

Recalling to Retell God's Wondrous Works

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[0 : 00] Psalm 105, let me pray before I read God's Word. God, thank you for this opportunity to get together as your people, people whom you have gathered as your special possession, people whom you have redeemed for yourself, so that we might obey you, so we might worship you.

We ask God that as we go through this psalm together, that you would remind us of the wondrous works that you have done in our lives and in the history of your people, so that we might be spurred on to praise and a life of worship.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Psalm 105. We'll give thanks to the Lord, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, sing to him, sing praises to him, tell of all his wondrous works.

Glory in his holy name, let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Seek the Lord and his strength, seek his presence continually. Remember the wondrous works that he has done, his miracles and the judgments he uttered.

O offspring of Abraham, his servant, children of Jacob, his chosen ones. He is the Lord our God. His judgments are in all the earth. He remembers his covenant forever, the word that he commanded for a thousand generations.

[1 : 33] The covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant, saying, To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance.

When they were a few in number, of little account and sojourners in it, wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people, he allowed no one to oppress them. He rebuked kings on their account, saying, Touch not my anointed ones, do my prophets no harm.

When he summoned the famine on the land and broke all supply of bread, he had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. His feet were hurt with fetters, his neck was put in a collar of iron, until what he had said came to pass.

The word of the Lord tested him. The king sent and released him. The ruler of the people set him free. He made him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions, to bind his princes at his pleasure and to teach his elders wisdom.

Then Israel came to Egypt. Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham, and the Lord made his people very fruitful and made them stronger than their foes.

[2 : 45] He turned their hearts to hate his people, to deal craftily with his servants. He sent Moses, his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. They performed his signs among them and miracles in the land of Ham.

He sent darkness and made the land dark. They did not rebel against his words. He turned their waters into blood and caused their fish to die. Their land swarmed with frogs, even in the chambers of their kings.

He spoke, and there came swarms of flies and gnats through their country. He gave them hail for rain and fiery lightning bolts through their land. He struck down their vines and fig trees and shattered the trees of their country.

He spoke, and the locusts came, young locusts without number, which devoured all the vegetation in their land and ate up the fruit of their ground. He struck down all the firstborn in their land, the firstfruits of all their strength.

Then he brought out Israel with silver and gold, and there was none among his tribes who stumbled. Egypt was glad when they departed, for dread of them had fallen upon it. He spread a cloud for a covering and fire to give light to night.

[3 : 48] They asked, and he brought quail, and he gave them bread from heaven in abundance. He opened the rock, and water gushed out. It flowed through the desert like a river, for he remembered his holy promise in Abraham his servant.

So he brought his people out with joy, his chosen ones with singing, and he gave them the lands of the nations, and they took possession of the fruit of the people's toil, that they might keep statutes and observe his laws.

Praise the Lord. I don't know if you guys have ever heard someone tell a story in a very halting and fragmented way.

Or maybe you've told such a story before. You start to tell a story, and then you're hazy on the details, so you wonder out loud whether it happened on this occasion or that occasion, or whether it was this guy or that guy that said this or that.

And soon enough, you've lost all the momentum, and the story never gets off the ground. And you probably also know a few people that know how to tell stories exceptionally well.

[4 : 56] They tell really good stories. And usually, good storytellers have a couple things in common. One is that they tend to talk a lot. And two is that they tend to repeat themselves a lot.

They tell the same stories in different contexts often. And that's because that's the reason why they're good, because they're practiced. They've been telling the stories, and because they've repeated the stories over and over again to different people, the details are fresh for them, and that's why they're able to retell it in an engaging way.

So in order to retell a story well, you need first to recall it well. And Psalm 105 is really teaching us to recall the wondrous works of God so that we can retell it to others.

It's telling us to rehearse the wondrous works of God so that we can retell it to other people. So the first part, 1 to 11, verses 1 to 11 is about retelling God's wondrous works, the command to retell God's wondrous works.

And then verses 12 to 45 is the command to recall God's wondrous works, what he's done in the past. And you can see in verses 1 to 5 a series of commands.

[6 : 03] Give thanks, call upon God's name, make known his deeds, sing, sing praises, tell of all his wondrous works, glory in his holy name, rejoice, seek the Lord, seek his presence, remember.

So these are the commands to retell God's wondrous works to those around us. And then that hinge command, remember, connects it to the rest. Verses 5 to 11 describe our part of the covenant to God, our relationship to God, and God's part of the covenant to us in a mirroring structure, verses 5 to 11.

So verse 5a tells us to remember the wondrous works that God has done. And then verses 8 to 11 tell us that God himself remembers his covenant forever. Verse 5b tells us to remember the judgments that God ordered.

Verse 7b tells us that God's judgments are in all the earth. And then verse 6 tells us who we are in this covenant relationship, the offspring of Abraham, God's servant, children of Jacob, God's chosen ones.

And then verse 7a tells us who God is. He's the Lord. That's the proper name for God, Yahweh. He's the Lord, our God. So there's this mutuality in our relationship with God.

[7 : 14] God is our Lord. We are his servants. God remembers his covenant with us, and we are to remember how he's kept his covenant and praise and worship him. And verse 11 closes this section, first section of the psalm, by telling us, reminding us of God's promise.

To you, I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance. And the rest of the psalm is really about recalling those wondrous works that God did in giving his people the land of Canaan as their inheritance.

There are three major geographic movements in that next section, verses 12 to 45. So 12 to 22, recall God's wondrous works from the wilderness to Egypt.

And then 23 to 36, about God's wondrous works from Egypt back out to the wilderness. And then verses 37 to 45 is about from the wilderness to the promised land.

And because this redemptive outline of the old covenant people of God, it's a shadow of the redemptive realities that we've experienced through Christ.

[8 : 19] It's the shadow of the new covenant people. And there is an application for all of us as well as we're reading this psalm, even though it's about something that happened in the past to Israel. Twice in this psalm, for example, God's people are described as sojourners.

Look at verse 12 and verse 23. So sojourners in the wilderness and sojourners in Egypt. And 1 Peter chapter 2, 11 describes us Christians this way.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul. So Israel's sojourning in the wilderness and in Egypt foreshadows our sojourning in the world.

And Israel's possession of the promised land foreshadows our eventual full possession of the kingdom of God and the new heavens and the new earth. So we could relate all of these things to our circumstances as well.

So so let's first look at the faithfulness of God to his people from the wilderness to Egypt in verses 12 to 22. Verses 12 to 15 say this, when they were few in number of little account and sojourners in it wandering from nation to nation from one kingdom to another people.

[9 : 29] He allowed no one to oppress them. He rebuked kings on their account saying, touch not my anointed ones do my prophets no harm. I think because we've rehearsed or heard this story so many times of God's, of the exodus and that redemption of his people that it's, we sometimes forget how far fetched it really is.

You know, that how unlikely it was for this to actually happen to them. You know, I mean, it began with God promising Abraham, right, a people, a nation and a place for them to dwell in with the presence of God.

A people, a place and the presence of God with them. The only thing that he really had going for him was the presence of God because he didn't even have a single child to his name at the time God gave him the promise, right?

And he didn't have any parcel of land that he could call his own. And so he was a sojourner, a wanderer in foreign nations with no place to call his own and yet God protected him and his family and he even rebuked kings on their account, he says.

So this is an allusion to Genesis 12, 17 and Genesis 23, 20, chapter 20, verse 3, where God rebukes Pharaoh, king of Egypt and Abimele, king of Gerar, respectively, on account of Abraham and his wife Sarah.

[10 : 47] So it's just, it's kind of crazy to think about, right? This little man in this big country and God rebukes kings on account of him. Likewise, Joseph began as a slave in fetters, so how unlikely is it that he, that the pharaoh, king of Egypt, will himself free this slave and make him the lord over his house and the ruler over his possession.

So like, all these things show that God literally orders the kings of earth to do the bidding of his people who are few in number and of no account. And if we were to apply that to our lives, then why do we worry and fret so much that God's plan for us might not unfold, right?

That we might, that we, that God's plan for us might be frustrated by our circumstances or whatnot because it doesn't matter if you look at the story of Israel how much the odds are stacked against us because God's promises will be fulfilled because God can order even the kings of earth to do our bidding whenever he wants.

And the phrase that God's people were few in number and of little account is reminiscent of Deuteronomy 7, 6 to 8. It says this, For you are a people holy to the Lord your God.

The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you for you were the fewest of all peoples but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

[12 : 33] That's the, and that logic of salvation applies to us as well. So why do you think you are a Christian? Why do you think that you are saved? Because if our beginning point of our answer is our merit instead of God's grace, if we start with our deservingness, whether it's our morality or our sincerity, our good works, if we start there instead of starting with God's prior love for us, then we have the sequence backwards.

God didn't choose his people because they were numerous. He chose them while they were the fewest. Likewise, God chose us while we were still dead in our trespasses and sins. So secondly, let's look at God's faithfulness to his people from Egypt to the wilderness in verses 23 to 36.

Jacob came to Egypt with his relatively small extended family, but as verse 24 says, the Lord made his people very fruitful and made them stronger than their foes.

So stronger than Egypt, which was arguably the most powerful nation in the world at the time. And you can see God's sovereign hand through all of history, right? Verse 25 tells us that it was God who turned their hearts to hate his people to deal craftily with his servants.

So even though we could look at that and see Egypt turning against Israel and think that they were subject to the whims of the Egyptians, their hatred, their power. But it was actually God who turned the Egyptians against Israel because that was his way of bringing about their redemption and liberation.

[14 : 10] So it's really, it's a powerful, far-reaching statement about the sovereignty of God. So likewise, then, we can be assured that nothing happens to us, even things that seem bad, even things that seem so opposed to God's will, things that happen to us, that they're not happening apart from God's sovereign control.

It happens, it's part of his plan to redeem his people and bring glory to his name. And then, verses 26 to 36, we count how God demonstrated his power through the plagues that he unleashed upon Egypt.

These plagues are really quite amazing because each plague kind of represents a subjugation and a repatriation of the gods Egyptians worshipped.

So it's like you could turn the world dark, for example, is a repudiation of the Egyptian sun god, Ra, right? And turning the Nile into blood is a repudiation of the Egyptian god of the Nile, Hapi, right?

So it's like making the land swarm with frogs is a repudiation of the Egyptian god of fertility, Heket, who was depicted in the Egyptian art with the face of a frog, right? So it's like, and so on. So basically, like, the very, very things that the Egyptians turned to for their security and the very things that they boasted of are the very points at which God exposed them and defeated them, right?

[15 : 38] It's like so, it's like so satisfying, right? But the, I mean, you could think of, I don't know, I was trying to think of an illustration, like how demoralizing that is, if you're, like one that's opposing God, right?

Like think of, I think of someone like Simone Biles, you guys know who that is? She's like an American gymnast, right? Arguably the most dominant athlete in the history of modern sports, the way she's dominating the sport that she's in.

And so she's, because usually gymnasts have like a specialty, every gymnast has like their own, the thing that they're the best at, right? So if it's like the floor exercise or a balance beam, like usually you're weaker than one, stronger than the other, or evolved.

When you fall behind in one of those events, you hope to make it up in the event that's your strength, but then when you compete against Simone Biles, it's completely demoralizing because you're weak on one and then you think you'll make it up but then you actually lose more ground and lose by a significant margin because she's just that much better than you at everything that you're good at, right?

It's like, that's like what, it's like kind of like what happens, like except in a far more drastic and dramatic way, right? That God takes all these things that Egyptians boasted about and found their strength in and then shows them, you just got nothing on me, right?

[16 : 51] And that's how powerful God is. And if that's what the Lord does for his people, like if, then of course for us, even though we might feel weak in the presence of the Egyptians, we might feel weak in our battle against the world of flesh and the devil, right?

That kept us imprisoned formally. They're no match for the Lord God who redeems his people from their slavery. and that's the, God, and Christ, as Ephesians 2 talks about, defeats each of those things, the world, flesh, and the devil.

He unites us with him so that we have his resurrection power and life in us. Even after the Exodus, the odds of Israel surviving in the wilderness and capturing the land of Canaan are long, right?

I mean, they're just, they just left their homes and now they're in the wilderness. The desert. And as verses 37 to 45 tells us, however, God leads them safely through the wilderness and into the promised land.

It says that he gave them bread from heaven and water from the rock, gave them the land of the nations. And this journey of Israel from the wilderness to the promised land foreshadows our journey from our present exile to the kingdom of God, to dwell in place with God.

[18 : 11] And that's why in John 6, 32, 35, Jesus says, truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.

I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger and whoever believes in me shall never thirst. So Jesus is explicitly taking this account in the wilderness of God providing for his people and saying, I am that provision to you from God to sustain you in this wilderness and to bring you into the promised land.

Similarly, that's why in 1 Corinthians 10, 3, 4, Paul writes that in the wilderness all of God's people ate the same spiritual food and all drank the same spiritual drink for they drank from the spiritual rock that followed them and the rock was Christ.

So this is not kind of an inappropriate allegorization of the passage. Israelites did literally drink from water coming from a rock, a literal rock. But since the Old Testament frequently uses the image of rock to describe God, God is our rock, Paul's making a theological connection that ultimately God is the rock who provided water for his people and that in this new covenant era that Christ is the rock from which living water flows as John 4 talks about.

So it's through the broken body and poured out blood of Jesus Christ through his death from the cross for our sins that we receive forgiveness and new life so that we can enter into the kingdom of God. And that brings us to the end of the psalm which gives us the purpose of this salvation.

[19 : 41] Why does God redeem a people for himself? Verse 45 says, That they might keep his statutes and observe his laws. Praise the Lord. Isn't that interesting? Right? God doesn't save them because they kept his laws.

He saves them so that they will keep his laws. And that logic is the same for us, for Christians. Ephesians 2, 8-10 says, For by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing.

It is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast but we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

Just as Israel was delivered and brought into the promised land so that they might keep God's statutes and observe his laws, the church is delivered from its slavery to sin and brought into the kingdom of God so that, not because of the good works but so that we might do good works.

And so this is this recalling the wondrous works of God not only are we able to tell his works to others it's what enables us to persevere in obedience in faith and to continue to live in this state of exile until we come to God.