

Give Thanks for Deliverance

Alister watched his silver-haired father with regard and amazement.

The exceptionally handsome Randall McKnight had risen from his parent's upper middle-income status to become a real estate multimillionaire. However, Randall's looks, money, and popularity made for a harmful mix. Some of the fallout had been three failed marriages of whom Alister's mother was the first. There were also a total of 10 children, most of whom only saw Alister's father in banking and monetary terms.

Alister eventually saw that his father needed something more. When Alister accepted Christ at the age of 20, he had shared his newfound joy with his dad, who more or less gave him a pat on the head.

Then about five years ago, Randall's lifestyle choices had him on the brink of despair. It was then that the senior McKnight grabbed hold of the Gospel message. Alister watched his dad transform into a new man! One of the changes was creating a foundation to help the homeless and addicts with housing, vocational training, and college scholarships.

"I know I don't look like it today," said Randall to the crowd of more than 150, "but I was messed up. I was an alcoholic and was involved in things I will not share. I could afford the trappings of a good life, but I was miserable. God rescued me and gave me a sense of freedom and purpose money could never buy!"

1. Briefly describe the three most important moments in your life and explain why you highly value them.

2. What role did God play in those three moments?

3. How are key moments in your life interconnected?

LESSON FOCUS: Tell your God story with thanksgiving.

Thankful for God's Enduring Mercy

Psalm 107:1-5, KJV

1 O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;

3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.

4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.

5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

Psalm 107:1-5, NIV

¹Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;

his love endures forever.

²Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story—those he redeemed from the hand of the foe,

³those he gathered from the lands,
from east and west, from north and south.

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

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

The Psalms reveal so many reasons for God's people to be thankful to Him. One of the many wonderful things about our eternal God is that His attributes are also eternal such as His love for His people, which is forever! The Hebrew word here, *olam* (o-LAWM), means "endures forever" (vs. 1). When we think God's love is getting to its end or reaching its point of exhaustion, there is infinitely more of it for His people to draw upon.

Not only is God's love enduring, but it is also redemptive. His people can always tell the story of how He lovingly redeems His people from their enemies. The psalmist may be referring to the Jews' return to Judah after their 70-year exile in Babylon since the people are being gathered "from the hand of the foe" (vs. 2). What a great reason for thanksgiving! With thankful hearts, those He redeemed were to tell others the story of their deliverance.

Whether this celebrates the return from the exile or not, it is a description of God's people being gathered together from the four points of the compass. They had wandered in barren wastelands, finding no city or other place of refuge for shelter. As a result, they were hungry and parched until their very lives began to ebb from them.

By His redemptive love, God gathered His people to Himself from the north, south, east, and west. He delivered them from the wilderness where they had nearly perished and brought them into His presence for safety.

Lost people in every part of the world wander in the barren wilderness of their lives, finding no place of spiritual refuge. Believers today who have been redeemed from sin have a story to tell of God's redeeming love.

4. What aspects of God's love do we see in this part of today's Scripture passage?

5. What was the plight of God's people, as described in the passage?

6. How were the redeemed to respond to God's deliverance?

Thankful for God's Deliverance

Psalm 107:6-9, KJV

6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.

7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

8 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!

Psalm 107:6-9, NIV

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

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

⁸Let them give thanks to the
LORD for his unfailing
love

9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

and his wonderful deeds for mankind,
'for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

A prerequisite for receiving redemption and deliverance is that people need to ask for it. The children of Israel had been scattered by their enemies, forced to wander in the wilderness, deprived of food and water. All that remained was for them to be willing to cry out to God. When they did, He heard their cry and delivered them.

The same is true when it comes to deliverance from the trouble and distress of sin. The first step is for someone to recognize they are a sinner in need of redemption and forgiveness. Once there is the recognition of the need, the next step is to ask God for it.

God also gave the returning Israelites a guide for right living—"a straight way" (vs. 7). Like a good shepherd, God guided the Israelites on the righteous path and led them to a city where they could settle and live safely. Therefore, because of God's merciful deliverance, faithful direction, and loving protection, He satisfied their needs, physically and spiritually, and they could praise Him for His goodness and wondrous works!

7. What must people do to receive God's deliverance and redemption?

8. How does the Lord lead His people?

9. How should His people respond to His deliverance?

Thankful for God's Deeds of Love

Psalm 107:39-43, KJV

39 Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow.

Psalm 107:39-43, NIV

³⁹Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled by oppression, calamity

40 He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way.

41 Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh him families like a flock.

42 The righteous shall see it, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

43 Whoso is wise, and will observe these things, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.

and sorrow;

40 he who pours contempt on nobles made them wander in a trackless waste.

41 But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks.

42 The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths.

43 Let the one who is wise heed these things and ponder the loving deeds of the LORD.

As a result of the exile, the people's numbers had diminished, and they were humbled by oppression, suffering, and grief. Therefore, the Lord had dealt with the injustice by pouring out His contempt upon the nobility, who did not seem to suffer as the poor did, earning God's contempt. So, He brought them low and caused them to wander in the "trackless" (vs. 40) wilderness.

While the nobility received their just reward, God lifted the needy from their suffering and pain to a high place of safety and provision. Because of God's deliverance and provision, the families of the afflicted began to grow again and prosper like flocks of sheep in safe, green pastures under the watchful eye of their shepherd. When we consider these truths, we should take heed, for it is a wise person who learns from the mistakes of others.

10. *What was the plight of God's people?*

11. *How did the nobles and princes fare?*

12. *When will the upright in heart rejoice?*

Your Life Is One of God's Stories

Dedicate your life to the Lord, and He will reward you with His wisdom, joy, and love. Of course, that does not mean there won't be days or moments of distress, but He will always be your refuge; He will always be your tower of strength; and He will always be a radiant lamp along your path, a path that leads you to His heavenly kingdom, where your story will continue for all eternity.

Your life is one of God's countless stories. Your story is unique and wonderful to behold. It is a story of triumph, not your triumph, but God's triumph in how He rescued you from sin and evil, demonstrating before the forces of darkness that goodness does prevail when we submit to the will of Almighty God.

Therefore, our daily song should be a celebration for the life God has given us, and its lyrics should be words of praise and gratitude. Moreover, we should sing with even greater ardor than with the passion we sang on the day we received Jesus as our Lord and Savior, for each ensuing day the theme of our story has become increasingly clear, and the theme of our story is the deepening appreciation of our redemption and atonement in Christ as we are being transformed into His image.

Dedicate your life to the Lord, and your story will be a glorification of the Messiah, who reigns over all creation and is the perfect storyteller. "I will praise the LORD all my life," sang the psalmist; "I will sing praise to my God as long as I live" (Ps. 146:2). Let us do likewise!

13. What opportunities do you have to tell your personal "God story" to others?

14. What impact have you seen your "God story" have on others?

15. How often do you express your gratitude to God for your "God story," and how do you show your gratitude to Him?

A Story to Behold!

In Psalm 107, the psalmist is exceedingly grateful for what the Lord God has done for His people, the ancient Jews. Today, you can be thankful for what the Lord Jesus has done for you. In the same way God delivered the Jews from their enemies and restored them to their homeland, Christ has redeemed us and repaired our relationship with Almighty God. Indeed, each one of us has a story to be told and a reason to be grateful.

► *Here or on an index card, write a pledge to share your particular “God story” with others this coming week. Pray for open conversations and thank Him for any opportunities He gives you to share.*

KEY VERSE

Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. —Psalm 107:6, KJV

Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. —Psalm 107:6, NIV

DAILY BIBLE READINGS FOR NEXT WEEK'S LESSON

Week of October 18 through October 24

(See *The Quiet Hour* and *Cross* devotionals on these passages.)

Mon. Psalm 126—God Has Done Great Things.

Tues. John 15:9-17—Joy Fulfilled in Love.

Wed. Nehemiah 8:9-12—God's Joy Is Your Strength.

Thurs. Philippians 2:1-11—Joy Fulfilled in Christ's Sacrifice.

Fri. Philippians 4:4-9—Rejoice in the Lord Always.

Sat. Psalm 16—Fullness of Joy.

Sun. Psalm 84—How Lovely Is God's Dwelling Place.