

They Cried, He Delivered Psalm 107

Today we begin a brief series on the Psalms.... I'll read the first 9 verses. [read/pray]

So all you need to identify with this passage is at least one problem.

- Do you have a problem? "What's your problem?"

- Notice the reoccurring word "**trouble**" in the text. (v. 6, 13, 19, 28)
- Jesus said we "will have trouble," but to "take heart" for he's "overcome the world"
- This Psalm teaches us something else about trouble: call out to the Lord.

This Psalm inspires us to cry out to the Lord no matter *what kind* of trouble we're in, and no matter *why* we're in trouble!

- It's a powerful Psalm about God's rescuing love.

The reason we can do this is because of "**the steadfast love of the Lord**," one of the richest words in Hebrew: *hesed*.

- We don't have an English word that captures it well enough so it's often translated "steadfast love" or "loyal love" or "faithful love."
- We see that word repeated over and over in this Psalm.

Because of his *hesed*, we can call out to him in trouble...

- Financial Trouble
- Relationship Problems
- Parenting challenges
- Death and Dying
- Sickness
- Stress
- Selling a house in the midst of a global pandemic
- Trouble of Relocating
- Trouble caused by your own sin or foolish decisions
- violence or danger
- Trouble of exams
- Most of all, the trouble of being under the judgment of God; of being unconverted.

This Psalm is filled with hope because we see that we can cast our cares about our God who cares for us, who is merciful to his people and faithful to his promises.

4 Pictures: Desert wanderer, prisoner, sick, and the storm tossed.

- "They cried, he delivered." (6)
- "They cried, he delivered." (13)
- "They cried, he delivered." (19)
- "They cried, he delivered." (28)

This is not the Amazon delivery man, or Uber Eats, this is our God who delivers!

When dealing with **Psalm 22** I said that the Messiah was likely strengthened at the cross as he worked his way through that Psalm, and one of the things he **did was cite God's work in history**. "In you our fathers trusted"

That's wise for us to do in this **midst of a global pandemic**.

- We come back to the rock; the **character of God and the past faithfulness of God**.
- "While the plague was raging ... what a comfort it was to feel that we were in the hands of a loving Father ... whether we were smitten with the epidemic or not ... we knew it would be well with us, that there was no reason to be alarmed. (Francis J. Grimké on Spanish Flu 1918).
- It was true one hundred years ago, and continues to be true today; we don't have to be alarmed because the steadfast love of God never ceases.
- "Your promise is well tried, and your servant loves it" (Ps 119:140)

Structure

Psalm 107 is the first Psalm in Book V of the Psalms (Ps 107-150).

Despite this classical boundary marker in the Psalter, Psalm 107 is tied to **Psalms 105-06**

- These 3 Psalms (105-07) provide **historical reflections on God's work for his people**.
- The **opening line of Psalm 107** even begins with the same call to praise found in **Psalm 106**. (See verse 1)

However, there are some obvious differences in this trilogy.

- Psalm 106 appears to include *a prayer for deliverance from exile*. (586BC)
- Psalm 107 seems to be *a post-exilic thanksgiving*, a hymn of praise to God for answering the prayer of Psalm 106. (see **106:47 and 107:2-3**)

While Psalm 107 is a lengthy historical Psalm, it's easy to follow.

After an initial call **to give thanks in verses 1-3**, the Psalmist gives the reasons to give thanks in verses 4-42 (for his deliverance and for his sovereignty).

- Verses 4-32 contain four pictures of the Lord's deliverance/rescue, or four cycles of "**they cried in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress**." (v. 6, 13, 19, 28)
 - **It's four predicaments and four interventions**.
 - **God – in his hesed – comes to the rescue!**
- verses 33-42 include praise to God for His sovereign work in the world.
- Finally, **in verse 43**, there's an appeal to gain wisdom.

Let this Psalm encourage you to (1) cry out the Lord in your trouble; (2) to give thanks to God for his rescuing love; & (3) to make you wise as you live in a world filled with trouble.

#1: Give Thanks to the LORD (107:1-3)

1: Praise God because "He is good" and His "faithful love endures forever" (107:1).

- God's **goodness** is displayed in manifold ways, both in **creation and redemption**.

- One of the signs of **personal and corporate spiritual renewal is a delight in God's goodness, love, and faithfulness.**
- These exiles were sent away because of their **sin**, but because of the Lord's goodness and faithfulness, they were gathered back home.
- God's kindness leads us to repentance.

2-3: This involves **more than mental assent.**

God's people should **say something** about God's redeeming love.

- God **delivers** and God **gathers** them back into the land.
- The "**foe**" (107:2) here probably refers to Babylon.
- And "**redeemed**" (v. 2) is speaking of being delivered from **exilic slavery.**

Return from exile was like a second exodus.

- **The exodus foreshadows our gospel freedom and salvation.**
- **In Christ Jesus, God has provided ultimate redemption (Col 1:13-14).**
- He has delivered us from our great foes: **sin, Satan, judgment, and death.**
- **We who have been rescued should say something!**
- **We should never tire of speaking about our great God and Savior in praise and in evangelism.**
- **"Redeeming love has been my theme and shall be till I die"**

Sometimes you wonder if what we're doing matters. Sometimes we don't see results; or sometimes we don't like the results we see. But we must speak!

One of my favorite stories of God's surprising grace is about a man named **Luke Short.**

- He was converted at **the tender age of 103.**
- Short was sitting under a hedge in Virginia when he happened to remember a sermon he had once heard preached by the famous Puritan John Flavel.
- As he recalled the sermon, Short asked God to forgive his sins right then and there, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- He lived for three more years, and when he died, the following words were inscribed on his tombstone: **"Here lies a babe in grace, aged three years, who died according to nature, aged 106."**
- The sermon that old Mr. Short remembered had been preached **eighty-five years earlier,** back in England!

A silent Christian is a strange creature.

- **The redeemed sing, share, discuss, pray, and declare the glories of the Redeemer.**

3: Previously in Psalm 106:47, the exiled people prayed for God to gather them back into the land. In **107:3,** we read of that very act.

- God gathered His people from various directions, **from all over the Mediterranean.**
- This is a bit of **foretaste** of the day in which the Lord gathers people from every tribe and tongue (cf. **Matt 8:11; Rev 7:9).**
- **All the redeemed on that day will most certainly say so!**

#2: Give Thanks to the LORD for His Deliverance (107:4-32)

Four Pictures of God's rescue.

It's interesting that experience one and four involve traveling (v. 4, v. 23); and experiences two and three involve the consequences of rebellion (v. 10-11; v. 17)

A. The LORD Delivers Wanderers (4-9)

4: Like those who wandered in the Exodus, so now Israel needed the Lord to deliver them from their recent "desolate wandering" (107:4a).

That wilderness is awful! I would have complained too!

4b: They were homeless, having no "city where they could live."

5a: As desperate wanderers, they were also "hungry and thirsty."

5b: Consequently, their "spirits failed within them."

This group of exiles were in **great need both physically and spiritually.**

- The great problem of wandering is wandering away spiritually..
 - **Your heart wanders off into other interests.**
 - **Wander away **theologically**, or wander away from **community**?**
 - **James -- bring them back!**
- **The good news is that the Lord brings the wanderers home.**
- How so?

6: "Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble; He rescued them from their distress" (107:6).

- In their time of distress, Israel knew where to look.
- They called upon the Lord, and He rescued them.
- He snatched them out of the grip of bondage and drew them to Himself.

The classic hymn "Come Thou Fount" expresses this cry for God to bring home our wandering hearts, "**Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, Prone to leave the God I love; Here's my heart, O take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts above**"

Be encouraged, dear wanderer, the Lord settles, secures, and satisfies those who cry to Him for restoring grace.

7: He replaces wandering with a right path/straight way, and their homelessness, with a city in which to live (cf. Isa 62:12).

Some of you may not be wandering spiritually, but you are looking for guidance in the midst of this pandemic. Let this Psalm instruct you, and cry out for his guidance.

8: What's the proper response to such transformation?

- The redeemed should "give thanks to the LORD for His faithful love and His wonderful works for all humanity" (107:8).
- Our reaction to the Lord's intervening grace should be heartfelt thanks to Him.

9: The Psalmist then adds a supporting word to incite gratitude, “For He has satisfied the longing soul, and the hungry soul he fills with good things.”

- **My sister:** “Will you bring me some ice cream?... I would bring a tiny drop.
- **This is two giant scoops of moose tracks grace!**
- **Previously they were hungry and thirsty, and their soul was fainting, but now they are full, and flourishing.**
- **The Lord met every need.**

Our Redeemer continues to be the One who makes our paths straight (cf. Prov 3:5-6), provides food, shelter, and water (cf. Ps 104), retrieves wanderers (cf. Lk 15:11ff; Jam 5:19-20), and renews our passion for living (cf. Ps 103:5; Isa 58:10-11; Jer 31:25).

He will bring us to a new Jerusalem, a new creation.

B. The LORD Delivers Prisoners (10-16)

The next condition involves imprisonment.

10a: The exiles sat in “darkness and the shadow of death”

10b: They endured “cruel chains”

11: Why the hardship?

- **It resulted from their rebellion “against God’s commands,” and refusal to submit to the Most High’s “counsel” (107:11).**
- **Sin has consequences.**
 - **Overly dramatic kid this week said, “I would rather be eaten by a dragon than to live this life” — what makes it so bad? “The consequences!”**
- **Israel had rejected God’s authority, and because of their sin, they suffered judgment.**
- **Sin promises you freedom — but it only leads to slavery.**
 - **Sins ability to interest and satisfy quickly runs out, and so the enslaved person goes to more bondage: from Meth to cocaine; from pornography to something beyond pictures; the liar can’t get to the end of his lies.**

12a: The Lord broke Israel’s stubborn hearts by making them endure hard labor.

12b: This labor caused them to “stumble,” but they had “no one to help” (12b).

13a: But then, they realized the folly of their ways, so they “cried out to the LORD” and He “delivered them”

- **What grace! Despite the fact that they rebelled against the Lord, He heard their cry, and reversed their lot.**

14: God “brought them out” (Exodus) of “darkness and gloom,” and broke their chains apart.”

Chuck Colson was special counsel to president Nixon, known as his “hatchet man.”

- **He said that he “would run over his grandmother if the president wanted him too!”**
- **That reflected something of his personality.**
- **The Nixon administration was collapsing because of the Watergate scandal in 1974.**
- **Colson’s life was falling apart too.**
- **He was part of the corruption that was engulfing that administration.**

- He pleaded guilty to obstruction of justice and spent 7 months in prison in 1974.
- Before he went to prison, he went to visit a friend named Tom Phillips.
- Phillips had become a Christian.
- Colson didn't tell Mr. Phillips what was going on in his life.
- And the news hadn't hit the papers that he was about to go to prison.
- But when they met Phillips read a chapter of C.S. Lewis' *Mere Christianity* – about the “great sin: pride.”
- Phillips asked Colson, “Do you want me to pray with you?”
- Colson said, “no.”
- But when Colson went back to his car, he broken down into tears, and he cried out in desperation for God to save him.
- And he was converted.
- He came to know Jesus Christ.
- He is now with the Lord, and the Lord used him in remarkable ways. (Schreiner)

When he hit bottom, he cried out to the Lord, and the Lord rescued him.

That's what this Psalm is about.

- **Exile** was “the bottom” for the Israelite.

15: In light of His redemption, the people are called to “give thanks to the LORD for His faithful love and His wonderful works for all humanity” (107:15).

16: A supporting verse is then provided: “For He shatters the doors of bronze and cuts in two the bars of iron.” These are powerful images of the Lord's deliverance.

Throughout Scripture, we see God delivering people from both physical and spiritual imprisonment (e.g., **Acts 12:1-17; 17:25ff; Mk 5:1-20**).

- All who are in Christ **Jesus know the chain-breaking power of the risen Christ.**
- **Sin enslaves; Christ liberates!**
- He has liberated us from **prison, and brought us into the light (Lk 4:18-19).**
- The words of Charles Wesley's hymn come to mind: “Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin and nature's night; thine eye diffused a quickening ray; I woke, the dungeon flamed with light; my chains fell off, my heart was free; I rose, went forth, and followed thee.”
- “He breaks the power of canceled sin, he sets the prisoner free, his blood can make the foulest clean, his blood availed for me.”
- **Ben Palka – drug house to the Bible study house to church planter!**
- **Breaking chains is God's speciality.**

C. The LORD Delivers the Sick (17-22)

17: Because these rebellious people were “**fools**,” they also “suffered **affliction**” as a form of judgment (107:17).

- Here, we find a **direct relationship between sin and sickness.**
- Sickness doesn't always come directly from **sinful choices** (sometimes it does), but it is always tied to living in a sinful *world*.

18: Their sickness involved a sickness unto to death in which **food was no longer appetizing, and they drew near the gates of death.**

19: More grace. The exiles “cried out to the LORD in their trouble,” and He delivered them from their distress (107:19).

20: How was this healing accomplished? “He sent His word and healed them...”

- God’s Word to them contained the promise of restoration and comfort (cf. Isa 55:11).

Notice how God’s Word is life-giving and restorative.

- **By the power of the Word and the Spirit, grieving sinners are restored today.**
- **God’s word is a healing balm.**
- **“My soul melts away for sorrow; strengthen me according to your word” (Ps 119:28)**
- **“If your word had not been my delight; I would have perished in my affliction” (v. 92)**

21: What should our response to the healing power of God be? “give thanks...”

22: A further description of thanksgiving is provided this time: “Let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and announce His works with shouts of joy”

- The people are called not to merely voice thanksgiving, but to demonstrate it with “thank offerings,” a communal offering involving great songs of joy.

How much more should we who have received a new heart and the promise of eternal healing give thanks to God?

- Jesus Christ has made the final sacrifice, and now we should offer Him unending praise with our lips and our lives (cf. Rom 12:1; Heb 13:15).
- He can heal us from temporal sickness (cf. Lk 7:22; 17:11-19; Jam 5:13ff), and He promises to take us to a place with no sickness (cf. Rev 21:4).

D. The LORD Delivers the Storm-Tossed (23-32)

The Psalmist now turns to the sea.

- This particular crisis speaks not so much of human *guilt* but human *littleness* (Kidner, 387).
- The historical context here is a bit of a mystery, and may simply be a poetic construction to describe the need for deliverance in general.
- Or it could be speaking of exile in particular, likening exile to being storm-tossed (cf. Isa 54:11).

23-24: The Psalmist describes the scene. Merchants go down to the ships to do business on the great waters (107:23).

25-27: The Psalmist describes **the power of the Lord over the seas.**

He says first that the Lord has the power *to cause the storm* [read]

- The LORD commands and raises the storm, not “Mother nature” or some other “god over the waters”
- Recall the words of Jonah, “Then the LORD hurled a violent wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose on the sea that the ship threatened to break apart” (Jon 1:4).

26-27: The Psalmist paints the picture of the sailors' terrifying experience.

- They "rise up to the sky" and "sink down to the depths" (26).
- As a result, they become unstable and hopeless (27).
- Such an occasion would tempt any of us to "cuss like a sailor!"

28: But then we read of the grace of God in hearing their desperate prayer, "Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distress" (28).

- Sailors cried. The Lord delivered.

The Lord may bring us to our wit's end so that we may turn to Him.

- Such crises are means of grace to us.
- We never know what the Lord may be doing in our trials.

29: Like scenes in Jonah and the Gospels (cf. **Jon 1:15; Mark 4**), the Sovereign Lord displays His power now *to calm the storm*.

- **Mark 4. They don't "high five Jesus!" They don't give him a nice hug. They don't say, "Sweet, Rabbi be kilin it!" They stand in awe of him.**
- **If you've never been in awe of Jesus, then you don't know him.**

30: The waters grow "quiet," and the Lord safely guides the sailors to their "desired haven."

"It Is Well with My Soul" by Horatio Spafford.

- Spafford had known peaceful and happy days as a successful attorney in Chicago.
- He was the father of four daughters, an active member of his Church, and a loyal friend and supporter of D. L. Moody.
- Then, a series of calamities began, starting with the great Chicago fire of 1871 which wiped out the family's extensive real estate investments.
- When Mr. Moody and his music associate, Ira Sankey, left for Great Britain for an evangelistic campaign, Spafford decided to lift the spirits of his family by taking them on a vacation to Europe. He also planned to assist in the Moody-Sankey meetings there.
- In November, 1873, Spafford was detained by urgent business, but he sent his wife and four daughters as scheduled on the ship, planning to join them soon.
- Halfway across the Atlantic, the ship was struck by an English vessel and sank in 12 minutes. All four of the Spafford daughters were among the 226 who drowned. Mrs. Spafford was among the few who were miraculously saved.
- Horatio Spafford stood hour after hour on the deck of the ship carrying him to rejoin his sorrowing wife in Cardiff, Wales.
- When the ship passed the approximate place where his precious daughters had drowned, Spafford received sustaining comfort from God that enabled him to write (Osbeck)

When peace like a river, attendeth my way,

When sorrows like sea billows roll

Whatever my lot, thou hast taught me to say

It is well, it is well, with my soul

God is able to give us peace which "transcends all human understanding."

31: The once fearful, but **now happy and peaceful**, sailors are called on to join the thanksgiving party.

32: An additional note is then provided in verse 32.

- **The sailors are called to give thanks to the Lord in communal worship and in places of leadership:**
- **They are called to tell their story of how the Lord delivered them to not only honor God, but also to encourage others.**

Summary of 4-32

1. Call to the Lord no matter what kind of trouble you are in.

- **Don't think it's too small!**
- **Don't think he won't listen!**
- **“Cast all your cares on him for he cares for you”**

2. Call to the Lord no matter why you're in trouble.

- **You may have no idea,**
- **You have made a bad mistakes,**
- **You may be in trouble because someone harmed you.**
- **You may be in trouble because of a pandemic.**

3. Remember to give thanks.

- **The psalmist is concerned that people forget to give thanks for his steadfast love.**
- **He says, “you were in exile, but now you are not, give thanks!”**
- **We have a better salvation for which to give thanks!**

#3: Give Thanks to the LORD for His Sovereign Acts (107:33-42)

A. The Sovereign LORD Judges (33-34)

- **Because of the people's “wickedness” (34), the Lord turns “rivers into desert” (33) and fruitful lands into wastelands (34).**
- **We see here that the Sovereign Lord may use **the ruining of the land as a sign of judgment** (cf. 1 Kin 17:1).**

B. The Sovereign LORD Restores (35-38)

- **The scene is now reversed.**

C. The Sovereign LORD Judges Princes and Exalts the Poor (39-42)

39-42: God is able to lift up the poor and the oppressed, and He will bring judgment to the wicked [read]

Application: Don't ever forget that God is the God of great reversals!

- **He can change things in a moment!**

Paul tells the Corinthians of the ultimate gospel reversal, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ: Though He was rich, for your sake He became poor, so that by His poverty

you might become rich” (2 Cor 8:9).

- **Because of the cross work of Jesus Christ, which looks foolish to some, we have found infinite spiritual riches.**
- **While we may experience hardship now, we know that the ultimate reversal is coming in the next life.**

An Appeal to Gain Wisdom (107:43)

- **By meditating on the ways in which God works, one gains and grows in wisdom.**
- **The wise person knows that God judges sin and restores the repentant.**
- **The wise person knows that God delivers helpless people who cry out to Him.**
- **The wise person knows that the Lord has the power to break the prison doors and calm the raging waters.**
- **The wise person knows that the Lord can reverse one’s fortunes.**
- **The wise person knows that the wicked will not ultimately prosper.**
- **The wise person knows to walk humbly with God and trust in His grace.**

Where should we look today for wisdom? We look to Christ.

- **Ultimately, wisdom is found in knowing a Person.**
- **So let us draw near to the Savior and give thanks to Him, for His faithful love endures forever.**
- **His faithful love is in high definition at the cross, as he took our punishment.**
- **There is more mercy in Christ than sin in us.**
- **And he is gathering a people for himself from the four corners – let the redeemed of the Lord give him praise.**

- **And one day the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover seas; it won’t be filled with a virus, but with victory.**

- **And that’s our hope today; not merely to have things restored to normal, but for Christ to come again restore all things; not for the country to reopen, but the heavens to open and for our King to come.**

- **He will.**
- **We cry, “Maranatha,” and He will deliver us from our distress.**