 Cor. 5:21), “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (1 Cor. 6:20) “You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” How appreciative are you for what Christ has done for you? You have been redeemed by the blood of Christ. He suffered so that we do not need to suffer.

From the first couple of verses, we see the call for the redeemed to give thanks. Psalm 107 is a song with a refrain that is repeated throughout the psalm in verse 8,15, 21,31. This refrain is to remind the people to give thanks. We need to come before the Lord with a grateful heart.

Too often we tend to complain for all that we do not have instead of giving thanks for all the things that we have. We take what we have for granted and do not appreciate it. Here, the psalmist reminds all of us who are redeemed to give thanks. We should recognize two things from the Lord. 1) His unfailing love 2) His wonderful deeds for men.

As the Israelites were set free, they were to thank God for his unfailing love. This speaks of God’s unmerited kindness. It is frequently associated with forgiveness. It is showing mercy. It is getting something that we do not deserve. It speaks of a binding relationship. It gives the understanding of loyalty and commitment toward another person. We are His children. God is a gracious God, who loves us dearly.

The second thing that we are to give thanks for is his wonderful deeds for men. Do we recognize God working in our lives? Are we paying attention to God? There are so many distractions in life that many times are not aware of what God is doing. May we pay attention to God’s wonderful deeds toward us. We need to be more intentional as we look around to God at work in our lives.

**ILLUSTRATION:** One of my friends owned a Saturn some years ago. He just bragged about it all the time. I said to myself, I hardly ever see a Saturn on the road. However, after talking with him, I started noticing Saturns on the road. Hey, there is a Saturn there. Look, there is another one. Did it just pop up? No, they were there all the time, but we were not paying attention to them. It is like background music. It is there, but we might not hear it. Many times, that is how we view God. He is doing work in our lives, but we are not aware of it. When we are more intentional in looking for God, then we will notice His wonderful work more. Then we will develop a more thankful heart.

We have looked at the call for the redeemed to give thanks. Let us look at the second part of the psalm as to the causes for the redeemed to give thanks. There are two major causes: 1) God's Deliverance and 2) God's Dominion. Let us look at the first cause to give thanks.

From vv.4-32, the psalmist provides four examples of the Lord's deliverance. In each case, the Israelites were in a bind mostly because they put themselves in a bind. In another word, it was self-inflicted. Many of the times, it is because of sin that cause us to suffer. In spite of God's grace, Israel still sins. When we sin, God being a just God will discipline His children because He loves them. The harsh consequences cause them to be aware of their sin and their need for the Lord and they cried to the Lord for help to deliver them (v.6,13,19,28). Time and time again, in spite of Israel's sin, God still poured out His grace. Definitely, they did not deserve to be delivered, but God reached out to them to deliver them. There are four parts to the structure of each of these examples: 1) They are in a dire situation 2) They cry out for help 3) God delivers and saves them 4) They are called to give thanks,

Problems in life are a given. How we respond to it is critical. When we are confronted with a problem, what do we do? It is natural for us to complain or blame someone, then we try to solve it on our own. If that does not work, then we ask someone to help us solve the issue. Our last resort, if everything else failed, we call out to the Lord for help. Instead of trying to resolve it ourselves and get frustrated, let us go before the Lord immediately. He is eager to help us because we have a covenant relationship with God.

## B. Cause for the Redeemed to Give Thanks:

### 1. God's Deliverance

#### a. God has redeemed the Israelites from their wanderings (vv.4-9)

In the first incident, the Israelites were wandering in the wilderness. They were not able to find their way out. They were hungry and thirsty. **APPLICATION:** Have there been times that you feel lost emotionally or spiritually? Life is meaningless. You feel alone as if no one cares or understand your unique situation.

May we remember that God is always there and is available to help us if we only cry out to him. Asking for help and crying out for help are two different things. We cry out when we are in a desperate situation. We feel we do not know what to do. Instead of trying to figure it out by ourselves, let us go immediately to the Lord. God is always there to give us a hand. Sometimes, God has to break us before we turn to the Lord. Time and time again, God comes through. The psalmist exhorts us to give

thanks to the Lord for His deliverance in v.8. Acknowledge God for who He is and what He has done for you. As a matter of fact, tell others of God's goodness to you.

In spite of God's grace, the Israelites fall back to sin of rebellion against the words of God (vv.10-12). As a result, God disciplined them. We somehow get into a cycle of sin, where we sin, God has to discipline us. We cry to the Lord and God delivers us. But somehow we forget and fall back into sin again. It is like the dog going back to his vomit. God disciplined his children this time by putting them in servitude. They came under bondage. [In vv. 12-16, we have the second example of God's deliverance. God has redeemed the Israelites from their servitude. ]

b. God has redeemed the Israelites from their servitude (vv.12-16)

**APPLICATION:** We can be under bondage of greed or bondage of pornography or bondage of people pleasers. Do we need to be set free? We might feel trapped. We know it is not good, but we can't get out of this bad habit. No one could help them. As a result, they cried to the Lord as it is recorded in v.13-14. "Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He bought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains." Notice how quick God answered their cry. God immediately saved them from their distress. God wants to deliver us if we only repent and turn back to the Lord.

Sometimes, God might not deliver us immediately. He is still there. Let us trust in the Lord. He is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. The word crisis in Chinese is made up of two characters. The first character means danger. The second character means opportunities. When we are in a crisis, it is not always bad. It could be an opportunity for God to shine or an opportunity for us to learn an important lesson.

Again, the psalmist calls for the redeemed to give thanks for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men in v.15.

It seems like the Israelites never learn. They fall back into the cycle of sin of rebellion as recorded in v.17. They wanted to do their own thing. That is our selfish pride. We think we can figure out everything without God. We also fall into this same cycle of sin. God being a just God must discipline his children. They suffered affliction. These are self-inflicted crisis. Instead of blaming someone else, let us look in the mirror and see if it is self-inflicted. May we learn from our past mistakes. God has to break them again through discipline. Somehow, they have not learned their lesson. When they are broken, then they cried to the Lord again in v.19. The Lord responds again by saving them from their distress. God healed them and rescued them. God is not only a just God, but he is also a gracious God. His unfailing love is being displayed. His loyal love causes him to deliver us.

c. God has redeemed the Israelites from their sickness (vv.19-22)

In spite of Israel's sin, God still poured out His grace as they cried out to Him. In verse 20, it says that He healed them and rescued them from the grave. God has redeemed the Israelites from their sickness. It does not matter whether we are

wandering in the wilderness or in servitude or in sickness, God can do something about it. Even though we have sinned against the Lord, God has not given up on us.

We see again the refrain to give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men in verse 21. In verse 22, it goes another step. It is not enough to give thanks to the Lord, but also to tell of his works with songs of joy. Don't keep it to yourself. Let others know of what God has done.

d. God has redeemed the Israelites from their stormy voyage (vv.28-32)

In the fourth scenario, the psalmist describes a sailor in stormy voyage. He is in a storm. They became helpless. We all have been in tough storms of life. It is natural for us to try to resolve it ourselves. Sometimes, God places storms in our lives to see how we go about dealing with it. God is able to calm any storm and make the rough waves still. When we are in danger, God can give us safety. Are you in a storm now? May we cry to the Lord who loves us. He will hear us and deliver us.

The refrain occurs again for the fourth time. Let us read vv.31-32, "Let them praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. Let them exalt him publicly before the congregation and before the leaders of the nation."

[ As a summary, God put us into situation where we need to abandon our trust in ourselves and to call out to God for deliverance. Through this trial, we will experience God's love and grace. The second cause of giving thanks is God's dominion. Through a series of four cycles of contrast which describe how God turns plenty into poverty and poverty into plenty, he shows that God humbles us from our self-sufficiency, but He lifts up the needy who call out to Him. ]

2. God's Dominion (vv.33-43): depicts God's power and mercy

a. God's power over nature (vv.33-38)

In vv.33-34, we see the people having plentiful. When things are going well, we tend to forget about God. Instead of thanking God, we take credit for our success. (Deut. 8:17-18) "You may say to yourself, "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me. But remember the Lord your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your for fathers, as it is today." God displayed his power over nature by turning their fertile land into a wasteland.

In vv.35-38, God's power over nature is displayed again by turning a desert into pools of water. He reverses the other way around by turning poverty to plenty. These people recognized their need for the Lord and that God met their needs. May we recognize God's dominion and thank Him. He is sovereign and may we submit to Him. [God not only shows his dominion through his power over nature, but also his authority over the nobles as we see this in the last section of this passage. ]

b. God's authority over the nobles (vv.39-43)

The people had to be humbled again by oppression and sorrow. The nobles and leaders misled the people and they had to be judged. God had to teach them by moving them from plentiful to poverty again. Most of the time, it is caused by self-sufficiency.

The fourth group as recorded in vv.41-42 are those that recognized that they are in need of what God can provide for them. READ vv.41-42, “But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks. The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths.”

In summary of this second section of the cause to give thanks is that God opposes the self-sufficient individuals. They think they are competent and do not need the Lord. God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble. Those who know that they are not that smart and they are insufficient, they call out to the Lord for help. In response, God delivers them and shows His dominion. God gives grace to the humble.

We worship a wonderful God, who pours out grace in spite of our sins. Therefore, we are to give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds. May we learn from our past mistakes and not return to our vomit. As we humble ourselves before the Lord by crying out to Him, God is eager to help us and to deliver us.