

Give Thanks
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Turn in your Bibles to Psalm 116

- How would you thank someone who saved your life?
 - Example: Andy Saves Gomer
 - Real Life Example: Miracle in the Hudson
- Imagine if a person had literally been the difference between life and death for you! How would you feel about that person?
- Though you could never repay someone who saved your life; you would no doubt say: “I’m ETERNALLY GRATEFUL!”

Guess what? Those of us who are believers in CHRIST DO have someone who has SAVED OUR LIVES and we SHOULD BE ETERNALLY GRATEFUL!

- The Writer of Psalm 116 really WAS ETERNALLY GRATEFUL and as we’ll see, for very good reason.
- Why do YOU love the Lord?
- If someone asked you today would you have a passionate response to give?
- In the first two verses the Psalmist makes it clear how he feels:

Psalm 116

¹ I love the LORD, for he heard my voice;
he heard my cry for mercy.

² Because he turned his ear to me,
I will call on him as long as I live.

- We husbands are sometimes pretty POOR LISTENERS...right?
- We serve a LISTENING LORD!
- He’s always ready to hear everything about our lives...the good or the bad.
- He has an INFINITE ATTENTION SPAN.

Just this week WSB TV had a story about 911 callers being put on HOLD in Atlanta:

The Atlanta Police Department’s own records show that 30,813 calls were placed on hold for more than 40 seconds in two-and-a-half months this spring and summer, which city guidelines say would be an “unacceptable” length of time.

Back on January 25th of this year Channel 2 reported:

As Wilford Reed tried to keep his house from going up in flames, his Grant park neighbors dialed 911 and got recorded messages. Nearby resident Sara Riney said, “I just think that the system is broken. Everyone was on hold with 911. Everyone in the street was on their cell phones. They just had a recording. You couldn’t talk to a real person,”

- Our LISTENING LORD NEVER PUTS US ON HOLD when we cry for help!
- The writer of Psalm 116 said the Lord heard his “cry for mercy”
- What do you think he means in verse 2 when he says “I will call on him?”
 - How do we call on God? Prayer.
- So then what did this Psalmist say he had committed to for “as long as I live?”
 - A relationship of prayer.
- This writer had good reason to be grateful to God.
- Look at verses 3 through 6

³ The cords of death entangled me,
the anguish of the grave ^[a] came upon me;
I was overcome by trouble and sorrow.

⁴ Then I called on the name of the LORD :
"O LORD, save me!"

- And how did the LORD respond?

⁵ The LORD is gracious and righteous;
our God is full of compassion.

⁶ The LORD protects the simplehearted;
when I was in great need, he saved me.

- In verse 5 the writer is saying: “Let me tell you about the nature of MY GOD!”
 - He’s GRACIOUS – Giving me what I don’t deserve
 - He’s RIGHTEOUS – Full of INTEGRITY; Always doing the RIGHT THING
 - He’s Full of COMPASSION – He has a DEEP INNER FEELING OF SYMPATHY for the needs we have
- In verse 6 when he says the LORD “protects the simple” he doesn’t mean the “simple HEADED” he means the “SIMPLE HEARTED”...He protects those who come to Him in CHILDLIKE Faith.
- Look at verse 7:

⁷ Be at rest once more, O my soul,
for the LORD has been good to you.

- Who is the writer talking to in that verse?
 - His “soul”; Himself
 - Ever talk to yourself? We ALL do. Now if you do it out loud people may begin to wonder about you.
 - Here’s a life principle...

“BE CAREFUL WHAT YOU SAY WHEN YOU TALK TO YOURSELF!”

- When we’re STRESSED and TIRED and SICK and FED UP what kind of things is that “little voice in your head saying?”
 - “You think things are bad NOW...just wait!”
 - “You must not have enough faith or you wouldn’t be going through this!”
 - “You must have done something REALLY BAD!”
 - “Why are you wasting your time talking to God?”
 - “He’s not listening!”
 - “You know why? Cause He’s NOT THERE!”
- Do you recognize the ACCENT of that voice? As my friend Steve Brown would say: It’s from the PIT OF HELL...IT SMELLS LIKE SMOKE!

“BE CAREFULWHAT YOU SAY WHEN YOU TALK TO YOURSELF!”

- Do you know how to tell the WHISPERS of JESUS from the WHISPERS of SATAN?
- Look back at verse 7. What’s the key word in that verse?
 - REST - The Psalmist reminding himself he can REST CONFIDENTLY in the Lord

Matthew 11:28 (New International Version) Jesus said:

28"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you REST.

- The WHISPERS of JESUS are WHISPERS OF HOPE and PEACE and REST
- The writer is saying to himself: “I can rest in the knowledge that God has been good to me in the past.”
- Then in verse 8 he goes further:

⁸ For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death,
my eyes from tears,
my feet from stumbling,

- And WHY did God so graciously DELIVER the writer of this Psalm? Verse 9.

⁹ that I may walk before the LORD
in the land of the living.

- God had SAVED HIM FOR A PURPOSE
- And that term WALK BEFORE THE LORD means LIVING BEFORE THE LORD
- Ever wonder why we call the Christian life our “WALK”?
- Think about it: Every step I take from the time I get up in the morning to the time I lie down at night I’m WALKING BEFORE THE LORD... He sees every step I take. And if I’ve given my life to Him...
 - He’s LEADING and I’m.... FOLLOWING
 - When He TURNS.... I TURN
 - When He STOPS... I STOP
 - When He MOVES ... I MOVE
 - I’m not walking CROOKED I’m walking...STRAIGHT
 - Who decides where we go? HE DOES
 - Who knows the right path? HE DOES
 - If there’s DANGER UP AHEAD who gets there first? HE DOES
- Why would this Psalmist decide to devote EVERY STEP HE TAKES to the LORD? Look at verse 12...he asks the KEY QUESTION of the whole Psalm:

¹² How can I repay the LORD
for all his goodness to me?

- We can NEVER REPAY the LORD FOR WHAT HE’S DONE FOR US
- It’s a GIFT!

Ephesians 2:8

8For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God

- “Jesus paid it ALL...ALL to Him I owe”
- “Nothing in my hand I bring, Simply to the cross I cling”
- We can NEVER REPAY the LORD for what He’s done for us
- However, our GRATITUDE will SHOW!

John 14:15 (New International Version) Jesus said:

15 "If you love me, you will obey what I command.

- What did He command? Look at...

Mark 12:30 and 31

³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.^[f] ³¹The second is this: "Love your neighbor as yourself."^[g] There is no commandment greater than these."

- That's the WALK Jesus asks for!
 - Love HIM
 - Love OTHERS
- Look at these remaining verses in Psalm 116 beginning in verse 13

¹³ I will lift up the cup of salvation
and call on the name of the LORD.

- The cup of salvation...two thoughts here
 - This is a picture of Old Testament sacrifice in two ways
 - LIFTING the cup would be a form of giving THANKS to God for SALVATION and ASKING FOR MORE GRACE

John Piper said...

The cup is lifted for another filling. More, Lord, more! Show your inexhaustible Self! Which is to say, God will be most glorified in...me if we keep calling on him as the only all-satisfying Treasure of our lives.

- We also think of the DRINK OFFERING -

Warren Wiersbe said...

(As) part of this sacrifice, the priest would pour out a portion of wine on the altar as a symbol of the worshipper's life poured out to serve the Lord. This was indeed a "cup of salvation" for the psalmist whose life could have been destroyed by the enemy.

¹⁴ I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people.

Our Commentator Says...

Vows were promises made to the Lord voluntarily. They were usually made during times of personal crisis...and...fulfilled in the presence of all His people.

Remember the story of Hannah in 1 Samuel chapter 1?

In bitterness of soul Hannah wept much and prayed to the LORD. ¹¹ And she made a vow, saying, "O LORD Almighty, if you will only look upon your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the LORD for all the days of his life..."

Hannah kept her vow and gave her son back to the Lord for His service.

By the way, we don't "bargain" with God and any vow we make to Him isn't a way of "earning" our Salvation.

¹⁵ Precious in the sight of the LORD
is the death of his saints.

¹⁶ O LORD, truly I am your servant;
I am your servant, the son of your maidservant ^[c] ;
you have freed me from my chains.

¹⁷ I will sacrifice a thank offering to you
and call on the name of the LORD.

¹⁸ I will fulfill my vows to the LORD
in the presence of all his people,

¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the LORD—
in your midst, O Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD. ^[d]

About these verses Warren Wiersbe writes:

After he had been delivered, the psalmist wanted to express his gratitude to the Lord, and he did so in four ways.

1. *A THANK OFFERING to the Lord*
2. *He LIFTED THE CUP OF SALVATION*
3. *He called on the LORD and publicly thanked Him for His mercies*
4. *He kept the promises he made to the Lord during his time of great suffering and danger*

A.W. Tozer said that thankfulness is healthy:

"Thanksgiving has great curative power. The heart that is constantly overflowing with gratitude will be safe from those attacks of resentment and gloom that bother so many religious persons. A thankful heart cannot be cynical."

- It's obvious that the writer of this Psalm didn't just SAY he was THANKFUL he SHOWED that he was THANKFUL.
- What about YOU and ME?
- This Thursday will we just reel off a quick list so we can get to the TURKEY and DRESSING quickly?
- Or will we take the time to REFLECT on verse 12

¹² How can I repay the LORD
for all his goodness to me?

- How would you repay someone who SAVED YOUR LIFE?
- You might feel that you OWED them EVERYTHING

After the attempt on his life in 1981 Ronald Reagan wrote...

“After I left the hospital and was back in the White House, I wrote a few words about the shooting in my diary that concluded: ‘Whatever happens now I owe my life to God and will try to serve him in every way I can.’”

So what’s the TAKEAWAY?

- We should be thankful that we serve a PERSONAL GOD who is ALWAYS LISTENING for our cry
- We express our CONFIDENCE in God by RESTING in His GRACE
- We express our THANKSGIVING to God by living in COMPLETE TRUST of His goodness.
- We express our THANKFULNESS to God by worshiping Him.
- We should live every day with the same sense of gratitude as someone whose life has been saved --- because if we are believers in Christ...OURS HAS
- We need to be mindful of that EVERY DAY not just every November