

Unit II. Called to Praise God “I Shall Be Released”

DEVOTIONAL READING: Psalm 68:1-6
BACKGROUND SCRIPTURE: Psalm 107
PRINT PASSAGE: Psalm 107:1-9, 39-43

KEY VERSE

They cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.
(Psalm 107:6, KJV)

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They cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress.
(Psalm 107:6, NIV)

Lesson Aims

As a result of experiencing this lesson, you should be able to do these things:

- Explore the importance of having a relationship with God, the deliverer.
- Place value on the role of giving thanks to God.
- Pray for those who need God's deliverance.

*Key Terms

Cried out (verse 6)—Hebrew: *tsooq* (tsaw-ak'): called or shouted; “cried unto” (KJV).

Dwell (verse 4)—Hebrew: *moshab* (mo-shawb'): to live, inhabit, or remain; “settle” (NIV).

Gathered (verse 3)—Hebrew: *qabats* (kaw-bats'): assembled; collected; gathered.

Good (verse 1)—Hebrew: *towb* (tobe): pleasant; agreeable; virtuous.

Goodness (verse 8)—Hebrew: *cheved* (kheh'-sed): kindness; worthiness; favor; “unfailing love” (NIV).

Redeemed (verse 2)—Hebrew: *gaal* (gaw-al'): redeemed; bought back; acted as kinsman.

*(Word Study Supplement—Refer to page 2)

Introduction

According to the Innocence Project, 2018 was a record year for exoneration of prisoners who were incarcerated for crimes they consistently reported that they did not commit. At the end of last year, the organization had helped to pass 17 wrongful conviction reforms in 17 states. Persons released in that year spent a combined 215 years behind bars for crimes they were proven to have not committed. One victim of such injustice is Malcolm Alexander. His story can be found on the Innocence Project website, at innocenceproject.org. After 38 years,



The Biblical Context

This is the first psalm in the fifth book of Psalms. The 150 psalms are divided into five distinct groupings, or books, each closing with a prayer or benediction. Psalms 105 and 106 join Psalm 107, constituting a trilogy of praise and thanksgiving psalms. Psalm 107 beautifully praises God's mighty deliverance of the lost, the captive, the sick, and the endangered. The psalm is referred to as The Song of the Redeemed and is a call for the redeemed to gather together and worship the Lord.

Alexander's sentence was vacated on the basis of DNA evidence brought to light by the Innocence Project. The website posted a picture of Malcolm coming out with his hands held high in victory and joy. Most of the men and women exonerated through the Innocence Project spoke of the importance of faith—holding on to a belief and hope of eventually being set free. Whether great or small, trouble and misunderstanding come to us all. That is why everyone must learn the lessons of faith and perseverance.

ANALYSIS OF THE BIBLICAL TEXT

Thank God for His Deliverance (Psalm 107:1-6)

KJV

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.

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

NIV

GIVE THANKS to the LORD, for he is *good*; his love endures forever.

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

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

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

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

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

The psalmist opens with a call for gratitude: “O give thanks unto the LORD” (**verse 1**). Gratitude to God is a proper starting point for worship. God deserves gratitude because of His goodness and everlasting mercy (**verse 1**). The psalmist calls the redeemed as witnesses of God's goodness: “let the redeemed . . . say so” (**verse 2**)—let them speak up, testify, and tell their stories of God's redemption and deliverance from every land (**verse 3**), circumstance, and condition of life (**verse 4**). God has delivered His own from desperate situations—from hunger, thirst, and the brink of death (**verse 5**). In every perilous condition of life, God hears His children when they cry out to Him for help. He does not just hear them—He helps them, delivering them from their distress (**verse 6**). Since God has heard and helped us, we should testify and give thanks for His deliverance.

? WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What is the importance and benefits of sharing your testimony of what God has done for you?

Thank God for His Filling (Psalm 107:7-9)

KJV

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

NIV

- 7 He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle.
8 Let them give thanks to the LORD for his *unfailing love* and his wonderful deeds for mankind,
9 for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.

The psalmist further describes God's acts of deliverance. God is neither distant nor far removed from His people. He is their "very present help" (Psalm 46:1). He chooses engagement and relationship with those who love Him. God gives guidance to those who seek Him, leading them to a place of peace and safety (verse 7). There are times when God chooses not to "send" help, but to actually "be" the help that we need. At the Cross, God chose to respond to humanity's greatest need and be the grace they needed, even though they did not deserve it! By a direct route, God leads His people to keep them from present dangers. God's deliverance, provision, and loving care for His people deserve acknowledgment and gratitude. God's people should "praise the Lord" for His goodness and wonderful works for humanity (verse 8). God satisfies and fills those who are longing for Him. Those who seek God will find Him and be filled. For this, we should give God praise (verse 9).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Do you think it is easy to lose sight of God's many blessings? Why or why not?

Thank God for His Love (Psalm 107:39-43)

KJV

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

NIV

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

While verses 35-38 (not in today's lesson) speak of God's hand of blessing and triumph, **verse 39**, by contrast, notes that God's hand brings burden and tribulation to the oppressors by decreasing their numbers and humbling them with affliction and sorrow. The oppressor's sad fate is not random or accidental—it is the Lord's doing. God judges and pours out contempt on our enemies, making them a laughingstock and causing them to wander in waste lands (**verse 40**). On the other hand, however, God looks upon those who have been unjustly oppressed and afflicted and lifts them out of their circumstances (**verse 41**). God does His work in the sight of everyone—He blesses His people openly. Those who trust God faithfully will witness God's deliverance and rejoice while the wicked remain silent (**verse 42**). The psalmist closes with a word to the wise: they should pause and consider what the Lord has done (**verse 43**). God's pattern of love, redemption, and restoration should ignite a flame of unprompted, unscripted gratitude and devotion. "Let the redeemed of the LORD say so"—let us "give thanks unto the LORD" (verse 1).

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

How can the knowledge of God bring the faithful out of crisis situations?

A Closing Thought

Jesus offers His peace as a remedy for life's troubles (see John 16:33). His peace is not the absence of trouble, but a serenity of mind and heart that believers find in the midst of their hardships. Even if God delays your deliverance, you can find peace in the assurance that He knows what is going on, He hears your cries and petitions, and, at just the right time, He will act and deliver. God proves Himself faithful over and over again.

Your Life

What is the most incredible experience you have ever had with God? How has He made you a witness of His power? You have a reason to praise God and testify of His goodness. No one can tell your story like you can. Has God spared your life? Healed you? Saved you from trouble? Then, whatever you do, say so!

Your World!

After Sunday school, turn to someone and briefly share a story of God's deliverance in your life. Then encourage your listener to pass it on, sharing his/her testimony with someone else. God is so good; spread the word! Share the results next week.

Closing Prayer

Dear Lord, we thank You for the many ways You continue to protect and deliver us. Help us not to be so distracted by the details of life that we miss the beauty of what You have done for us. We pray this in the precious name of Jesus. Amen.

Conclusion

(Preparing for Next Week's Lesson)

While reading the Background Scripture, consider this thought: "This is our house!"