

## God Will Fix It For You – Part B Ps 107

10/26/14

This morning we draw our message from Psalm 107. This psalm or song is a call to worship. It is a reminder of God's faithfulness in the nation's history and in individual's experience as well. Within this text are two key revelations that we want to embrace. First, how God's love is expressed to us in the context of our troubles in life: This revelation equips us to respond wisely to those troubles rather than simply resenting them or wondering where God is. Second, how genuine worship is birthed in our hearts: Worship is not just something we pump up through great music. Great music might facilitate the process; but worship is a response that flows out of our experience with God and our understanding of Him as a result of those experiences. So today we will be talking about worship and we will be talking about trouble and what to do about it.

Anybody here run into some trouble along your life's journey? Job was going along pretty good in life until he ran into some trouble—and the trouble was serious (financial loss, deaths in the family, personal sickness—unexpected trouble. How do you deal with it? David had a lot of wonderful experiences with God and some awesome victories; but David also had a lot of trouble along the way—His own king going berserk and throwing spears at him. King Saul chasing through the country like a common criminal—he had a baby son die, strife in the family, kids who rebelled. There were glories times in David's life when he danced for joy before the Lord; but there we also can hear the anguish of his soul in some of the Psalms he wrote during times of trouble.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> These Psalms can help us find expression in our prayers when we are going through a difficult time. For example, take the words in Psalm 61 or 62 and put them in the first person in your prayer for help.

There are four stanzas in this song that represent paths that people take in life. As an artistic piece of literature, Psalm 107 is not trying to be exhaustive of all the stories of redemption people may have; but it is giving us four pictures of how people go their own way and how God brings them into relationship with Him.<sup>2</sup> Three weeks ago, my wife, Jeanie, identified these four stories. So, I will just briefly review them.

I. Four groups of people experiencing trouble in life and God's help in time of need.

1. Wanderers in verses 4-9. People wandering through life trying to find their way, living in a wasteland-- hungry, thirsty, unsatisfied—yet unable to find a place of contentment and satisfaction--frustrated and unfulfilled. Verse 4, "Some wandered in desert wastelands...." Verse 5 "They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away." Anybody here feel your life is ebbing away—you need purpose and direction—you need God to lead you into fulfillment?

2. The Prisoners in verses 10-16 are depressed, living in a state of gloom. Circumstances have closed in on them-financial woes, relational breakdowns, addictions and other complications. They see no way out—no solution in sight. Verse 11 specifically says they got themselves in the mess "for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High." Most of my troubles have been self-imposed—the consequences of my own bad choices—following my own desires instead of doing what I knew to do. Jonah got into the belly of a fish because he rebelled against the words of God. God told him to go one way; he chose to go his own way. God Himself sent a storm into Jonah's life—a storm designed to turn him around. David said in Ps 119:67 "Before I was afflicted I went astray; but now have I kept thy word." And in verse 71 "It is good for me that I have been afflicted; that I might learn thy

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<sup>2</sup> All people who do not know God go their own way (Romans 3:10-12); but Christians who are walking in the flesh (Galatians 5:16-17) following their own desires rather than the will of God are going their own way.

statutes.” The chastening or correction David experienced from the Lord was painful and the time; but in it he humbled himself and learned the lesson to be learned and later he could see the goodness of his Heavenly Father in it all (Heb 12:11).

3. Verse 17 calls the next group Fools, “Some became fools”(How) through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities.” Verses 17-22 describes their experience. It’s important to recognize that the troubles are a consequence of their own choices. A mean old devil didn’t do it to them. They are not victims of fate. They got themselves into the trouble. In our society everybody is a victim and nobody is responsible. That leaves the door to freedom locked—because the key to freedom is an old-fashion thing called repentance. And the first step toward repentance is to acknowledge that you’ve been going the wrong way—you walked into trouble because you were moving in the wrong direction—now you are ready to turn around and walk out of the mess going the other direction.

4. The Merchants in verses 23-32 are the last group. These people are just busy making a living. They were not doing anything overtly wrong—except that sometimes we get so busy with our natural lives that we forget about the most important thing of all—relationship with God.<sup>3</sup> “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these other things will be added unto you.” So when trouble comes we really feel the whole thing is very unfair—what did I do to deserve all this? Now, before I proceed, I want to make a quick disclaimer. Not all

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<sup>3</sup> We are specifically told that trouble came to the second and third group as a consequence of their own bad choices (sins of commission). The first group seems to just be wandering aimlessly without purpose and that was their trouble. The beautiful thing is this: that trouble caused them to call out on the Lord and discover His goodness. For the last group there were no sins of commission mentioned, but we can infer a possible neglect or even absence of relationship with God. God sent the storm, “*Then* they cried out to the Lord in their trouble” (vs 28). When we’re too busy for God, we’re too busy and we may encounter a storm to help us get our priorities right.

trouble is a correction from the Lord. Paul had a lot of trouble while he was doing exactly what God was telling him to do. He had a thorn in the flesh that he asked God to take away—and God didn't take it away because it was in his life as a discipline to protect him from pride. If you've got troubles today, I'm not insisting that those troubles are a consequence of some bad choices or even that the trouble is a call to repentance. I am saying, that is the first thing we should consider—instead of immediately seeing ourselves as a poor victim, we need to ask first, “Father, is there anything you're trying to say to me in these circumstances; have I taken a left turn when I should have taken a right turn?; have I boarded a ship to Tarshish when I should have boarded a ship to Nineveh? The focus Psalm 107 is man's tendency to go his own way, do his own thing, and God's work in our lives to lead us in the way we ought to go.

Look with me at the last verse (43) of this Psalm.

“Whoever is wise, let him heed these things....” What things? There is something in this Psalm that is very important to see and understand. If I'm wise, I will pay close attention to revelation that is here. What is it that I need to “heed”? There is a pattern that runs throughout this Psalm and is spelled out in regard to each group that teaches us how to deal with trouble when it comes into our lives—and reveals something about the way God works in our lives. “Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love (lovingkindness) of the Lord.”

So let's look at that pattern: 5 Steps in each story

1. Chosen **Path**—each group was following a direction as we have already talked about.
2. Trouble (**Problems**): Each one of these groups experienced a different kind of trouble-emptiness, bondage, sickness, perilous seas. It came in different shapes and forms but the solution was the same in every case. What is the solution?

3. Desperate **Prayer**—they Cried Out to the Lord (vs 6, 13, 19, 28).

This is the crucial step for you and me. Verses 6, 13, 19, 28 all say exactly the same thing. “Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble.” One sure way to stay in trouble is to not do this. The children of Israel ran into trouble in the wilderness after they left Egypt. God had prepared for them a lush land of milk and honey—a place of provision—everything they needed. But instead of humbling themselves and crying to the Lord—they complained to one another and to Moses. The complaining did not get them out of the trouble—wallowing in self-pity never got anybody out of trouble. With the exception of Joshua and Caleb who were of a different spirit, that whole generation died in the wilderness—still in their trouble.

So what is involved in crying out to the Lord? Jonah cried out to God in the fishes’ belly and God delivered him. In Genesis 21 Hagar cried unto the Lord, and God showed her the answer. Jacob wrestled in prayer all night in Genesis 32 and God answered his prayer.<sup>4</sup>

These were not casual, nice prayers. These prayers were not prayed out of duty. The cry came from the heart out of desperation. There is something powerful about praying a desperate prayer. The words may not be as proper and orderly—but the cry seems to reach God faster than any other sound. You mothers know the difference between your child’s whimper and his desperate cry. When you’re desperate you’ll pray all night if you have to. When you’re desperate you’ll keep praying. Nobody has to remind you to come to prayer meeting; you’re there before they unlock the doors, ready to do business with God.

James 5:13 makes all this very clear. “Is any one of you in trouble? He should pray.” Notice, James says to the person in

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<sup>4</sup> See my message entitled “Between a Rock and a Hard Place” preached September 14, 2014.

trouble—you're the one who needs to pray. It's ok to send in prayer requests, but that's not the answer. Why? Because God has sent the trouble to you—so *you* would pray. But I thought the devil sent all that trouble. No, Psalm 107 doesn't give the devil that kind of credit. Verse 25 specifically says God sent that storm into the merchants' lives. God did it. God did it. Why? because he wanted them to know Him. It was His lovingkindness that did not allow them to just go on with life. Trouble was a call to prayer—and prayer is the pathway to knowing God. And knowing God is more valuable than living a trouble-free life. This is what Ps 107:43 is trying to help us see. It is God's lovingkindness to use trouble to drive us to Him. "Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the lovingkindness of the Lord." This interaction of God with us in our life journey is His lovingkindness-acts that bring us in trouble and acts that bring us out of trouble.<sup>5</sup> Does your worldview consider trouble as a possible friend to grace? Have you understood what David meant when he said, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted that I might learn...."? The worst thing that can happen to a person is for God to just leave him alone! If we had time we would go to Psalm 73 and discuss that further; but time does not permit.

Crying out to the Lord may be a process—it usually is. You go to God wanting the trouble removed; God talks to you about the sin

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<sup>5</sup> Take for example the story of Esther. (1) God providentially made a way for Esther to become queen (2) God allowed trouble to come through Haman (3) Esther and the Jews cried out to the Lord for help (4) God delivered them (5) the Jews responded in worship (Purim). Why didn't God just spare them the ordeal? God revealed Himself to His people through the process and is glorified by them when they discover His goodness (Ps 50:15). Had the trouble not come, they would have never known God's faithfulness and never worshipped Him in this way.

that got you into trouble in the first place. There is an interaction. God is about root causes and deep character issues. We often want a quick fix to our problem so we can go on about our business—but going our own way is probably what got us into trouble in the first place and will have us back into trouble soon if not addressed. Jerm. 29:12-13 talks about being whole-hearted in our pursuit of God—and getting to that place usually involves a process. “Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. I will be found by you...” That is God’s promise to all who call upon him in their troubles. Thus the next step in Psalm 107.

4. Deliverance (**Power**) “...and He delivered them from their distress.”

In every case God answered their cry. It didn’t matter that they got themselves into the mess; He delivered them when they sought Him for help.

“I will lift up my eyes to the hills -- From whence comes my help?  
2 My help comes from the LORD, Who made heaven and earth”  
(Ps 121:1-2 NKJV).

God is able to fix it for you.<sup>6</sup> You may not see how He could do it; but that is His business. Your part is to cry out to Him in prayer. The merchants were “at their wits end” in verse 27. They had come to the end of themselves—but the Maker of Heaven and Earth rescued them.

By their own personal experience they came to know God’s power—they came to know the Father’s love. They didn’t have to rely on second-hand information. I’ve never met anyone who knew God very well that didn’t walk through some trouble during their journey. The pattern described in Psalm 107 is the process

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<sup>6</sup> Time does not allow for a rich contemplation of specifics as to how God delivers. For example, Ps 107:20 says, “He sent out his word and healed them...” The process of the deliverance is instructive and should be studied. Time does not allow for exploration of verses 33-42 that reiterates the sovereignty of God in the affairs of men.

by which most (if not all) of us come to know God. The lovingkindness of God is NOT just that He delivers me out of trouble. God could have spared them the whole process by never stirring up the storm (vs 25). The lovingkindness of God is that He would work in your life so that you come to know Him and are “conformed to the image of Christ” (Rms 8:29). The end result is not just deliverance and calm seas. The end result is personal transformation and revelation of God. Jerm. 33:3 “Call to Me, and I will answer you, and show you great and mighty things, which you do not know” (NKJV).

The experience leads to the last step  
(5) Worship (**Praise**). Let the redeemed of the Lord say so.

This pulls the whole psalm together. The song is a call to worship based on your experience with God in these matters. Look at Ps 107:1-3

“Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. (*we’re about to rehearse*

*some understanding of how that love has been expressed to us.*)

2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say this--those he redeemed from the hand of the foe<sup>7</sup> (*which*

*resonates with your history?*), *story is*

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

That’s the inspired introduction to this Psalm. Then in each of the four examples, the following phrase completes the cycle “Let them give thanks to the Lord for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men” (vs 8, 15, 21, 28).

I prefer the NKJV on this, “Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness, And for His wonderful works to the

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<sup>7</sup> Or trouble



children of men!”

Do you feel that call to genuine worship?

The foundation for worship is not a better band or good acoustics or styles that I may prefer. The foundation for worship is experience with God and personal revelation of His goodness that comes out of that experience. So John Newton goes through the horror of being a slave to the slaves in West Africa. He was rescued, but on the voyage home a storm came like the one described in our text that could have meant the end of his life. In that storm he cried out to the Lord and the Lord delivered him. In an expression of worship and gratitude to the Lord he wrote the hymn Amazing Grace, a song we’re still singing over 200 years later. The power of that hymn is not found in the artful structure of rhyme and rhythm. It’s found in the depth of experience with God that produced it.

Trouble is a fact of life. As the sparks fly upward, trouble happens here on earth. The important question is this. What will you do about it? Will you simply try to press on and try a little harder—keep rowing the boat through the storm? Will you complain to others? Will you lean upon your own understanding and devise ways to resolve it? Will you grow bitter and resentful toward life? Or will you cry out to the Lord and receive His help. He is a very present help in time of need.

Here is the lovingkindness of the Lord.

He does not leave us alone. He intervenes in our lives and sometimes even sends a storm—not to punish us but to get our attention and to bring us into a permanent solution for the problem. Yes His lovingkindness is manifest in the deliverance He brings to us—but even before that, it’s His lovingkindness that uses trouble to bring us to Him—the source of all life.

(Altar call or enter into a time of worship).<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For Audio message go to [www.PromiseChurch.us](http://www.PromiseChurch.us)

## **OUTLINE OF PSALM 107**

### **Call to Worship (vs 1-3)**

Recall the works of God and Give Thanks

### **Four Examples—Same Cycle**

1. **Wander (vs 4-9)** Aimless Life
2. **Prisoner (vs 10-16)** Depressed Life
3. **Fool (vs 17-22)** Wasted Life
4. **Merchant (vs 23-32)** Busy Life

### **The Cycle**

1. **Going Our Own way**
2. **Trouble**
3. **Cry Out to God for Help**
4. **Deliverance from God in Answer to the Cry**
5. **Giving Thanks for God's Goodness**

### **Reiteration of the Principle (vs 33-42)**

God is active in extending and withdrawing blessing.

### **Call to Learn/Observe the Lesson (vs 43)**

"Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the LORD."