

“Let The Redeemed Give Thanks” Delivered 11-22-20 Romans 8:18-39;  
Philippians 4:4-9; Psalm 107:1-31 (sermonette)

Our psalmist opens up with powerful words in Psalm 107

You can almost hear him shouting

“Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever!!”

As psalm 107 was most likely a community hymn of praise, and thank offering given in the temple in Jerusalem.

“...for his steadfast love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so”

Have you been redeemed by the Lord this morning?

“Redeemed” - what a word! Redeemed “atone or make amends for, or to regain possession.

Redeemed – the act of making something or someone better or acceptable.

Indeed, those who are in Christ have been redeemed, bought with a price.

Those who can point to the Lord and say because of God I live, I breath, I move, I have my being.

I am redeemed because Jesus bought my redemption as the old hymn says “with His own precious blood”.

“The Redeemed” the Psalmist calls the group by what they are.

They are changed by the grace and mercy of God.

By saying “the Redeemed”, our psalmist implies that there is enough of a memory of what life was like prior to God’s redemptive or saving act that there is no excuse to not praise God on the other side of having met God.

And just in case there was any doubt that life is different on this side of God’s mercy and presence, our Psalmist takes pains to paint four groups of people.

4 groups of people, though very different, they all share something incredible in common.

Each of the four groups have a moment where they can see the hand of God moving in their circumstances.

In verses 4-9 he tells of a group of wanderers who have lost their way in the desert. He describes the wanderers as “Hungry, thirsty, and their lives ebbing away. Aimless. Wasting away. Distressed. Without a settlement.

And then God enters in...

And they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, and vs 6 says he delivers them from their distress.

Those who were wandering, He leads by a straight way to a city where they could settle.

He satisfied their thirst and he filled their hunger.

To this group of delivered wanderers, who had met God, he says “Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for mankind.”

To the second group in verses 10-16 we meet are prisoners. The moment we are introduced to them they are in darkness, the psalmist they are chained in this utter darkness, because they had rebelled against God.

And we know that when we call to God He answers, He hears, and He makes a way out of no way.

But sometimes, God finds it beneficial to us to experience the consequences of our actions of rebellion.

And the Psalmist says of these prisoners, that God subjected them to bitter labor, and they cried to the Lord and God saves them from their distress.

God brings them out of darkness and he breaks their chains and leads them to the light.

To the one time prisoner, the scripture says “Give thanks to the Lord for His unfailing love and wonderful deeds for mankind”.

Our third group who meets The Great Deliver is described in verse 17-22 those who suffered affliction because of their iniquities. Those who are described in one translation as the “foolish ones”.

And then God sends out His word and he heals them and rescues them from the grave (v 20)

To them the psalm says “let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and His wonderful deeds for mankind”

And finally, we meet a fourth group.

A group of sailors who find themselves shipwrecked.

It is God Himself who speaks and stirs up a tempest that lifts high the waves.

They are described as being afraid with every ounce of courage leaving them.

And in a dramatic scene the psalmist describes the sailors reeling and staggering like they are drunk.

And in a in a scene that calls to mind the image of Jesus calming the stormy seas in the new Testament, God stills the storm to a dramatic whisper.

God then guides them to the desired haven.

To that group, the scriptures cry out again “Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind.

Each of these 4 groups all have a few things in common that the Psalmist speaks to us today.

Each group (the wanderer, the prisoners, the foolish, the shipwrecked) all have four things in common:

1. The people recognized they were in distress or trouble.
  - a. The wanderers recognized they had gone off course and were paying dearly for the consequences of veering off.
  - b. The prisoners in utter darkness, after veering off from God’s stated plan for them.
  - c. The rebellious fools recognized they were drawing near the “gates of death”
  - d. The shipwrecked sailors, tossed about at sea recognized they were no longer on sure footing and that their very lives and probably livelihoods were in danger.
2. Once recognizing that they needed God, they were not too proud to call out to God in their distress. Those who had suffered because they had rebelled against the Lord humbled themselves in such a way as to say “I sinned. Please help me”
3. They each received deliverance from God as their prayers were answered.

- a. The wanderers were no longer wandering off course. They now walked with renewed dedication to God and went in His direction.
  - b. The prisoners were no longer captive in the dark but were set free into the light and the light of God tears apart their shadow of their bonds.
  - c. The foolish, who lavished in their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their actions. Those foolish one who were close to the gates of death, God snatches them from their graves
  - d. And our riders upon the shipwrecked boat whose journey had become imperiled with pending death by drowning or worse, God calms the storm and takes them to safety.
4. They each received deliverance and each group took time to thank God. In each situation the prayer to the Lord and expression of thanks are the same. “Let them thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for his wonderful works to humankind.”

The story still speaks to us today.

We may not find ourselves literally wandering in the desert, but many of us today are wandering in the circumstances of life in a pandemic.

Like the shipwrecked, our lives at this time have been turned upside down as things we once thought were stable grounded routines have now become like quicksand.

Like the prisoners we are in need of a light to shine into our darkened moments, God still longs to shine His light into our lives, that we would not be in darkness.

Our lesson in Romans 8:31 speaks true to us now. We are more than Conquerors in Christ Jesus.

We cannot let the present circumstances make us forget that we still serve a God who delivers, who saves, who loves us and who wants the best for us.

We can never forget our own testimonies of deliverance from God. “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Rom 8:28).

We can never forget our own deliverance at the hand of God, and we must never cease to proclaim what God has done for us.

In good times and in troubling times or even in times that are difficult to classify, God is unchanging in His love, unrelenting in His pursuit of us, still desiring that we put our focus on Him and our focus on things above.

We are the redeemed of the Lord, once we accepted Christ into our hearts and our lives we are changed and that change in our lives is just as stark as the before and after of our friends from the psalm this morning.

So redeemed of the Lord, I say to you and we all should say to one another “Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ... Do not be anxious about anything but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.” (Phil 4:4-6)

God is still a delivering, prayer answering God.

And because God is so good, even in trying times there is no need to be anxious.

Thank God for what He has done, for what He will do and thank Him in advance for all that He will do.

In the Name of Jesus.

Amen.