

PSALM 107: 1-9

- ¹ O give thanks to the LORD, for God is good;
for God's steadfast love endures for ever.
- ² Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
those God redeemed from trouble
³ and gathered in from the lands,
from the east and from the west,
from the north and from the south.
- ⁴ Some wandered in desert wastes,
finding no way to an inhabited town;
⁵ hungry and thirsty,
their soul fainted within them.
- ⁶ Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
and God delivered them from their distress;
⁷ the Mighty One led them by a straight way,
until they reached an inhabited town.
- ⁸ Let them thank the LORD for God's steadfast love,
for God's wonderful works to humankind.
⁹ For the Mighty One satisfies the thirsty,
and the hungry God fills with good things.

Have you ever found it difficult to feel thankful? Certainly the people of Israel would have had many reasons to find it difficult to feel thankful. At one time they were enslaved. Later they were enslaved again when their land was taken and they were exiled from it. But through faith and hope awakened, and courageous perseverance, they were empowered. They seized their freedom when they were awakened to faith and hope in a God whose love would never abandon them. This psalm refers to the long journey back to their homeland. It is a powerful story remembered.

This psalm, like many psalms, seeks to evoke and stir in the reader and worshipper a sense of thanksgiving through remembering... Remember when?... Remember what God accomplished in and through you?... Remember what you and we came through?... Remember how we made it through and are here now to tell the story, to create poetry, worship liturgy and song so that we can inspire another generation to faith and hope, to gratitude and love?

If you read this whole psalm through, you will notice a repeated rhythm and pattern. It begins with a call to thanksgiving. Then it gives the reason for why thanksgiving is called for. At one time people fell into trouble. In their trouble they cried up to God. God heard their cry and delivered them. How do they know God heard their cry? Because they came through it all, maybe bruised and scarred, but stronger and ever more grateful for having arrived at a new place of gratitude...

So how can we make use of this kind of psalm? Maybe you are feeling really safe and whole right now. Maybe you are feeling exiled from “home” right now, whatever home in yourself, your relationships or your living situation means. Maybe you feel broken down, disconnected from yourself or the people around you. Or maybe you are sleeping through life right now, just taking everything for granted as if it will always be there as it has been... Taking the time to express gratitude intentionally, to pray it, sing it, and meditate upon it, whatever your situation, is transformative. It is transformative in the moment and it is transformative in setting you on a good course in the days, weeks and months ahead, no matter what trouble may come...

PRAYER: Thank you God. Thank you for the ways I have come through trouble. Thank you for giving me the strength to endure and to rise up again. Thank you for walking the journey above, beside and within me. For there are seasons of life to come, and perhaps this is one such season. I need to make the journey again, O God. There is trouble and I need to find my way through once again to that place of gratitude and victory, even should circumstances be diminished because of age or disability. With you above, beside and within me, I can pass through the waters to the safety of a new land once again. I can feel gratitude once again. Thank you. Amen.