

**Praise God for the Wonders of His Love**  
**Psalm 106**

**Main Idea:** This historical Psalm recites a series of events from Israel's history, magnifying God's faithful love toward a sinful people, and teaching us some valuable discipleship lessons.

- I. Disciples worship with their lives, not merely with their lips (106:1-3)**
- II. Disciples care about God's people, not merely themselves (106:4-5)**
- III. Disciples practice repentance, not self-righteousness (106:6-46)**
  - A. Unbelief (7-12)
  - B. Discontentment (13-15)
  - C. Jealousy (16-18)
  - D. Idolatry (19-23)
  - E. Grumbling (24-27)
  - F. Unfaithfulness (28-31)
  - G. Rebellion (32-33)
  - H. Corruption (34-46)
- IV. Disciples glorify God, not themselves (106:47-48)**

In the previous Psalm I tried to do a bit of “blue collar apologetics.” May I continue? Here's a common question: “Why do you believe in the Bible is true?” There are many answers we could give. We can point to *external* evidence, *internal* evidence, and *experiential* evidence. *Externally*, we can talk about matters like archeology and manuscript transmission. *Internally*, we can talk about (1) textual consistency; that is, despite being written by over forty authors, in a period of over 2,000 years, the Bible is remarkably consistent in its message; (2) the vast number of fulfilled prophecies contained in the Scriptures; and (3) the authenticity of the Bible – that is, how the Scriptures really bear the ring of truth and honesty about life and history. *Experientially*, we can talk about (1) how God has changed thousands of lives through the living and abiding Word of God, and (2) how God's Word best explains the experiences of this world – a world filled with suffering, longing for redemption.

I bring this question up because Psalm 106 gives us a supporting point to the matter of authenticity. Psalm 106 contains a catalogue of sins committed by the God's people. If you were going to write your own history, you probably wouldn't do this! If a church wanted to write its history, it wouldn't contain all the moral scandals in its past. Consider yearbooks at high schools. What do they contain? They contain the highlights. You don't read about the kid who got expelled for bringing weed to school. But the Bible doesn't candy-coat history. The Bible is filled with stories and examples of great sin. It's honest. It's authentic. And because it's honest and authentic, it gives us honest and authentic *hope*. Because the good news of the Bible, and Psalm 106, is that God's grace is greater than our sin!

Like Psalm 105, Psalm 106 is a historical Psalm (perhaps written during some kind of exile, see v. 47). The Psalmist recites a series of events from Israel's history, magnifying God's faithfulness and love toward a sinful people. Unlike Psalm 105, Psalm 106 catalogues a list of Israel's wrongdoings. Goldingay says, “In Ps. 105 the repeated theme was, ‘We're in trouble, but Yhwh rescued us.’ Here, the repeated theme is “‘We failed Yhwh, and Yhwh punished us, but then we were rescued.’”

We have much to learn from this Psalm. It stirs us up to praise, but it also warns and instructs us about some basic discipleship themes.

What does this Psalm teach disciples today? Obviously, it teaches us about the wonders of God's love. But what should our response be to his steadfast love? The Psalmist teaches us four critically important lessons. He teaches us that disciples worship with their lives, not merely with their lips (106:1-3); that disciples care about God's people, not merely themselves (106:4-5); that disciples practice repentance, not self-righteousness (106:6-46); and that disciples glorify God, not themselves (106:47-48).

### Disciples worship with their lives, not merely with their lips (106:1-3)

Worshipping with your *lips* does matter! Throughout the Psalms we're called to give verbal expressions of praise (cf., 105:1-2)! However, in verses 1-3, the Psalmist connects lips with *life*.

He opens with a call to praise, "Hallelujah! Give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; His faithful love endures forever." This is call to praise with our lips. And it's a call to praise God in particular for His faithful love. God's faithfulness, grace, and mercy flies like a banner over this Psalm. The Psalmist will talk much about sin, but the great hope of the Psalm is found in the goodness, grace, faithfulness, and love of God. We should never cease giving God verbal praise for these attributes.

In verses 2-3, the Psalmist shows the relationship between words and deeds. In verse 2, he asks the question, "Who can declare the LORD's mighty acts or proclaim all the praise due Him?" Who can worship genuinely? This question gets asked elsewhere, like Psalm 15, where the Psalmist asks, "LORD, who can dwell in Your tent? Who can live on Your holy mountain?" (Ps 15:1). Here's the answer: "He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks truth in his heart..." (Ps 15:2, ESV). A similar question is raised and then answered in Psalm 24:3-4. Likewise in Psalm 106, the Psalmist gives the answer, connecting life with lips with this little beatitude: "How happy are those who uphold justice, who practice righteousness at all times" (106:3). Allen puts it well: "Right living must ever be the preface to worship" (53).

If Israel had practiced justice they wouldn't have went into exile. Jesus, however, obeyed where Israel failed. One of the great attributes of the Messiah, promised in places like Isaiah, is that He will uphold *justice* (Isa 11, 16). The world needs justice. Just watch the news! And when Jesus returns, we will be stunned by His execution of justice. Peace and righteousness will exist perfectly when our Messiah makes all things new. At Jesus' first coming, He gave us a foretaste of that just rule. Now, the Spirit is making us like Jesus. And one of the ways people should see Christ in us, is by the way we demonstrate righteousness and justice in all our actions. Notice how the Psalmist says "at all times" (106:3). The doing of justice (Micah 6:8) includes doing that which honors God in all of life (cf., Job 29:14) – with integrity in your vocation, finances, family, relationships, church membership commitments, social involvements, recreation, and so on.

Jesus connected life with lips when he said that if you're on your way to worship and remember that your brother has something against you, then you should go reconciled with your brother before you go to worship (Matt 5:23-24). Peter connected life with *prayer*. He says to everyone, "be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers" (1 Pet 4:7, ESV, my emphasis). To husbands in particular, Peter says they must show honor to their wives "so that your prayers may not be hindered" (1 Pet 3:7). Our lives matter when it comes to worship and prayer.

Often churches put people on stage because they're gifted musically, even though he or she is not seeking to observe justice and walk in righteousness. Let's not make this mistake if we're in leadership. Understand we aren't talking about moral perfection here. We're talking about pursuit of godliness. Something is wrong when a person can live like a total pagan during the

week, and then arrive on a Sunday morning and sing with great gusto and expression. This is hypocrisy. This doesn't honor God. This will not impact the watching world.

So then, we should prepare ourselves for weekly worship by walking with God during the week. Ligon Duncan (whose exposition of this passage helped me tremendously!) reflected on the privilege he had as a young person in being able to sit under some of the best biblical preaching in the world. Sadly, it didn't impact him greatly. He didn't arrive on Sundays with expectancy, nor a sense of gratitude for the privilege of hearing God's Word. Instead, his mind drifted to other stuff. Why? Duncan said it was because he had been thinking about other stuff *all week*. He wasn't committing criminal offenses during the week. He just simply wasn't thinking about God rightly and deeply. I appreciate his testimony. I can relate to it. Why is that someone gets something out of a worship service and the other person doesn't? One reason is just this, the true worshiper worships all week long, and arrives at corporate worship with expectancy and gratitude and need. The other comes in with their minds on earthly things.

We must see all of life as an opportunity to honor God. In the mundane, ordinary experiences of life, learn to worship. When you do the dishes, do yard work, study, exercise, eat, drink, or spend time with friends and family – do it to the glory of God. In your day-to-day dealings, work honestly, keep your promises, be faithful to your spouse and children, and be mindful of the poor. Verse 3 is teaching us that true worship involves both lips and life.

#### Disciples care about God's people, not merely themselves (106:4-5)

Here's another needed corrective for worship. Many view worship, and the life of faith *individualistically*. This is a real problem for those of us who live in the West. But consider how the Psalmist approaches God:

Remember *me*, LORD,  
when You show favor to *Your people*.  
Come to *me* with Your salvation  
so that *I* may enjoy the prosperity  
of *Your chosen ones*,  
rejoice in the joy of *Your nation*,  
and boast about *Your heritage*. (106:4-5, my emphasis)

Notice how the Psalmist is seeking God's blessings *personally*, but he realizes that he wants to experience these blessings *within the context of the people of God*. He's not an isolated mystic. He recognizes that he's a participant in the ongoing story of the people of God, and He's seeking God's favor personally in view of that corporate reality. In this context, he may be looking ahead to deliverance from exile (cf., Isa 49:8; 60:10; 61:2). If deliverance comes, then there will be renewed blessing, joy, and glory (Ps 106:5).

Many Christians either haven't been taught about the communal nature of the faith, or they are refusing to submit to it. Much of today's teaching is about God's blessing of individuals with health, wealth, and prosperity. It's a deadly combination of false gospel and individualistic consumerism. We need to revive the teaching of "the communion of saints," stated in the Apostles' Creed. This phrase means that the church includes a common union of believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. It includes saints who have already entered heaven (the church triumphant), and the saints who still struggle on earth (the church militant).

Disciples understand that they are part of a larger story of God's people, and that story is going somewhere (Duncan, "Our Story"). In the end of Hebrews 11, we are told that the saints that have gone before us are waiting for the fullness of God's promises until we all *together* enjoy the fulfillment of God's promises (Heb 11:40).

So then, how can we demonstrate a concern for God's people, not merely ourselves? We should first recognize the simple fact that God is "redeeming a people" (Ti 2:14). We should care about all of God's people. We should identify with them, rejoice with them, weep with them, do mission with them, and pray with and for them – both locally and globally. And practically, we should join a local, gospel-preaching, gospel-shaped church. God's plan has never been for a Christian to live his or her life apart from the community of faith.

Sometimes coaches have excellent players on their team, but have horrible teams because the team is filled with ambitious individuals, who simply want to make it to the pros. This dynamic is present in the Christian life as well. Many want to be superstars, but don't want to attend a small group. They want a platform, but don't want to do childcare. They want accolades, but they don't want to care for the widows in their church. They want to be on the ministry circuit, but don't want to go to membership meetings. This version of Christianity is consumeristic, cheap, selfish, immature, and shallow. Reject it. Instead, let's love the people of God. Let's pray for the people of God. Let's serve with the people of God. Let's worship with the people of God. Let's pray for your own needs in light of the people of God.

#### Disciples practice repentance, not self-righteousness (106:6-46)

Now, the Psalmist provides a detailed, historical account of Israel's rebellion and God's relentless grace. Verse 6 provides the purpose for cataloging these sins, and prepares us for the content of the next forty verses. It includes a corporate confession: "Both we and our fathers have sinned; we have done wrong and have acted wickedly" (106:6). The Psalmist identifies with his ancestors' failures, and accepts that they have behaved like them. And so he moves through a list of sins as a means of confession and repentance.

Repentance is a daily discipline for the Christian life. This may sound negative and morbid to some people. But only if one doesn't understand repentance. Here's something you need to know about the Psalmist: He's happier than the person who refuses to repent (Duncan, "Our History"). The Psalmist knows that by acknowledging the sins that he and God's people have committed that God's grace is greater than these sins! He knows that it's the kindness of God that leads us to repentance (Rom 2:4). He knows that repentance leads to joy.

The Psalmist values repentance over self-righteousness. Self-righteous people deny sin, shift the blame on their sin, redefine sin, or only talk about other people's sin. A true disciple acknowledges, confesses, and experiences God's renewing grace, daily. We come into the Christian life by repentance, and we continue walking into close fellowship with God, and grow in the image of Christ, through repentance. Therefore, this Psalm is a tremendous gift to us because it serves as a guide for repenting disciples.

Before moving through this sin inventory, stop and consider the grace of God and the patience of God. Derek Kidner says that "God's extraordinary long-suffering ... emerges as the real theme of the Psalm" (378). We should marvel at God's long-suffering. We should also seek to imitate God's patience and grace toward others. Praise God that He's patient with us! Praise God His mercy extends to us!

Let's seek God's mercy as we consider the Psalmist's recounts Israel's historical failures. We could label these sins with various descriptions. I have chosen eight particular terms but each sin overlaps with other sins and includes other sins.

**Unbelief (106:7-12).** The Psalmist begins with the Exodus event and points out Israel's history of unbelief. By the time the people had gotten to the Red Sea they had already seen God's mighty power and faithful love displayed in Egypt (7a), including the mighty plagues, but then they "rebelled by the sea" (7b). At the first sign of danger, they didn't believe (cf., Ex 14:11-12). They didn't trust God. From the very beginning, they seemed to have an "ingrained unbelief" (Wilcock, 136).

Despite their unbelief, the Psalmist goes on to say that God "saved them for his name's sake" (8a, ESV; cf., Ex 14:18). The Lord did this to make His power known (8b). He saved them through the Red Sea miracle (106:9-11; cf., Ex 14:15-22). What grace!

Following this miracle, the Psalmist says then they "believed" and "sang his praise" (106:12; cf., Ex 15). But this belief and praise proved to be short-lived. It was more emotional than authentic. Williams says, "it is one thing to praise God for his benefits. It is quite another thing to praise God as God" (kindle).

Let's go back to the rebellion in Egypt (v. 7). Notice the relationship between believing *with the mind* and rebelling *with the will* (Kidner, 379). If we don't believe, we rebel. It's that simple. In fact, the sin list that follows include expressions of *unbelief-driven* sin.

If we don't believe God will provide, we will be tempted to steal, cheat, lie, or freak out. If we don't believe that God is more satisfying than any pleasure in this life, then we will be indulge the flesh. If we don't believe that our identity is in Christ, we will try to find our identity in our career, from what people say about us, or somewhere else.

At the root of rebellion, is unbelief. Let's repent of not truly believing God's Word. Pray for grace to help your unbelief. He has raised Jesus from the dead. He has given us new life. You can trust His Word.

**Discontentment (106:13-15).** God provided miraculously and mercifully for His people in the wilderness, but they "soon forgot His works" (106:13a). They "would not wait for His counsel" (13b). Their impatience and discontentment is described as a "wanton craving" (14a, ESV). Their craving led them to "put God to the test" (14b, ESV). So they displayed not only selfish desires, but godless *attitudes*. They made demands, instead of offering humble requests (cf., Ex 15:24; 16:3). The Lord Jesus obeyed where Israel failed in the wilderness. When Satan presented a similar temptation to Jesus, our Lord honored the Father with obedience (cf., Matt 4:1-7).

The result of Israel's discontentment was tragic (106:15). In the book of Numbers, we read that the Lord's anger blazed and that Moses was provoked (Num 11:10). The people gave them so much they became sick, and then on top of this, the Lord struck them with a plague (see Num 11:10-34).

Let's learn from Israel here. Resist discontentment, and the placing of demands on God. Learn to delight in God's will, and to trust in your Father's provision. Remember that you don't find contentment by looking away from God's will, but by walking in it. Jesus said, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work" (Jn 4:34). Let's repent of being discontent with God's actions, and find satisfaction in simply doing His revealed will.

**Jealousy (106:16-18).** Next, the Psalmist highlights the sin of jealousy. Dathan and Abiram shared in Korah's rebellion against Israel's leaders (Num 16:1ff). The Psalmist identifies the cause of this revolt as stemming from "envy" (16a) or "jealousy" (ESV). God brought a dramatic

judgment upon them as a result. The earth opened up and swallowed up the conspirators and fire consumed those who tried to violate the priestly requirements (Num 16:31-35).

Men were jealous of other leaders. Sound familiar? Throughout Scripture envy is underneath many sinful actions (cf., Mk 7:22; Rom 1:29; Gal 5:21). Matthew says that Jesus knew the people delivered him up to be crucified because they were filled with “envy” (27:18). Titus says that one sin that characterized our lives prior to conversion was “envy” (Ti 3:3). Envy leads to problems in the local church (Gal 5:26). It can lead one to murder (text). People can even be motivated in ministry by envy instead of love (cf., Phil 1:12-18; 1 Cor 13:4). Peter tells us what to do with this wicked sin: *put it away* (1 Pet 2:1).

Kill the sin of envy. Accept the providences of God. Learn to rejoice in the success of others. Serve out of love, not jealousy and selfish ambition. Make the glory of Jesus your dominant concern in life, not personal fame.

**Idolatry (106:19-23).** In Exodus 32 and Deuteronomy 9 tell us about Israel’s sin of making a calf and worshipping this man-made, metal image (106:19). Of all places, they worshiped the calf in Horeb (Sinai, Ex 19:20), where they were in the midst of the most stunning encounter with God in the Old Testament (Wilcock, 138). Allen says, “Israel’s career of ingratitude reached an all time low, in the golden calf incident” (54).

In verse 20, you can hear the apostle Paul’s words to the Romans, when you described the nature of idolatry. The Psalmist says, “They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass” (106:20, ESV). They sought to replace God with something else. In Romans 1, Paul says, idolaters “exchanged the truth of about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen” (Rom 1:25, ESV). Idolatry involves making a foolish and deadly trade. Wilcock says, “When people abandon the God of Scripture, it is astonishing what foolish alternatives people choose” (139). Israel’s foolishness is noted here, as the Psalmist adds this phrase about the ox: “that eats grass” (20b). Why worship something that eats grass? How foolish!

The Psalmist connects Israel’s idolatrous exchange to spiritual amnesia. He says, “They forgot God their Savior, who did great things in Egypt” (106:21). God had put His power on display in Egypt (106:22). God had shown His supremacy over the gods of Egypt, and yet, the people made a golden calf to worship.

We make foolish exchanges when we fail to remember the Savior. When the good news doesn’t impact our affections, then we will go chasing other lovers. We will look to other things to give us what only Jesus can give us. So then, let’s daily remember the gospel!

Because of their idolatry, the Lord would have destroyed them, but the Psalmist says, that Moses interceded for the people (106:23; cf., Ex 32:7-14). What grace again!

This description shows us how the gospel works. We need a mediator, and we have one! We have a mediator better than Moses, Jesus Christ, who not only turned away God’s wrath (106:23b), but actually absorbed it on our behalf, so that we could be right with God.

VanGemeren says, “The metaphor ‘stood in the breach’ derives from military language, signifying the bravery of a soldier who stands in the breach of the wall, willing to give his life in warding off the enemy (cf., Ez 22:30)” (677). Jesus stood in the breach for us. He gave His life for idolaters like us, that we may have life. Don’t forget the Savior!

Fight idolatry not by merely resisting idols; fight idolatry by pursuing Jesus with great passion! Don’t just say “no” to idols; say “yes” to the Savior. If your affections are filled with joy in the Savior, then there will be no room for idols!

**Grumbling (106:24-27).** The Scriptures have much to say about the sin of grumbling/complaining/murmuring (cf., Phil 2:14; 1 Cor 10:10). Here in verse 24-27, the Psalmist spotlights Israel's grumbling when they failed to obey God and take the Promised Land.

At Kadesh Barnea, the people rebelled again. They didn't believe the Lord could lead them to the Promised Land (stated here as "the pleasant land," 106:24; see Num 13-14). Twelve spies went to scout out the Promised Land (Num 13:32-14:38). Ten gave a bad report, leading Israel to fear, and failing to take the land. This was "the moment of truth" for Israel, and they failed (Kidner, 380). They refused to believe God's Word. Even though they believed God's promises at the Red Sea (Ps 106:12) momentarily, they regarded them as insufficient in this stage of the journey (Deut 1:32). So, instead of believing and praising God (106:12b), they "grumbled in their tents and did not listen to the Lord's voice" (106:25; cf., Deut 1:27; 1 Cor 10:10). Stubbornly and cowardly, they stayed in their tents grumbling, instead of taking the land.

As a result of their grumbling unbelief, a whole generation would now die in the wilderness, in fulfillment of God's oath (106:26; cf., Num 14:32; Ps 95:8-11). The reference to "scattering their offspring among the nations" (106:27) seems to refer to the fact that similar unbelief led Israel into (present?) exile (cf., Lev 26:33; Ezek 20:23).

**Unfaithfulness (106:28-31).** Continuing this sad commentary, the Psalmist turns to more idolatry and unfaithfulness in Moab (see Num 25). Israel joined itself to "Baal of Peor" (106:28), the Canaanite fertility god. Peor was a mountain in Moab (Num 23:28). In Numbers 25:1, we read that Israel played the harlot with the daughters of Moab. Israelite travelers had reached civilization, and found a structured religion that was more appealing to them. It was more "comforting than the tiresome faith of Yahweh – comforting with the comforts of the whorehouse" (Wilcock, 140). So they reject the faith and embrace a pagan religion.

The Psalmist adds a detail. The people also "ate sacrifices offered to the dead" (28b, ESV). The "dead" could refer to "lifeless gods" but more likely, it refers to Moabite rites connected to the dead (Kidner, 381; Goldingay, 232; cf., Deut 14:1; 18:11; 26:14; Isa 57:1-8). One aspect of Baal's activity included the realm of the dead.

Involvement in Moabite rites once again provoked the Lord to wrath. Israel was spared, however, because of one man intervened: *Phineas* (106:30). The Lord sent a plague but Phineas' actions checked it. Interestingly, Phineas punished one of the idolatrous Israelites, who was seeking to marry a non-Israelite, and turning to Baal with her to make the family fertile. Phineas put the offenders to death with a javelin (Num 25:6-9), making atonement, satisfying the call for judgment (Num 25:13). Though the plague was stopped by his intervention, still a huge number died during this time of unfaithfulness (Num 25:9). Phineas was "counted as righteous" for his zeal for Yahweh down through the ages (106:31).

We must see the uniqueness of Phineas' actions here. He was in a sense, protection the whole future of Israel by executing judgment. We aren't called to throw javelins at people in the church! But we must pursue a life of faithfulness and holiness.

"Counted righteousness" reminds us of Abraham's justification and ours (Gen 15:6; Rom 4:3; 23-25). Kidner remarks, "Happily it is Abram's faith we are to follow, not Phineas's zeal! But this is because the sentence has been executed (on the just, for the unjust), and atonement made, not in token but in full" (381). Because Jesus has made us righteous, we have the power now to pursue practical righteousness.

Those who have been declared righteous through the work of Jesus Christ, have no business participating in pagan religions. Christ is sufficient. Paul makes this argument forcefully in the New Testament, as found in the letters to the Corinthians (cf., 2 Cor 6:14-7:1).

**Rebellion (106:32-33).** Or we could call it “more complaining!” Or “more unbelief!” The Psalmist goes back now to Numbers 20, where God grew angry “at the waters of Meribah” (106:32). In an earlier incident, the people complained about a lack of water and Moses struck the rock and water gushed out (Ex 17:1-7). Now, near the end of the journey, the people quarreled again with Moses about the lack of water. This time, God told Moses to “speak” not “strike” the rock (cf., 1 Cor 10:4). But Moses, in anger, calling the people “you rebels” (Num 20:10), struck the rock twice (Num 20:8-11). As a result, God judged Moses, rejecting his entry into the land (Num 20:12).

Moses treated God’s word and this symbol disrespectfully, with the same type of rebellion as the people. Interestingly, the Psalmist draws attention to the people provoking Moses rather than to Moses’ actions, saying that the people “angered Moses” (32a), “Moses suffered because of them” (32b), and that they “embittered his spirit” (33a). This emphasis doesn’t intend to excuse Moses’ actions. But it does highlight the evil of driving another person to sin.

We should confess not only our rebellion to God, but also confess the times in which we have helped others sin. By our words and actions, what have we done to drive someone else to sin? Our actions always effect other people. Let’s be mindful of this reality. Let’s ask God to help us love our neighbor, not cause our neighbor to stumble (Matt 18:5-6).

**Corruption (106:34-46).** In verses 34-39, we see further corruption associated with the settlement in Canaan. It wasn’t only the wilderness generation that was unfaithful; so were the people who crossed the Jordan River.

Once in the land, Israelite didn’t obey the Lord’s command to drive out the nations (106:34; cf., Num 33:53). Instead, they “mingled with the nations and adopted their ways” (106:35). This corruption involved “idolatry” (36a) insightfully described as “a snare” (36b). This pagan worship included child sacrifices made to demons, and Israel participated in it! (37; cf., Lev 18:21; Deut 32:17; 1 Cor 10:19-21). As a result “innocent blood – the blood of their sons and daughters” was shed, as they “sacrificed to the idols of Canaan” (106:38). The Psalmist summarizes, “They defiled themselves by their actions and prostituted themselves by their deeds” (39).

God’s response to this corruption is stated in verses 40-43:

Therefore the LORD’s anger burned against His people,  
and He abhorred His own inheritance.  
He handed them over to the nations;  
those who hated them ruled them.  
Their enemies oppressed them,  
and they were subdued under their power.  
He rescued them many times,  
but they continued to rebel deliberately  
and were beaten down by their sin. (106:40-43)

The Lord’s wrath was kindled, as He considered them an abomination. God gave them into the hands of the Gentiles (41) and they oppressed the people (42). Many times the Lord delivered the people, yet they continued to rebel (43). This cycle is played out throughout the book of Judges: apostasy, a cry for help, deliverance, and then renewed apostasy.

However, judgment was not the last word, for in verse 44-45, hope arises:

When He heard their cry,  
He took note of their distress,  
remembered His covenant with them,



and relented according to the riches  
of His faithful love (44-45).

Like Israel's cry to God in Egypt (Ex 2:23-24), the Lord heard the people's cry here (106:44). God's sensitivity is tied to His covenantal commitment (106:45), just as it was in Egypt (Ex 3:24). As a result, the Lord moved the hearts of Israel's oppressors: "He caused them to be pitied before all their captors" (106:46). This verse moves ahead the biblical narrative to a later time period, to exile and restoration (2 King 25:27-30; Ezra 1:2-4). Solomon prayed for such clemency (1 Kin 8:50).

What's the point of this whole catalogue of sins? God's mercy overshadows His judgment (Williams, *Kindle*). In the words of verse 1 of this Psalm, "His faithful love endures forever" (106:1). Israel's only hope was found in this fact. And our hope as individuals and as churches is found in the steadfast love of God. Let His love lead you into repentance and into praise. With this, we can now consider the concluding prayer and doxology.

### Disciples glorify God, not themselves (106:47-48)

This Psalm teaches us that God alone deserves glory. Were it not for His mercy, we would have no hope. God grants grace and mercy to rebels, and therefore, He alone should be praised. Corporately the people cry out:

Save us, Yahweh our God,  
and gather us from the nations,  
so that we may give thanks to Your holy name  
and rejoice in Your praise.

May Yahweh, the God of Israel, be praised  
from everlasting to everlasting.  
Let all the people say, "Amen!"  
Hallelujah! (106:47-48).

Once again the Psalmist identifies himself as part of the people of God. He is praying specifically, that they may be delivered from the Gentiles and may return to the land (47a). The result of such salvation will be worship (47b).

Verse 48 provides a fitting end to his Psalm. God's steadfast love is greater than even the people's perversity. As a result, all His people, should praise Him continually! This is a fitting conclusion not only to Psalm 106, but also to book IV of the Psalms (Ps 90-106).

So then, in light of God's steadfast love, let's worship with our lives, not only our lips. Let's stay concerned about the people of God, not merely ourselves. Let's practice repentance. And let's live for the God who saves sinners, through Jesus Christ. Let's live faithfully before Him, until we see Him, and enjoy the New Heavens and New Earth, where this cycle of sin and rebellion will be no more, and where total justice and peace will have no end.

### Reflect and Discuss

1. Have you ever been asked, "Why do you believe the Bible is true?" What are your typical answers? What does Psalm 106 teach us about the nature of Scripture?

2. What does this Psalm teach us about worshiping with our *lips* as well as with our *lives*?
3. What does it mean to “do justice?” What verses would you use to teach someone about a biblical view of justice?
4. How does this Psalm emphasize the communal/corporate nature of the faith? Why is this important?
5. Why should we practice repentance? What does this Psalm teach us about repentance?
6. What does this Psalm teach us about God’s steadfast love?
7. What is idolatry? What are some common idols today?
8. What does Israel’s history teach us about the sin of “grumbling?” Why is grumbling so evil?
9. What does this Psalm teach us about God’s covenant?
10. Take a few moments to reflect and pray through this Psalm. Use it as a guide for repentance and renewal.