

Thanksgiving

Psalm 107

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I. MESSAGE #1

a. This morning our worship gathering is going to be a little different...

- i. Last Thursday we just celebrated Thanksgiving.
 - And so we wanted to use our worship gathering this morning as a time to intentionally and corporately give thanks to God.
 - And to do that, we are going to walk through Psalm 107.
 1. Get your Bibles out.
 - So, I'm not going to preach a sermon. We'll spend some time reading, I'll spend some time explaining, we'll spend some time reflecting, and also singing songs of thanks to God.... repeat.

b. One of the themes that we see throughout the whole Bible is one of "Exile and Pursuit."

- i. God exiles people from his presence, not to just leave them there, but so he can pursue them, redeem them, and restore them back to right relationship with him.
- ii. We see this in the first few chapters of the Bible in the garden.
 - God creates everything and he gives it to the first man and first woman.
 1. They are living within his Kingdom and nothing good was withheld from them.
 - But Adam and Eve decide not to continue to trust God, but rather to reject God.



- They rejected his word and they rejected his goodness.
- So, what does God do?
 1. He exiles them from his presence. He exiles them from the garden.
- But in the midst of that exile, he told them they he would be coming after them, to redeem them, and restore them back to right relationship with Him.

iii. **We see it with the Biblical Nation of Israel.**

- God had given them his Word, he had made a covenant with them that He would be their God and they would be his people.
- He led them to the promised land where they would prosper.
- But the Nation of Israel rebelled against God. They rejected God. They rejected His Word.
- So, God sent the Babylonians and other nations to conquer them and carry them off into exile.
 1. They carried them literally away from the promised land.
- But God raised up prophets like Jeremiah and others to call the people of God to repentance and to turn back to God.
 1. And God eventually allowed for His people to come home back to the promised land.

iv. **And in Psalm 107, we read a song that was written praising and thanking God that they have been brought home from exile.**



- But as we read Psalm 107 this morning, we can use this to thank God and to reflect upon how God has rescued us from exile as well.
 - As those who have also sinned against God, we were at one point exiled from God's Kingdom.
 1. Literally an enemy of God.
 - But God pursued us in and through Jesus Christ.
 1. He made a way that our sins could be forgiven and we could be reconciled to God.
 - He brought us home from our exile and made us his children.
- v. So, as we read Psalm 107 this morning, we want to offer thanksgiving to God for how he has pursued us and rescued us from our sin and misery.

c. Read Psalm 107:1-9

d. The picture that the Psalmist gives is of someone wandering in the desert, hungry and thirsty, and they don't belong anywhere...

- i. They cry out to the Lord and he delivers them.

e. Have you ever felt like you were wandering through this life...

- i. ...hungry and thirsty...
- ii. ...not knowing if you're really happy or not...
- iii. ...unsure if you're really living your life in a way that pleases the Lord or not...
- iv. ...constantly questioning if God really loves you in maybe the way that he loves other people...



f. Understand that the Bible is not filled with examples of people who lived their lives in such a noble way that God had his favorites...

- i. Oh, it's so opposite.
- ii. The Bible is filled with the stories of people who were wandering, people who were hungry and thirsty, people who didn't measure up...but in the midst of their despair and wandering, they cried out to God for help...
- iii. And God came for them, he pursued them, he delivered them, not because they were good, but because they were children of God.

g. Read PROOF - Pg. 81-83

h. The truth is that if you have trusted Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, this is your story.

- i. You are a recipient of the outrageous, steadfast, never going to end, never going to change love of God.
 - He has brought you home and he will never let you leave.
 - Not because your good, but because you're his.
- ii. Would you take a minute to rest in that truth? To silently go before God and give him thanks that you are his. You are a recipient of outrageous grace?



II. MESSAGE #2

a. Read Psalm 107:10-16

b. Another picture of what our exile from God looks like...

- i. This time, we imagine being locked in a prison with no way of escape.
 - And as we cry out to God for deliverance, he comes and literally breaks our chains and busts out of prison.
 - But this is no ordinary prison.
 - This is the prison of death.
 - This wasn't God just breaking a chain, this was God literally defeating the forces of death.
- ii. Yes, as we were wandering in the desert hungry and thirsty, God the Father delivered us and brought us home...he is outrageously gracious to us...but it came at great cost to God the Son, Jesus.
 - Because God the Father sent God the Son to become one of us and break the chains of sin and death so that we could be redeemed and restored.

c. The Gospel

- i. As sinners and those who were at one point exiled from God's presence - we were spiritually dead and just waiting for the judgement day to where we would be forever cast away from the presence of God to suffer in hell for all of eternity with no relief.
 - V.11 - We rebelled against the Word of God. We spurned his counsel.
 - V.12 - So he bows us down in hard labor.



- God is a just God and he must properly deal with our sin against him.
 - ii. **But God is patient and slow to anger. He has not brought about the Day of Judgment yet.**
 - And he sent Jesus, the Son of God, to make a way for us to be restored to God that demonstrates his love but also preserves His justice.
 - We were justly, not unjustly in prison.
 - So, God doesn't break us out in an unjust way.
 - iii. **Rather, Jesus takes our place.**
 - Jesus offers to switch lives.
 - He'll give us his life.
 - And he'll take our life.
 - We get the righteousness of Jesus.
 - He gets the pain and misery of the cross.
 - Our sin doesn't go unpunished, and Jesus' righteousness doesn't go unrewarded.
 - iv. **So, Jesus suffers for our sin and takes it with him into the grave.**
 - But because the Son of God took our sin into the grave, the wrath of God was fully satisfied and death could no longer hold Jesus down.
 - So, he walks out of the grave fully alive.
 - And if we cry out to Jesus for rescue from our sin, he'll unite our lives to his and the iron chains around our body are busted apart and we'll live forever as Jesus lives forever.
- d. This is how God rescues us! This is how God accomplishes his outrageous grace.**



- i. **And I want us to spend some time giving thanks to God the Son for suffering in our place, conquering death, and giving us his life.**
 - So, God gave us a way to remember this and to give him thanks and that is through communion.
- ii. **As a church, we regularly come together around this meal that is designed to remind us of what Jesus did for us.**
 - We take bread and break it. This reminds us of how the body of Jesus was torn as he took the punishment that we deserve for our sin.
 - We take the juice. It reminds us of how the blood of Jesus was poured out to cleanse us from all of our unrighteousness and to break us from the chains of death.
- iii. **So, I invite you this morning, if you are a follower of Jesus, to go to the table right now.**
 - Take some bread and juice.
 - Come back to your seat and spend some time thanking God the Son for breaking the chains of death around you.
- iv. **Fence.**



III. MESSAGE #3

a. Read Psalm 107:17-22

b. Another picture of what our exile from God looks like...

- i. ... we think of how our foolishness has caused us such great pain and affliction in this life.
 - Although God has delivered us from the desert and His Son has rescued us from the prison of death...there are still consequences to our sin in this life.
 - Even as followers of Jesus who have been saved, we can still struggle with sin, with foolish decisions, with addictions, idols, and with a love for this world that robs us of our joy.
 - And we experience the pain and affliction of those things.

c. But God promises to deliver us from these idols and addictions if we cry out to him.

- i. And as I was thinking about this promise that we have from God, I began to think about how when we feel like we are stuck in some sort of habitual sin, some sort of addiction, some sort of behavior that is destructive...
 - ...how we will try to do anything and everything to deal with that sin apart from crying out to God, bringing the sin into the light, and letting God heal us from that sin and its consequences.



- We do that because we know God wants to not just address our behavior, but he wants to address our hearts. He wants to take control of our lives and make changes that we're not quite open to.

d. I was reminded of a scene in the book *“The Voyage of the Dawn Treader”* by C.S. Lewis...a part of the Narnia series.

- i. There is this boy named Eustice who no one likes. He's mean. He's arrogant. He's entitled.
 - And Eustice comes across this cave that is a dragon's lair.
 - And he goes into the cave to get some shelter from a storm and he discovers in the dragon's lair treasure.
 - And his heart is filled with greed as he dreams about all of what he could do with that treasure.
 - He slips on his arm this golden bracelet with diamonds on it and falls asleep in the cave.
- ii. **When he woke up from his sleep, he quickly discovers that he himself has become a dragon.**
 - It was an outward manifestation of his greed.
 - And he immediately felt a pain on one of his dragon legs where he had put on that gold bracelet.
 - It was too small for him now and it was digging into his skin.
 - And he felt lonely, because as a dragon, he couldn't go back to his friends.



- iii. **Well, one night, Eustice encounters Aslan the Lion. Aslan was an allegory for God.**
- And Aslan takes Eustice to a pool. And Eustice believes that if he could just wash himself in the pool, the pain from the bracelet will go away.
 - But Aslan tells him that he must be undressed first.
 - Eustice is confused but quickly remembers that as a dragon, he has snake-like skin that can shed.
 - With his claws, he begins tearing off his skin. He peels off one layer only to discover another layer underneath. And then another. After three layers, he realizes it's useless — he will never make himself clean or get rid of his pain or shed the nasty skin.
 - He will always be a dragon.
- iv. **But Aslan says to Eustice. You must let me undress you.**
- Read pg. 108-109.
- v. **What a beautiful picture of what it looks like when God delivers us from our foolishness.**
- God's not interested in just cleaning up our behavior, he wants to change our hearts.
 - He wants all of us. And giving all of ourselves over to God is more painful than we realize because there are things in this world that we love and do not want to let go.
 - But it's only when we allow God to do his work of ripping out our hearts love for this world will we experience the joy of being who God created us to be.



e. So, I don't know what it is for you.

- i. What sort of sin that you struggle with...
 - Maybe an idol you don't want to let go.
 - Maybe an addiction that you can't shake.
- ii. You know what it is...
 - We will all struggle with sin until Christ returns and conquers sin once and for all.
 - But will you let God undress you?
 - Will you cry out to him for deliverance from your sin and will you allow him to address it with no strings attached?
 - Knowing that even though it will hurt, it is the pathway to joy.
- iii. So, let's take a moment to do two things...
 - (1) Let's give thanks to God for delivering us from our foolishness and sin. He has spared us from so much.
 - (2) But let's also go before the Lord and cry out to him for deliverance for any sin that we've been holding onto, refusing to confess, and trying to deal with on our own...

f. Pray



IV. MESSAGE #4

a. Read Psalm 107:23-43

b. As we wrap up this Psalm...

- i. This time, we get the imagery of being out at sea on a ship that is being tossed by a storm.
 - We cry out to God and the sovereign God of the universe who controls all of creation calms the storm.
 - And as the Psalm closes we are reminded to consider the steadfast love of God because he is sovereign and he is good.
 - He is able to make us go through tough circumstances in order to turn us back to him and he is also able to raise up the needy out of their affliction.
- ii. We can rejoice because God's love for us will never change. He will never cast us out again.
 - Even when we walk through hard circumstances, he is in control and he is good.
 - Sometimes, we cannot make sense of his plan, but we can trust that his plan is the best.

c. My wife reminded me of this in a blog she wrote a few weeks ago the practice of giving thanks to God. (Plug...)

- i. And in her blog, she used an example from the life of Corrie Ten Boom from the book *The Hiding Place*.
 - Corrie Ten Boom of course was imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp during WWII.



- Her and her sister were placed in a bunkroom that was infested with fleas.
 - It was miserable!
 - But Corrie's sister challenged her to thank God for the fleas.
 1. That makes no sense.
 2. But Corrie mustered up the will-power and thanked God for the fleas.
 - Now, Corrie and her sister were able to smuggle in some Bibles into the bunkroom and hold Bible studies with other ladies where many came to know Christ and were saved.
 1. What Corrie didn't realize at the time was the reason that they never got caught and were able to hold these Bible studies is because the guards didn't want to go into the bunkroom that was infested with fleas.
 2. There are folks, who although were going through unspeakable suffering at the time, are in glory with God the Father because of the fleas provided the cover for Corrie and her sister to share the gospel.
- ii. **Sometimes, we have no idea why we are going through the circumstances that we are going through.**
- But we know we can cry out to God and have confidence that all things work together for good for those who love God.



d. So, again, let's go before God and lift up thanks to Him for his sovereignty and his goodness.

- i. Let's thank him that he is trustworthy even when we don't completely understand what is going on in our lives.
- ii. Let's thank him that his love is steadfast, even when we are experiencing fear and suffering.
- iii. So, spend another minute silently giving thanks to God and we'll end our time in song.

