

Psalm 106

Read Psalm 106:1-3: A question is asked: “Who can talk about the great things that God has done? Each generation possesses many individualistic experiences with God; never to be seen by other men. I am sure that the homesteaders who were starving and working their hands to the bone saw God provide differently than the millennial generation. God is not only endless; but our intersection and views of him are in vastly different settings.

Lord, You have been our dwelling place in all generations. (Psalm 90:1)

The implication is: Who has a clue about all of the far-reaching and complicated works of God’s hand? Nobody can even begin to understand these things. They are far beyond our comprehension.

Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind, and said: “Who is this who darkens counsel By words without knowledge? Now [a]prepare yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer Me. “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Tell Me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements? Surely you know! Or who stretched the [b]line upon it? To what were its foundations fastened? Or who laid its cornerstone, When the morning stars sang together, And all the sons of God shouted for joy? (Job 38:1-7)

Saying “Praise the LORD” can become such a cliché or part of Christian-eze that we may not really even be thinking about what we are saying. In order to honestly praise God; we need to reflect on what he has done for us. An interesting question is posed here. “Who can actually praise God?” You would think that any person can praise God. Not so. A person cannot truly get excited about something that they are unfamiliar with.

...no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by Holy Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:3b)

When an unbeliever says “Praise the LORD” they might just be mocking Christians or mindlessly be repeating a common saying.

This psalm goes on to add that a person cannot really describe the great things that God has done in the world, or in their life unless they are seeking God’s righteousness. This is

why seminaries and the theologians who study the scriptures so carefully do not seem to get around to being filled with the Holy Spirit. They are not seeking God's righteousness in their own lives. They just want facts. The scribes at the time of Jesus' birth knew where to tell the wise men to find the Christ child; but they did not care to walk seven miles to see him. How could a person study the scriptures so carefully for so long, and not apply the content to themselves?

For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. (Romans 10:2-3)

These verses also tell us that God's mercy endures forever. Deuteronomy 9 tells us about how the children of Israel literally provoked God to anger from the day they left Egypt for the entire 40 years in the wilderness. Moses laid on the ground interceding for 40 days praying that God would not destroy them. In fact; his intercessory prayer was interrupted by their sin outbreak in the camp...that he had to put a stop to. That is a ton of mercy.

“Do not think in your heart, after the Lord your God has cast them out before you, saying, ‘Because of my righteousness the Lord has brought me in to possess this land’; but it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord is driving them out from before you. It is not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart that you go in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations that the Lord your God drives them out from before you, and that He may fulfill the word which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Therefore understand that the Lord your God is not giving you this good land to possess because of your righteousness, for you are a stiff-necked people. “Remember! Do not forget how you provoked the Lord your God to wrath in the wilderness. From the day that you departed from the land of Egypt until you came to this place, you have been rebellious against the Lord. Also in Horeb you provoked the Lord to wrath, so that the Lord was angry enough with you to have destroyed you. When I went up into the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant which the Lord made with you, then I stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. I neither ate bread nor drank water. Then the Lord delivered to me two tablets of stone written with the finger of God, and on them were all the words which the Lord had spoken to you on the mountain from the midst of the fire in the day of the assembly. And it came to pass, at the end of forty days and forty nights, that the Lord gave me the two tablets of stone, the tablets of the covenant. “Then the Lord said to me, ‘Arise,

go down quickly from here, for your people whom you brought out of Egypt have acted corruptly; they have quickly turned aside from the way which I commanded them; they have made themselves a molded image.’ (Deuteronomy 9:4-12)

In fact, the conquest of the Canaanites was not about the righteousness of the children of Israel. It was about the time to judge the Amorites.

Then He said to Abram: “Know certainly that your descendants will be strangers in a land that is not theirs, and will serve them, and they will afflict them four hundred years. And also the nation whom they serve I will judge; afterward they shall come out with great possessions. Now as for you, you shall go to your fathers in peace; you shall be buried at a good old age. But in the fourth generation they shall return here, for the iniquity of the Amorites is not yet complete.” (Genesis 15:13-16)

Read Psalm 106:4-7: A zealous follower of God just wants to be part of what God is doing. A person who has no intention of following God is not going to subject himself to God’s demands and direction. Intellectual honesty is important here. People much greater than ourselves failed miserably. How can you pretend that the bible is real and then fail to follow it? We have overwhelming evidence of God’s power. We have books written about what happens to people who live contrary to God’s will for their life. We are incredibly blessed to get on the right side of history. We are fools to think that we can be the exception.

Any student of the bible can see that God has had a lot of mercy on his people. There is a special treatment and place of privilege that comes to those who are considered to be holy. The Jews are a walking billboard of God’s grace. They rebelled as soon as they crossed the Red Sea. How can you build faith in a person who is witnessing miracles; and still rebels? We offend God and our neighbors in most of what we say and do. It is the nature of all mankind to rebel against authority. The Jews paid a price; but it would have been the same if Jesus came to the Chinese instead. God has tied himself to the children of Israel. They have a role to play in prophecy; so God keeps saving a remnant.

The children of Israel are a little like the pastor's kids. They have been drilled on the fundamentals over and over; and they want to get away from it. We want to venture out and find something new for ourselves. Our nature is to gain acceptance because we are worthy. God’s plan is to show us that no person is worthy. It is a hard pill to swallow. It is

hard to get excited about being put in a place of blessing because we could not get it done on our own. It requires a change in our mind set.

Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin. But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, even the righteousness of God, through faith in Jesus Christ, to all and on all who believe. For there is no difference; (Romans 3:19-22)

Read Psalm 106:8-12: Deuteronomy 11 is written about the generation who crossed the Red Sea, and perished in the wilderness. They saw it all; but they had no faith. The next generation needed to memorialize and think about all that their ancestors experienced. God is making his power known to mankind. The good news of the gospel in the New Testament is without context and value if we do not know what happened to all of those generations of people in the Old Testament. Are we living more of an Old Testament rebellious lifestyle? Or are we fully embracing God's goodness without having to go through the consequences of sinful living? In a sense, those who were rescued from severe sin have more appreciation and zeal for God.

But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more, (Romans 5:20)

Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.” (Luke 7:47)

I have a friend who went to the El Hongo prison in Mexico and paid \$150 per person to bail them out of jail. The arrangement was that they would have to attend his live-in christian training camp in a lemon grove near Valle Guadalupe, Ensenada, Mexico. They were taught a trade; so that they would not resort to their old schemes and illegal ways to survive. They would study the bible daily, and then engage in work for 3-6 months. Some of these men became experts in their craft; and they had a high demand for their work. This is like God blessing the Jews. They were lawbreakers; who were rescued from their captors; and taught a new code to live by. It really had nothing to do with them. We want so badly to be recognized independently.

We are walking billboards for God's grace. When people see us they should see an average guy who has a lot of blessings. They should not see a great guy who is an

independent superstar. It can be a long journey in the faith to get to a place where honoring God and loving others is all we care about.

Read Psalm 106:13-33: The bible illustrates that it is impossible for man to remain impressed by God without faith. Eve was dissatisfied with perfection. The generation in the wilderness saw huge and continual miracles. They were worshiping idols while God's pillar for fire by night, and cloud by day remained with them.

“This is he who was in the [e]congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles[f] to give to us, whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, ‘Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.’ And they made a calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: ‘Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.’ (Acts 7:38-43)

Fortunately for them; God tied his reputation to save men to them. There would be no other conceivable reason to have saved the multitude of complainers and rebels, who tried to displace Moses and turn back.

Read Psalm 106:34-48: The exodus generation died in the desert without faith. They battled wills with Moses the whole time. They were just faking it to stay out of trouble. The new generation heard the Law again (Deuteronomy) just before crossing the Jordan River. They did not fully obey God. They left some of the enemies of their souls alone. They were tired of all of the conflict; and wanted to get to normal living. These people of the flesh in Canaan became very influential on the children of Israel. They yielded to the pop culture; and also began to worship their idols and sacrifice their children in the same ways. God told them to have no association with the associated temptations that can own your soul; and make you their slave. Today we have a pluralistic society. It is considered a virtue to live and let live. God is very clear about not compromising certain things.

So Samuel said: “Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of [d]witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king. (1 Samuel 15:22-23)

Mankind has turned away from God in every setting. We were dissatisfied in the Garden of Eden. The enslaved children of Israel who prayed for relief only wanted a means to get away from their misery. They did not continue in his ways. The land of abundance in Canaan was fully stocked for them. They traded that all away to chase their imaginations and lusts. We are all easily misguided. Eventually they were kicked out of the holy land and again became under the controls of others. God again reached out after 70 years, and gave them an opportunity to return. Saving mankind has been a nearly-impossible task throughout time. Our foolishness is a measuring stick of God’s greatness. Who else could save us from ourselves?