

Let the Redeemed of the Lord Say So

Psalm 107

Thesis: We are people who let the Word of God help us to develop honesty and sincerity in our praying and interceding, so that we become whole, truly human in Jesus Christ, who also prayed the Psalms and connected with God through the Scriptures.

Text: Psalm 107:1-43

Let me begin by setting the stage for what God is doing in our lives.

God wants to shape our lives into the image of his Son, Jesus (Romans 8:28-29). If God is going to shape our lives into the image of his Son, Jesus, then he intends for us to follow the same practices which Jesus did.

Early believers were called followers of **The Way** (Acts 9:1-2; 19:9, 23; 22:4 ESV). **The Way** that they were talking about was “The Way of Life,” or the practices of life, of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The early disciples looked like Jesus, talked like Jesus, and did the works of God just like Jesus did (Acts 4:13). How was this possible? The disciples heard about and saw the spiritual practices of the Lord Jesus in his relationship with his Father. The disciples then engaged in the same spiritual practices as Jesus, so that they could do what the Father was doing and could say what the Father was saying, just like Jesus modeled for them. As followers of Jesus, **the early disciples watched what Jesus did and listened to what Jesus said, just like Jesus modeled for them in his relationship with his Father.**

As followers of Jesus, we recognize that Jesus engaged in a way of life or practices of life that are necessary for growing in his relationship with the Father. So, we too, want to grow in our relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by practicing spiritual disciplines relationally, intimately, intensely, and regularly. We need a **rhythm of spiritual practices** to help us in this journey of joy: practices that are daily, weekly, and occasional. And, our spiritual practices include individual and corporate activities.

In a number of different sermons, I have talked about spiritual practices: [The Joy of the Disciplines](#) (a four-part series) and [Fueling Your Passion for the Lord](#).

Now, let's talk about the spiritual practice of prayer. Specifically, we want to learn how to use the Scriptures as our prayer book.

Through two spiritual practices-- (1) devotional Scripture reading and (2) praying the Scriptures back to the Lord-- we can grow in our capacity to hear The Voice of God and to talk with God. Scripture helps give vocabulary for and expression to our prayers.

Remember, too, that prayer is both listening to God and talking to God. We listen to God who speaks to us in a myriad of ways. **God speaks to us most clearly through his Son, Jesus. God speaks to us most frequently through his word, the Holy Scriptures.** And, the God who speaks and the Lord who is the Word of God also speak to us through a number of different ways: through creation, conscience, revelation (like dreams, visions, words of knowledge, words of wisdom, prophecy), and other ways. (See [Fourteen Ways God Speaks to Us](#) by Pastor Steve Meeks.)

Let's drill down another level. Praying the Psalms is one way to help us learn how to pray.

"Most Christians for most of the Christian centuries have learned to pray by praying the Psalms. The Hebrews, with several centuries of a head start on us in matters of prayer and worship, provided us with this prayer book that gives us a language adequate for responding to the God who speaks to us." (Eugene H. Peterson, *The Message: The Bible in Contemporary Language* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 2005), *Introduction: Psalms*.)

According to another scholar, "The Psalms show us four ways to speak to God: in words of praise [worship], thanksgiving, trust, and supplication." (John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone* (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press; Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2013).)

Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 107.

Through the years, this Psalm has helped me express my worship, thanksgiving, trust, and petition to the Lord on behalf of my life and others. The Lord helps give me vocabulary and helps me stand in the gap for my life, my family, my community, and others through this Psalm.

Let's consider an overview of Psalm 107.

1. **The context of Psalm 107, according to verses 2-3, is the return of the people of Judah from exile.**
 - a. Judah went into Babylonian exile about 596 BC.
 - b. Later, Persia defeated the Babylonian empire.

- c. Then, the people were free to return to Judah after about 70 years of exile in foreign lands.
2. **The initial call to worship or praise is followed by a report of deliverance (Psalm 107:4-32).**
3. **The sections in Psalm 107:4-32 celebrate their restoration from four types of experience.**
 - a. For some people the experience meant being lost, hungry, and thirsty.
 - b. For some it meant captivity and darkness.
 - c. For some it meant sickness or injury and the likelihood that they would die.
 - d. For some it meant a hazardous journey across the ocean to start a new life on some other Mediterranean shore.
 - e. (John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone, Part 2: Psalms 73–150, Old Testament for Everyone* (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press; Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2014), 115–116.)
4. **In the extended report from Psalm 107:4-32, four metaphors are developed to describe the experience of deliverance from exile.**
 - a. **Viewing the same event through four different lenses is a process of meditation that leads the worshipers to appreciation and praise for the Lord.**
 - b. **The four views all follow the same pattern:**
 - i. Israel experienced adversity,
 - ii. they cried out to the Lord for his help,
 - iii. the Lord responded by rescuing them from their distress,
 - iv. and the people were called to thanksgiving for his faithful love.
 - c. **Embedded in the four sections are two recurrent refrains:**
 - i. **the cry of the people to the Lord and his response in rescuing them (vv. 6, 13, 19, and 28),**
 - ii. **and the call to the people to give thanks to the Lord (vv. 8, 15, 21, and 31).**
 - iii. The praise section in vv. 33–42 celebrates what the reports of deliverance teach about the Lord.
 - iv. The psalm concludes with a final wisdom teaching in v. 43.
 - d. (Daniel J. Estes, *Psalms 73–150, ed. E. Ray. Clendenen, vol. 13, New American Commentary* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 311.)
5. **The praise section in Psalm 107:33-42 celebrates what the reports of rescue and deliverance teach us about the Lord.**
6. **In verse 43, the Psalmist asks: Who is wise?**
 - a. The Psalmist invites us to be wise by paying attention to the way the Lord works in dealing with the impact of our own waywardness (our own sin or brokenness), with the impact of the sin of others against us,

- with the impact of a broken world on our lives, and with the impact of spiritual adversaries or enemies against us.
- b. The Lord comes through for us with the power of his faithful love just like he has in the lives of others, whether we deserve it or not.
 - c. Paying attention to the faithful love of the Lord throughout history shows us how to live wisely before him and dependently upon him.
 - d. **Wise people learn how to live according to the ways of the Lord, how to respond healthily to the correction or discipling (discipline) of the Lord, and how to trust his faithful, restoring love and presence in their lives.**
 - e. **As followers of Jesus, we testify how God is at work in our lives and circumstances with his saving and sustaining mercies when we experience hunger and thirst, darkness and gloom, sin and affliction, storm and trouble.**
 - f. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

Psalm 107 NIV

1 Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say this— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, 3 those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.

4 Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle.

5 They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away.

6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.

7 He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle.

8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, 9 for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

Psalm 107 ESV

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever! 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so....

Lost, hungry, and thirsty.

10 Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, 11 for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High.

12 So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help.

13 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.

14 He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains.

15 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, 16 for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.

17 Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.

18 They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death.

19 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress.

20 He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave.

21 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.

22 Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.

23 Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters.

24 They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep.

25 For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves.

Darkness, gloom, and bondage.

Allowing us to reap what we sow when we reject the leadership, wisdom, and ways of the Lord.

The discipline of the Lord resulted in correction rather than destruction.

Affliction, sickness, waywardness, or sinfulness.

Storm, trouble, and waves culminate in loss of control and the end of our resources and skills.

26 They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away.

27 They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits' end.

28 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress.

29 He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed.

30 They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven.

31 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.

32 Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.

33 He turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground, 34 and fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there.

35 He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs; 36 there he brought the hungry to live, and they founded a city where they could settle.

37 They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest; 38 he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased, and he did not let their herds diminish.

39 Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled by oppression, calamity and sorrow; 40 he who pours contempt on nobles made them wander in a trackless waste.

Celebrate what the reports of rescue and deliverance teach us about the Lord.

The Lord rules over nature, nations, and nobles.

<p><i>41 But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks.</i></p> <p><i>42 The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths.</i></p> <p><i>43 Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the LORD (Psalm 107:1-43 NIV).</i></p>	<p>Who is wise? Those who meditate upon these realities and upon the faithful love of God.</p>
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Remember the pattern in Psalm 107.

1. Recognize that in this life, you and others around you will experience adversity or trouble.
2. May you cry out to the Lord for his help when you or others face challenges, tests, adversity, or trouble.
3. Trust that our God responds to our distress with his help, strength, comfort, or rescue.
 - a. God himself is what we need.
4. Give thanks for God's faithful love.
 - a. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

Resources on Psalm 107:

Daniel J. Estes: New American Commentary

Form, Structure, and Setting

Although Psalm 107 is similar in some ways to Psalms 105 and 106, it is not really a historical psalm as they are. Rather than tracing the pattern of Israel's national history, **Psalm 107 focuses on one event, the restoration from exile (vv. 2–3)**. In its form, it is a communal song of thanksgiving, or declarative praise psalm, as indicated especially by the refrain calling for thanksgiving in vv. 1, 8, 15, 21, and 31. The final verse places Psalm 107 in a wisdom context (cf. Ps 111:10), as the wise person pays attention to and considers the acts of the Lord's faithful love.

The initial call to praise in vv. 1–3 is followed by a long report of deliverance in vv. 4–32. In the extended report, four metaphors are developed to describe the experience of deliverance from exile. Viewing the same event through four different lenses is a process of meditation that leads the worshipers to appreciation and praise for the Lord. **The four views all follow the same pattern: Israel experienced adversity, they cried out to the Lord for his help, the Lord responded by rescuing them from their distress, and the people were called to thanksgiving for his faithful love.** Embedded in the four sections are two recurrent refrains, the cry of the people to the Lord and his response in rescuing them (vv. 6, 13, 19, and 28), and the call to the people to give thanks to the Lord (vv. 8, 15, 21, and 31). The praise section in vv. 33–42 celebrates what the reports of deliverance teach about the Lord. The psalm concludes with a final wisdom teaching in v. 43.

The language in vv. 2–3 indicates that the setting for Psalm 107 is thanksgiving after the return from exile. This psalm may well have accompanied a public thank offering, as is intimated in vv. 22, 32. (Daniel J. Estes, Psalms 73–150, ed. E. Ray Clendenen, vol. 13, New American Commentary (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2019), 311.)

John Goldingay: Psalms for Everyone

It was on the basis of the opening of this psalm that they were called "Say so" times. In the King James Version, verse 2 of Psalm 107 reads, "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so." While the psalm wants to get Israel as a community to testify to what God has done for it, otherwise its presupposition is the same as the one Raymond Castro used. **The opening three lines suggest that the testimony urged by the psalm relates to the return of people from exile and what this event meant to them. The following sections celebrate their restoration from four types of experience**

rather than from four places. For some people the experience meant being lost, hungry, and thirsty. For some it meant captivity and darkness. For some it meant sickness or injury and the likelihood that they would die. For some it meant a hazardous journey across the ocean to start a new life on some other Mediterranean shore.

There were aspects of this experience that the people all had in common. First, they couldn't complain; it was their own fault, the result of the kind of waywardness that is described in 1 and 2 Kings and in the Prophets. But second, they cried out to Yahweh in the midst of their trouble. Third, Yahweh responded and delivered them from whatever was their experience of trouble—typically, Yahweh was not held back by their sinfulness from rescuing them. In each case, the rescue deals with the particular trouble they were in—Yahweh enables them to find the way to where there is food to eat, or breaks open the prison doors, or heals them and pulls them back from the gates of death, or stills the waves that threaten their sea crossing. All these people, then, have been redeemed or restored by Yahweh, and they ought to say so—because that testimony honors Yahweh, builds up the people themselves, and encourages other people.

The last major section of the psalm implies a stress on that last consideration. The fact that people were free to return to Judah as decades went by did not solve their problems in the way you might have expected. You can read the story in the books of Prophets such as Haggai and Zechariah and in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. It's therefore important that people draw the right conclusions from the psalm's four vignettes. Those acts whereby Yahweh rescued people were not one-time-only events, because getting into trouble isn't a one-time event. They showed the kind of God Yahweh is and the way Yahweh characteristically acts. But decrease, oppression, trouble, and sorrow have reasserted themselves in the people's experience. And therefore they need to listen to the testimony that a previous generation could give. The redeemed of the Lord are to say so for the sake of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

So people of insight will meditate on their story in order to have possibilities opened up in their imaginations and in order to pray the way their grandparents did. (John Goldingay, *Psalms for Everyone, Part 2: Psalms 73–150, Old Testament for Everyone* (Louisville, KY; London: Westminster John Knox Press; Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 2014), 115–116.)