

“O Give Thanks!”
Psalm 103

October 11, 2015

A. Introduction

1. Gratitude is made perfect by

B. Psalm 107 in Miniature

1. what do verse 8 (& its repeats) call upon men to do?
2. what verse 6 (& its repeats) say Israel did in trouble?
3. how did God respond throughout the psalm according to verses 1-3?

C. Verse 9

1. what are the two emphatic words in this verse?
2. how does man fill his emptiness? ... God fill it?
3. what is the nature of God's filling?

D. Verse 22

1. what does sin do to God's people?

2. when they are restored, what are their responsibilities?

E. Verse 32

1. what is the subject of the section (vv 23ff) this concludes?
2. what is a natural response of being delivered from such a situation?

F. Verse 38 – how should we respond to material blessing from God?

G. Verse 43 – how can I show wisdom in these matters?

A. Introduction

1. Gratitude

- a. one of the things with which Andrew and Jen have been impressed in their stay in Africa, in both Malawi and Tanzania, is the gratitude that is constantly being expressed by the people in the villages where they have served. It is spontaneous, effervescent, from the heart.
 - b. they are not the only ones who have discerned this
 - c. Joel Gregory writes —{2}.
 - (A) The Masai tribe in West Africa have an unusual way of saying thank you. Translators tell us that when the Masai express thanks, they bow, put their forehead on the ground, and say “My head is in the dirt.”
 - (B) When members of another African tribe want to express gratitude, they sit for a long time in front of the hut of the person who did the favour and literally say, “I sit on the ground before you.”
 - (C) These Africans understand well what thanksgiving is and why it’s difficult for us: at its core, thanksgiving is an act of humility.
 - d. oh that as we look at Psalm 107 this morning, we might learn that humility before the Lord that makes our thanksgiving spontaneous, effervescent and from the heart
2. this Thanksgiving morning we have joined together
- a. in the words of the hymns we have been singing
 - b. in seeing the pictures accompanying some of them
 - c. in listening to the reading of the Scriptures
 - d. and have turned our hearts in thanksgiving to God

B. Psalm 107 in Miniature

1. Early in the service, we read verse 8 of this Psalm

- a. here it is again: **Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!** (Psalms 107:8 NKJV) ... and it was pointed out that three more times these words were repeated throughout the Psalm
- b. these words punctuate four sections of the Psalm
- c. each section recounts the circumstances of Israel under captivity as a punishment for their turning from God
 - (A) oh, how this our nation has turned away from God!

- (B) pray that God would cause good men and women to be elected
- d. and then in the midst of those circumstances there is repeated these words or their equivalent: *Then they cried out to the Lord in their trouble, And He delivered them out of their distresses.* (Psalms 107:6 NKJV)
- e. and there follows a description of God's salvation, to which that punctuation is given
- f. *Oh, that men would give thanks to the Lord for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the children of men!* (Psalms 107:8 NKJV)

2. The Psalm opens with a condensed version of itself in verses 1–3

- a. *Oh give thanks to the Lord, for He is good; For His lovingkindness is everlasting.* (Psalms 107:1)
- b. and then summarises the goodness and lovingkindness of the Lord
- c. *"2 Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the adversary 3 And gathered from the lands, From the east and from the west, From the north and from the south."* (Psalms 107:2-3)
- d. it is God's salvation for which they should be thankful

3. let us look at a few verses from this Psalm

- (A) which give reason why we, too, should exclaim
- (B) "Oh, give thanks to the Lord!"

C. Verse 9: *For He has satisfied the thirsty or, longing soul, And the hungry soul He has filled with what is good.* (Psalms 107:9)

1. There are two words are most emphatic here: *satisfied and good*

2. Satisfied: God fills the void in our lives

- a. how many seek to fill such emptiness with *things*

*I tried the broken cisterns, Lord,
But ah! the waters failed!
E'en as I stooped to drink they'd fled,
And mocked me as I wailed.* —{3}.

- b. how many seek to fill it with *activities*

- (A) if I am busy enough, I don't think of my hunger
- (B) so, the Devil tempts us to mere activity, so we fail to hunger and thirst after righteousness as God would have us to do

c. but when God fills, it is *beyond any need*

- (A) Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, they will pour into your lap. For by your standard of measure it will be measured to you in return. (Luke 6:38)
- (B) My cup runneth over Psalm 23:5c (AV)

3. "Good", "goodness" or "good things"

a. in contrast to Satan's counterfeit inducements, God gives us reality, and this blessed invitation

- (A) Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; And you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk Without money and without cost. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And delight yourself in abundance. (Isaiah 55:1-2)

b. we rejoice, not only in what we have received from the hand of the Lord in the past, but of His guarantees to us in the future; so we can

- (A) "... fix our hope ... on God, who richly supplies us with all things to enjoy." (1 Timothy 6:17b)

D. Verse 22: Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, And tell of His works with joyful singing. (Psalms 107:22)

1. this completes the section of verses, 17 to 22,

- a. God's people had transgressed, committed iniquity
- b. they were filled with distress, trouble
- c. they couldn't even enjoy their food
- d. and God delivered them
- e. now they are to present a thanksgiving offering – that was an offering in which the one presenting it shared in eating it
- f. God has healed – forgiven – them; now they can enjoy food

2. there are some very impressive truths here

- a. first, there are many reasons

- (A) that we should give thanks to God
- (B) that we should give witness about God
- b. secondly, acceptable spiritual services involves these same
 - (A) giving *thanks* to God
 - (B) giving *witness* about God
- c. what makes this such acceptable service? Paul Moede wrote:
 - (A) *Is obedience what pleases God most? In the account of the ten lepers, nine of them obediently followed obeyed Jesus' command to go to the priest yet they were not commended by Jesus. The one who came back to express gratitude was the one commended.*
 - (B) *True obedience is a response of gratitude toward the giver of the gift. It is gratitude in action.* ^{4}.
- d. or, as A. W. Tozer put it
 - (A) *Gratitude is an offering precious in the sight of God, and it is one that the poorest of us can make and be not poorer but richer for having made it.* ^{5}.

E. Verse 32: *Let them extol Him also in the congregation of the people, And praise Him at the seat of the elders.* (Psalms 107:32)

1. This concludes the section of verses 23 to 32
 - a. where the writer describes the storms faced by *sailors*
 - b. from which God delivers them
 - c. and the application is that God has likewise delivered
 - (A) his people from perilous times of trouble
 - (B) into a harbour of peace
 - d. many are the histories in the maritime provinces
 - (A) when the fishing fleet has been out
 - (B) and the weather is rough and blustering
 - (C) the people gather on a height of land to search the sea for boats
 - (D) oh, what great rejoicing comes when the cry comes, "There they are," in the town: by the wives, by the children, by everyone
2. when people have had such a salvation experience, then
 - a. they say so – this re-echoes verse 2, which we sing in one of our hymns: "*Let the redeemed of the LORD say so ...*"

- b. they are not intimidated by *numbers* — they do so in the congregation (this being the gathering of all the people)
- c. they are not intimidated by *status or prestige* – they do so even to the mayor, the council, the member of parliament

F. Verse 38: *Also He blesses them and they multiply greatly; And He does not let their cattle decrease.* (Psalms 107:38)

1. This verse concludes the section of verses 33 to 38

- a. where God has restored the prosperity of the land
- b. and the harvest has been gathered in with rejoicing
- c. this is the “Harvest Home” celebration, as we celebrate today!

2. Does God still bless His people materially?

- a. Yes! Yes! Yes!
- b. but does that mean we say “Alright; I am a Christian, so Lord I *expect* to receive this and this and that”?

(A) No! No! No!

(B) remember that lesson from Africa? Humility breeds gratitude.

- c. so it is because we are Christians that we see His hand of blessing, *recognizing* in every provision that the gracious Providence makes for us and give Him thanks

(A) Jerry Anderson was holding revival meetings. One young couple had attended every meeting. She was clothed in a plain, shapeless dress. His suit was a pair of overalls. At the final service she approached and said, “We are Christians; would you come by tomorrow and dedicate our home?” Jerry asked the pastor who encouraged him to do so.

(B) Jerry followed the instructions and arrived at a rude shack. Before he could knock the couple came out and greeted him and brought him in. She still wore a print dress, he overalls. No furniture to speak of. A wood stove with heating irons. A straw mattresses on the bedroom floor.

(C) He took out his Bible and read some appropriate scriptures and was just ready to pray the Prayer of Dedication, when they each took my hands and knelt on the floor. So, there we were - kneeling on that hard, bare floor — looking through the cracks to the ground below — holding hands and thanking God for this home and invoking His blessings on this young couple. Then she turned to her husband beaming with joy, saying, “Now we have everything!”

(D) As he left, Jerry realized he had not dedicated a house, but a home; a home where the couple with their faith and there love truly had everything. ^{—{6}}.

G. Verse 43: **Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things; And consider the lovingkindnesses of the Lord.** (Psalms 107:43)

1. This completes the section of verse 33 to 43 which were our Scripture reading – in which there is a sharp contrast between the situation of the wicked and that of those who are righteous
 - a. for the OT saint this was the righteousness of faith that was shown by the way he or she heeded the commandments of God
 - b. for us in this day of grace, that righteousness is found in Jesus Christ for 1 Corinthians 1:30 tells us that “... **Christ Jesus, ... became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption,**”

2. Do you want to be wise?
 - a. one of our Awana song-time favourites goes this way
**If you want to be wise, Then open your eyes
and take a look into God’s book
and you must trust Him for His Word is true
He’ll show you just what to do to help you to be wise
If you will open your eyes. .-{}.**
 - b. well, here is His word, if you would be truly wise
 - (A) you are to take heed, watch, observe, pay attention
 - (B) to all the reasons that you have for gratitude
 - c. and, as you count your blessings, recognize not just that they are blessings but that they proceed from God: **Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow.** (James 1:17)
 - d. and the greatest of all blessings is the blessing that is the result of the cross on which Jesus died, that bring salvation to our souls – let us give thanks for that.

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2. '*Thanksgiving*,' by Joel Gregory, in *Leadership*, page 48, Winter 1993.
3. Hymn, "None But Christ Can Satisfy" by "B. E.", Holwick illustrations #16987
4. Paul Moede, "The Heart of Obedience", *Discipleship Journal* #82, July 1994, Holwick illustrations #3287
5. A. W. Tozer, "Signposts", *Online Christianity Today*, November 1995, Holwick illustrations \$4484
6. Adapted from an account by Jerry A. Anderson, "A Humble Blessing", Holwick illustrations #21881
7. Author Unknown