

## "The Journey"

### Part 3A - "The Growing"

#### The Caution of Neglecting God's Word

**Memory Verse:** 1 Peter 2:2 - As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby.

It is a good thing to give glory to the Lord for His goodness to us. It is even better to give glory to the Lord for His goodness to us because of His knowledge of our badness. It would be an understatement to say the contrast between God's goodness and our badness is extreme.

**Psalm 106** is a recorded history of God's goodness to Israel. In this Psalm there is the admission of guilt concerning the rebellion of His people; there is the reaction of God concerning that rebellion and there is more rebellion despite God's mercy.

As we consider a portion this Psalm, we will see that God is intentional about His dealings with His people. We will also see His patience and His mercy despite some of the descriptions of rebellion concerning the children of Israel. The description of the sins of Israel despite God's goodness included greedy desires, envy, worshipping the golden calf, murmuring, and quarreling with Moses. In all this God rebuked them for their sins and yet still saved them from their ruin.

One thing that we also see is that God still determined to get His word to them for their good and for their blessing and He does the same thing with us. Even in our rebellion God will make a way to get a word to us. It is often delivered by a friend who might be concerned for us; or in a song to bring us back home or perhaps in His word that we receive when we least expect it. The truth of the matter is, when God is trying to get a word to us it would do us well not to neglect that word any longer. We will take a closer look at several of these verses found in **Psalm 106** in order that we might make good use of them.

Practical, beneficial application from **Psalm 106**:

1. **Vs. 6-8 - A confession and a purpose.** We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly. 7 Our fathers understood not thy wonders in Egypt; they remembered not the multitude of thy mercies; but provoked him at the sea, even at the Red sea. 8 Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.

It does not appear that it can get any clearer and to the point than verse 6 does. Israel was made aware of their sin and at this time they responded honestly regarding it. The writer (most believe to be David) then goes on to describe the neglect of the "fathers" concerning the amazing works of the Lord in Egypt and the Red Sea.

**For our learning:** When we see the behavior of others in the Bible it is a great advantage when we can relate to that behavior. When God does a great, merciful work in our lives we are too often careless and "forgetful." Carelessness and forgetfulness can often stem from a lack of concern and ingratitude. Overcome both by being sensitive to God's goodness in your life.

**Nevertheless he saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his mighty power to be known.....**an amazing explanation of the "why" God did what He did. It is also an amazing explanation of why God does what He does..... **that he might make his mighty power to be known.**

God will make good on His promises, and we see an example of that here; He saved them **for his name's sake**. Though they did not deserve it, He planned it and their being undeserving was not going to change his plan. God does what He does for the sake of His glory and love for His people. His power is displayed for all to see, and He chose to display His power by parting the Red Sea. Always remember that the power of the grace of God in forgiving sin and sparing sinners is as much to be in awe of as the power of the God in nature that divided the Red Sea.

**For our learning:** One of the great purposes concerning our salvation is that the power of God might be manifested in and through our lives. One of the amazing ways that God makes His power known is in the life of the believer. If He is not making His power known in our lives it is not a lack of God's willingness to do so, it might be a lack of our willingness to allow Him.

**2. Vs. 12-14 - A right step and a wrong step.** Then believed they his words; they sang his praise. 13 They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel: 14 But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert.

**Verses 9-11** give us a description of what the Lord did for the children of Israel. He "**rebuked the Red Sea**" and led them through it. He led them through the wilderness, saved them from the hand of those that hated them and redeemed them from the hand of their enemies. Following these events the Bible says, "**They soon forgot his works; they waited not for his counsel**".....

No doubt they did the right thing when they **believed His words and they sang His praises**. Faith and praise go together; when we believe God we are in a much better place to praise God. How can anyone that continues to doubt God continue to praise God at the same time? However, no sooner did they believe, and no sooner did they praise that after a while they forgot God.

I do not think that I know anyone, including and especially myself that cannot relate to doing this. We can all acknowledge the Lord's work on our behalf and somewhere along the way we took His blessings for granted. However, in this description of the experience of the children of Israel we see evidence of their carelessness. Not only did they **"forget"** the works of the Lord on their behalf they also neglected to **"wait for His counsel."** This leads me to consider that one leads to the other. In other words, the more careless they were concerning what they ought to remember (the works of the Lord in their lives) the more prone they were to reject His counsel (word).

It is very enlightening and beneficial for our application when we see the meaning of several different words. When the Bible says the children of Israel **"forgot" it speaks of "ignoring or ceasing to care, neglecting;"** a mindset that we understand as apathy and indifference. When we see the word **"counsel" it speaks of "advice, purpose."** The children of Israel were extremely careless concerning these two things and we would benefit if we paid close attention to not allow this to happen to us.

**For our learning:** When the Lord does something good in our lives, we should recognize it as an expression of His goodness and grace. We should not only recognize it by thanking Him for it but also glorify Him because of it. Gratitude accompanies humility; the grateful person will stay humble and open to more counsel from the Lord.

### **3. Vs. 15 - A request granted and a need created. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul.**

If the children of Israel experienced this, we can experience it too. They may not have gotten all they wanted from the Lord, but the Bible clearly says, **"he gave them their request."** Then it also says that their experience following was God **"sent leanness into their soul."** Leanness speaks to there still being a deficiency in their lives. God was providing for their needs and perhaps their response kindled God's anger, and He caused them to be in want.

Leanness of the soul speaks to more than just the necessities of life. Many fare sumptuously concerning their physical needs who have at the same time have no love for God, no thankfulness

to God and no appetite for the things of God and are still very much in need and have leanness in their soul. Feasting the body and starving the soul is the result of the forgetful believer. God gives good things in this life in love and with them He gives us the grace and ability to glorify Him in the use of those good things.

**James 1:17 - Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.**

**Matthew 7:11 - If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?**

**For our learning:** One of the surest ways for us to keep ourselves from apathy and leanness is to keep an attitude of gratitude. Recognize the blessings in your life and give God the thanks and the glory for them that He deserves. Remember His blessings and use them to serve as a reminder of His goodness.

**Psalms 50:15 - And call upon me in the day of trouble: I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me.**

**A Biblical instruction concerning neglecting God's word and how to avoid it:**

**Psalms 107:1-14 - O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; 3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. 4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. 5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. 6 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. 7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. 8 Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! 9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. 10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; 11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: 12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. 13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.**

- 1. Vs. 1-5 - Memory that produced gratitude.** O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever. 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; 3 And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. 4 They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. 5 Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

What a blessed thing it is when our memory of the good things God has done for us produces gratitude to Him and for Him. As the children of Israel reflected upon God and what He had done for them it inspired them to praise Him. Also notice that it was not only for what God did but also for "how" God is..... **"for he is good: for his mercy endureth forever."** God is good and it will always do us well to acknowledge that to others but especially acknowledge that to Him. When we read that His mercy endures forever, and we are also reminded that His mercies are new every morning we need to consider that God does not only want us to have that awareness but to experience it for ourselves personally.

Memory can serve as a tool for torment, discouragement and frustration or it can serve as a provider of strength, joy, and peace. When we consider what we have been guilty of we can become discouraged and frustrated. We are reminded of how slow things might seem to be going and how fast we wish they were going. It can remind us that if we had only done some things differently, we would not be experiencing the adverse effects of our poor choices. On the other hand, when we reflect on God's word, and we see so many situations that may have appeared to be hopeless until God began to and continued to turn them around it brings a sense of peace, strength, and hope to our own situations. None of this will occur without our desire and effort to apply ourselves to the reading and application of God's word.

- 2. Vs. 6,7 - A cry that produced deliverance.** Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their *distresses* (anguish). 7 And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.

Notice what the text says, **"Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble"**.....there is never a bad time to cry out to God but for some reason we might be tempted to think when we are at our worst and it's our fault that God may not want to hear from us and that is NOT true. Yes, before troubles become extreme, we should cry out to God but especially when they DO become extreme, we should cry out to Him for deliverance.

Their cry produced an amazing response from God; a response that could not have been better when someone is in the middle of their trouble..... **"and he delivered them out of their distresses."** This word **"deliver"** speaks of **"to snatch away, rescue or save."** God not only consoles us and teaches us while we are in our trouble, but He also rescues us out of our troubles in order that we do not return to them. Trouble will always produce suffering, but God's desire is that He might deliver us from all of it.

**For our learning:** Keep in mind the condition of the deliverance. The condition was that they cry out to God. God will leave us in our trouble for as long as we want to stay. We must never think it is just going to happen if we do not make the first move by crying out to God.

Notice God's desire after the deliverance..... **"And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation".....** God's way, though it may often appear to be a different way to us will always be the right way. Notice that all the children of Israel had to do was follow because God promised that He would lead. God's deliverance not only provides a way out, but His way out is the **"right"** way out.

In many ways our experience has been like the wilderness experience of the children of Israel. They wandered, they complained, they were tired and many of them gave up on God and rebelled against His will and way. Many of them also did not make it out of the wilderness, not because they could not but because they would not.

**For our learning:** Just because we know that God will provide a way does not mean that we will not be tempted to try and find another way. God's way involves God's timing and there will be times that we will be tempted to think that just because His way is not moving along as fast as we would like for it to move that our way is a better way than His.

### **3. Vs. 8 - Deliverance that produces a response. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!**

Would there be any better response to what the Lord has done in our lives than our praise? The psalmist gives two very convincing reasons for us to respond in such a way; God's goodness and His wonderful works to us. Do we really need to go any further than our own personal experience to bless the Lord for His goodness in our lives? Even in all my badness I can still see God's goodness. The psalmist cries out with confidence that our cry of praise to God is something that God deserves and something that we should acknowledge.



**James 1:17** - Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no *variableness* (variation, change), neither shadow of turning.

A lack of gratitude is a reproach to the provision of God in my life. When I am grateful and acknowledge my gratitude to God it is a sure way to assure my contentment and when I am content, I will not wander after things that may be less for my good and more for harm.

**4. Vs. 9-14 - A power that produces results.** For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. 10 Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, *being bound* (prisoner) in *affliction* (misery) and iron; 11 Because they rebelled against the words of God, and *contemned* (despised) the counsel of the most High: 12 Therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. 13 Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and brake their bands in sunder.

As for thirst he gives satisfaction, and for hunger he supplies filling. In both cases the need is more than met, there is abundance in the supply and that supply could not be met were it not met by the Lord. The Lord does nothing in a measly fashion; satisfying and filling are his means of supplying his children. None who come under the Lord's provision should ever complain of short supply.

**Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron.....** The condition of a person under the conviction of sin is powerfully symbolized in this verse. This is a condition that cannot see or refuses to see the promises that would bring them comfort. The chains of addiction bring with them great affliction. This affliction is known by those who have felt them and when you are set free from them it should make us prize our liberty even more. This description also reminds us that misery is the companion of all of those that still sit in darkness and for those of us who have been set free we should remember those that are still in bonds.

- **God's description of their error.....***Because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High.*

This was the general cause of bondage among the people of God, they were given over to their adversaries because they were not loyal to the Lord and His word. We can learn from this

example of the children of Israel; they thought that they knew better than the Judge of all the earth, and therefore they left his ways and walked in their own.

**For our learning:** When we do not follow God's counsel we give the most practical proof of our dislike for it. When God lifts us up and lifts us out, He would have us remember and know that He did that. When I remember who brought me out, I will remember who keeps me out.

**Galatians 5:1 - Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled (to be held) again with the yoke of bondage.**

- **God's method to get their attention..... Therefore he brought down their heart with labor; they fell down, and there was none to help.**

God has methods of reducing the arrogance of rebellion and one of His methods is to humble us. God turned them over and made their enemies their masters and no one was there to pity them or help them up. Their misery was unseen by anyone that might care and if it were observed no one could interfere with them and their masters. God knew that when the Israelites were pressed, they were more likely to become humble and by being humble they would be tender toward God and in turn, more aware of their sin.

**For our learning:** When a person is exhausted of all self-effort and feels utterly without strength the Lord is at work preparing that afflicted one to receive His mercy. When all else fails and there is nowhere else to turn, Jesus will still be there.

**5. Vs. 13,14 - A cry created by a memory.** Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. 14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder.

According to what happened in the past we might be able to read it like this..... **Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses...AGAIN!!** The children of Israel were no strangers to God coming to their rescue and He did so in response to their cry unto Him. The memory of God being faithful in the past should compel us to call upon Him in the present and continue to call upon Him in the future.

We should never presume upon the grace of God that He will get us out of all our foolishness simply because He can. We can all admit and relate to times in our lives where God did deliver us from our troubles only to find us in trouble again. We need to understand that God is not obligated to come to our rescue at our beckoned call. Yes, He does, and He has, but there are



also times when He leaves us in our trouble long enough to learn a greater lesson. When we neglect the word(s) that He continues to send our way, He will find other ways to get our attention. We would all do well to get and stay sensitive to the teaching of the word of God in order that we may place ourselves in a better position to experience the blessings of God and not in a position to experience the discipline of God.