

WHEN YOU ONLY HAVE TIME FOR ONE VERSE - Part two

Sunday, June 11th, 2023 - 5:30 p.m.

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THE SUREST WAY TO PRESERVE OR WASTE GREAT INFLUENCE

Psalm 107:2 - “Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble”

There is no denying the *value* and *appropriateness* of a thankful heart for those who have been redeemed. But that is *not* what this verse is all about. This verse isn't about the *heart*. It's about the *voice*. Specifically, it's a verse about *giving voice* to the thankfulness that is present in the *heart*.

There is a vast difference between *being* thankful and *giving* thanks. Giving thanks is what David is pressing home in this psalm. This idea is so important to the Psalmist he repeats the same longing of his soul over and over again:

Psalm 107:1 - “Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever!”

Psalm 107:8 - “Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men!”

Psalm 107:15 - “Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men!”

Psalm 107:22 - “And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving, and tell of his deeds in songs of joy!”

Psalm 107:31-32 - “Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of men! [32] Let them extol him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders.”

Of course, the amazing thing is that such instruction should have to be given at all. Look at what the Lord has done for these people: They were ***lost*** and have been led into safety (**4**). They were ***hungry and thirsty*** and have been nourished by the Lord’s provision (**5-6**). They were ***bound and in prison*** and the Lord set them free (**10-16**). They were ***lost and drowning at sea*** and the Lord rescued them (**23-32**).

All of these are meant to serve as ***pictures of deliverance and rescue***. Some of the Psalmist’s listeners knew of certain aspects of this divine deliverance in a very literal way. They are the descendants of those who had been rescued out of Egypt and led through the wilderness and fed miraculously by God’s Almighty hand. Now they were again being delivered from Babylonian captivity in the same supernatural manner.

So the Psalmist **reminds these worshipers who they are**. These worshipers live on the **post-deliverance** side of life. They are the **redeemed (2)**. And they are the redeemed because, over and over again, in a host of different circumstances, in situations from which they could never have freed themselves, **they called out to the Lord and He rescued them!**

In view of all this, the call to praise is an **imperative**. In view of all this, their silence is **sinful**. That's why each of the four **deliverance stanzas** of this Psalm ends with the same **call to praise**. **We are the worshipers who have been redeemed! We** are the lost who have been found. **We** are the hungry who have been fed. **We** are the captives who have been liberated. **We** are those who were drowning in hopelessness and are now set upon a rock.

How we need this reminder today! If we only see ourselves as the **uninformed** who need to come to church to **learn**, we will be silent in terms of praise. If we forget we are the **redeemed** - if we no longer see ourselves as naked, poor and blind but for the strong hand of the Lord on our lives - our Christian walk will become a dry business indeed.

Look with me at our text for the day:

Psalm 107:2 - "Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he has redeemed from trouble"

If I **know** I have been redeemed, why is it so important to **say so**? Why isn't it enough just to **know** I've been redeemed in my own heart? Why does this thankfulness need to be **voiced**?

1) **PRAISE STRENGTHENS AND ENRICHES EACH EXPERIENCE OF GRACE IN MY OWN HEART**

Praise is like oxygen for your inner spiritual life. **Silent** discipleship will always be **weak** discipleship. Experiences of grace cool when they are silenced. Love for God that never gets expressed in praise will have a short shelf-life. Your own convictions about the goodness and faithfulness of the Lord are fanned to burning life and strengthened as you express them in praise - ***“Let the redeemed of the Lord say so!”***

You are giving your own doubts the upper hand if you are not giving voice to thankful praise to the Lord. Praise is to your own doubts what penicillin is to an infection. Discouragement and praise are never roommates for long. They simply can't abide each other's presence.

The defeat of doubt involves more than just your intellect. Certainly victory over doubt **includes** the intellect. No Christian should strive to be **empty-headed**. We need to have a **reason** for the hope that is in us. But it is also true that you can be **accurately informed** and still **dry and dull in your heart**.

This problem is frequently an issue, not of **information** but **expression**. Paul talks of a wonderful solution to be found in the worship life of the church:

Ephesians 5:18-20 - “...be filled with the Spirit, [19] addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, [20] giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ”

Do you see it? Thankful worship and praise - **“saying so”** in the language of the Psalmist - puts **“melody in the heart”**(19). That’s what **“saying so”** does. It puts **music into life**. The Spirit uses **outer** praise to warm the **inner** life with joy and melody.

So that’s the first reason we are so passionately exhorted by the Psalmist, as the redeemed of the Lord, to **“Say so.”** Praise strengthens and enriches the experience of grace in my own heart.

But there's another reason perhaps even more important:

2) **THE SINCERE, THANKFUL TESTIMONY OF AN HONEST PERSON HAS GREAT INFLUENCE ON THOSE WHO ARE ALSO IN NEED OF HOPE AND HELP**

Now it all starts to become rather obvious. We can clearly see the good wisdom of God. The people around us can't read our *thoughts*. They need to hear our *words*. That's why this voicing of praise and testimony is to take place in the midst of the rest of the church:

Psalm 107:32 - "Let them extol him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders."

There is incredible power in the shared story of the Lord's work on behalf of the redeemed. The church is to be *charged* with this kind of life. It should *brim* with the sharing of hope and faith and courage. There are enough skeptics and cynics and grumblers. "Let the *redeemed of the Lord* say so!" Their positive voice must be lifted up above everything else.

Think of our Sunday morning altar times and Sunday night prayer groups - **especially** our Sunday night prayer groups. People come, some very shyly, with their problems and burdens. And I'll tell you something very important about each one of them: **They rarely come with pure, unmixed, confident faith.** They come with fear. They come with doubt. They aren't bad Christians. They're just human like the rest of us. Some have carried their burden for so long they can't imagine living life without it. They're usually a mixture - like the man in the New Testament - of both **belief** and **unbelief**.

Now, you're in a group praying with those people. And suddenly, as prayer goes up to the Lord - as they "**call upon the Lord**" like the Psalmist described - you tie in with their story. You had the **same** request months, perhaps years earlier. You've gone through the **same** situation.

Here's what you should do: Immediately, when the person praying is finished, you should **speak up**. You should "**say so.**" You should lovingly tell that person, "I know God will do this for you. And I know He is more than able. You see, I've been right where you are tonight. And I wasn't any more worthy than you. But I called out to the Lord and He heard my cry. He lifted me out of that very same pit. He's redeemed my life at the very point you're facing right now. So take courage. Don't despair. And don't ever give up!"

Your assurance can seize upon the doubter's timidity. Your words can turn the light of hope on in a dark, fear-filled heart. The testimony of the redeemed is life -giving.

Every few months our gymnasium is filled with people donating blood. They literally give physical life to people they don't even know. And every Sunday the testimony of the redeemed gives spiritual life in just the same way to those needing hope, courage and faith.

God wants to hook up your faith to someone in need. He wants you to be a donor. There are no substitutes to this kind of life. It can't be manufactured in any other way in the body of Christ.

Let me close with a further application of this truth from a wonderful passage of Scripture:

Psalm 78:4-7 - "We will not hide them from their children, but tell to the coming generation the glorious deeds of the Lord, and his might, and the wonders that he has done. [5] He established a testimony in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers to teach to their children, [6] that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and arise and tell them to their children, [7] so that they should set their hope in God and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments...."

The silent redeemed **rob** the next generation of its greatest blessing. Just recently my wife, Reni, used this text as a header and wrote out a list of some of the blessings of God on our home and gave it to our two daughters. They had no idea of some of these wonderful acts of kindness the Lord had bestowed upon our family.

She told them of how the Lord provided us with a beautiful car for \$1 when we had no money. She told them of how the Lord protected her when someone broke into our house late at night when we had just moved to Newmarket. I was away speaking at a men's retreat. She told them of how that very night of the break-in the Lord woke grandma Horban up with the sudden, intense burden to pray for Reni and the two small girls in their new strange house. She told them of how not a single hair was hurt on any of them.

The Lord has manifested His strong arm many times for all of us here today. We've been "***crowned with loving kindness and tender mercies.***"

But the point of this Psalm is just ***receiving*** these mercies doesn't ***complete*** the Lord's plan for them in our lives. The redeemed of the Lord must say so. It's a command. Others need the heat of your fire to warm their hearts just as you will need theirs at another time.

Perhaps you've had tough times lately. Remember, you measure the blessing and care of the Lord on your life not just by the problems you **avoid** (who could accurately count that number?), but by the problems He's **brought you through**. He **removes** you from some problems. He **sustains** you through others. But it's all of His grace. And it's all to be shared.

3) **REMEMBER, THE TESTIMONY OF THE LAY PERSON HAS FAR MORE POWER THAN THAT OF THE PREACHER**

That's because the witness of the clergy is **expected**. The words we say are partly **discounted** by those with even the slightest doubt or suspicion.

Also, the testimony of the superstar has less and less credibility. They are in the hands of managers and image makers. They have become the stuff of big religious business. They have the feel of a grand production.

There is no doubt about it. The honest testimony of the average saint is the one that comes with arresting strength. Your testimony is the most important one of all because you have no perceived agenda up your sleeve. This is why God has always used average, converted people (the ones the Psalmist called the "**redeemed**") to change the world.

Don't hoard the goodness of the Lord to yourself. Grace multiplies in expression. You must **lose** your life in ministry to others if you ever want to **find** it in the truest sense.

Don't hesitate. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Start right away.