

August 10, 2014 by Steve Brandon



Make Known His Deeds

Psalm 105

1. **Glorify God (verses 1-5).**
2. **Remember His Faithfulness (verses 6-45).**

As most of you know, we have been in the Psalms this summer. Psalms are great to preach through during the summer months when vacation schedules make attendance each Sunday a bit erratic, because, you can jump into any Psalm, without missing the flow from week to week. This is because each Psalm is a self-contained unit. It makes each week during the summer a self-contained message. I have wanted to wait until the fall to dig into Leviticus, when attendance on Sunday mornings is a bit more regular.

But, I have also wanted to preach through some of the Psalms to help you grow in your familiarity with the Psalms, perhaps preaching through some Psalms that you don't know very well. This familiarity would surely help you in your future reading. The Psalms are some of the most-read portions of the Bible. And rightly so, because they deal with our hearts. Many of them call us to worship the LORD. Many of them also deal with the real struggles of life, and faith, and doubt, and trials, and desperation. And all of them are helpful to our souls. That's my aim in preaching through these Psalms. That God would use them to help our souls.

This morning, we will dig into Psalm 105. In many ways, this Psalm is like Psalm 103 that I preached from last week. It begins with a call to praise. And it ends with a call to praise. And in the middle we have a bunch of reasons why to praise the LORD.

Verse 1 at the beginning simply says, "Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name;" Verse 45 at the end says, "Praise the LORD!" The heart of the Psalm is all about the fact that God "has remembered His covenant forever" (verse 8). From verses 9-45, the Psalmist expounds upon God's faithfulness to Israel during the Exodus account. He recounts His miracles, His protection, His provision. The hinge comes in verse 5: "Remember His wonders which He has done." Do you remember Psalm 103? The hinge came in verse 2, "forget none of His benefits." The idea is the same here in Psalm 105. Remember everything that he has done.

Now, in Psalm 105, we are going to look back to Israel's history. Five hundred years of Israel's history, beginning with Abraham (verse 9); continuing through Isaac and Jacob (verses 9-10); continuing further through Joseph (verse 17); and ending with Israel's entrance into the promised land (verse 44).

Because of so much space devoted to a reflection upon God's dealings with Israel throughout their history, Psalm 105 has been called an historical Psalm, along with Psalm 106 and Psalm 78, each of which have equally long sections telling of Israel's history. Psalm 106 (which I plan to preach next week) is much like this Psalm. The difference, however, is that Psalm 106 emphasizes Israel's unfaithfulness throughout their history. Psalm 105, on the other hand, emphasizes God's faithfulness to the covenant "which He made with Abraham" (verse 9). But, in both of these Psalms, Israel was called to praise the LORD.

In fact, that's how Israel used Psalm 105 in their history. The first half of this Psalm was used in celebration when the ark of the covenant first came into the tabernacle in David's day. David assigned Asaph (and his relatives) the duty of giving thanks to the LORD on that day. They used this Psalm to guide their celebration. Perhaps you remember this as the day that stirred the heart of king David so much that he was "leaping and dancing and celebrating before the LORD" (2 Samuel 6:16; 1 Chronicles 15:29).

Let's read Psalm 105. Perhaps it would do you well to picture that day in Israel's history, when the ark of God finally came into the tabernacle in Jerusalem. You can read about that event in 1 Chronicles 16.

Psalm 105

Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples.
Sing to Him, sing praises to Him;
Speak of all His wonders.
Glory in His holy name;
Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.
Seek the Lord and His strength;
Seek His face continually.
Remember His wonders which He has done,
His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth,
O seed of Abraham, His servant,
O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!
He is the LORD our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.

He has remembered His covenant forever,

The word which He commanded to a thousand generations,
The covenant which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac.
Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel as an everlasting covenant,
Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the portion of your inheritance,"
When they were only a few men in number,
Very few, and strangers in it.
And they wandered about from nation to nation,
From one kingdom to another people.
He permitted no man to oppress them,
And He reproved kings for their sakes:
"Do not touch My anointed ones,
And do My prophets no harm."

And He called for a famine upon the land;
He broke the whole staff of bread.
He sent a man before them,
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
They afflicted his feet with fetters,
He himself was laid in irons;
Until the time that his word came to pass,
The word of the Lord tested him.
The king sent and released him,
The ruler of peoples, and set him free.
He made him lord of his house
And ruler over all his possessions,
To imprison his princes at will,
That he might teach his elders wisdom.
Israel also came into Egypt;
Thus Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.
And He caused His people to be very fruitful,
And made them stronger than their adversaries.

He turned their heart to hate His people,
To deal craftily with His servants.
He sent Moses His servant,
And Aaron, whom He had chosen.
They performed His wondrous acts among them,
And miracles in the land of Ham.
He sent darkness and made it dark;
And 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 a swarm of flies
And gnats in all their territory.
He gave them hail for rain,
And flaming fire in their land.
He struck down their vines also and their fig trees,
And shattered the trees of their territory.
He spoke, and locusts came,
And young locusts, even without number,
And ate up all vegetation in their land,
And ate up the fruit of their ground.
He also struck down all the firstborn in their land,
The first fruits of all their vigor.

Then He brought them out with silver and gold,
And among His tribes there was not one who stumbled.
Egypt was glad when they departed,
For the dread of them had fallen upon them.
He spread a cloud for a covering,
And fire to illumine by night.
They asked, and He brought quail,
And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.
He opened the rock and water flowed out;
It ran in the dry places like a river.

For He remembered His holy word
With Abraham His servant;
And He brought forth His people with joy,
His chosen ones with a joyful shout.
He gave them also the lands of the nations,
That they might take possession of the fruit of the peoples' labor,
So that they might keep His statutes
And observe His laws,
Praise the LORD!

I see two applications in this Psalm. The first is this:

1. Glorify God (verses 1-5).

This comes in the first 6 verses. In these verses, I count 11 commands to glorify the LORD in one way or another. And these 11 commands show us a bit of the diversity of ways in which we can glorify the LORD. We can sing His praise. We can tell others of His greatness. We can seek His heart. We can simply bring to mind all of the great things that He has done.

All of these commands all come back to one theme: glorify God! And not without reason. We are called to praise the LORD because of the "wonders which He has done" (verse 5). Did you see how rapid fire these commands come?

Psalm 105:1-5
Oh give thanks to the LORD, call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples.
Sing to Him, sing praises to Him;
Speak of all His wonders.
Glory in His holy name;
Let the heart of those who seek the Lord be glad.
Seek the Lord and His strength;
Seek His face continually.
Remember His wonders which He has done,
His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth,

Do you feel the overflow in his voice? He seems to say the same thing over and over and over again. In many ways, all of these phrases are synonyms -- they are saying the same thing. So, let's quickly run through each of these phrases to see just how broad our praise of God should be.

First of all, in verse 1 we see, ...

a. Give thanks to the LORD

In thanking God, we acknowledge the gifts that God has given to us. It may be as simple as life itself, or creation or food that God has given (Romans 1:21). Giving thanks isn't trying to repay the LORD for what He has given to us. It is simply an expression of our gratitude to the kindness of the LORD. And in this, God is glorified.

b. Call upon His name.

Whereas giving thanks is acknowledging what God has given, calling upon His name is an expression of need. We call upon the one who provides us with all things. God is equally glorified in this, as it shows our dependence upon Him. See, God isn't glorified when we are self-sufficient. God is glorified when we acknowledge our need of Him.

c. Make known His deeds among the peoples.

When a beat reporter from a newspaper writes an article about how well the quarterback did in the football game on Saturday, it brings attention and honor to the quarterback. When a magazine features a musical talent on their cover, with a follow-up article in its pages, it brings attention and honor to the musician. So also, when we speak to others (or write about) the great things that the LORD has done, it brings attention to Him and gives reason to glorify Him. Note how God can be glorified when we communicate with others on a horizontal realm of the great things God has done.

In verse 2 we read ...

d. Sing to Him.

When we think of worship and glorifying God, this is often one of the first things that comes to mind: we sing to Him. And rightly so. When God puts a song on our heart, it must be sung! Notice here that the song is sung to God. As a lover would sing his song of praise to his sweetheart, so also do we sing our love song to God, the One we love.

e. Sing praises to Him;

This second phrase of verse 2 is a virtual synonym to the first. To God, we should sing our praises! We are called to extol Him. We are called

to exalt Him. We are called to sing of how great God is. We are called to give Him what is due!

f. Speak of all His wonders.

Not only are we called to sing, we are also called to "speak." This is what Psalm 105 is all about, speaking of all of the wonderful things that the LORD has done: His miracles, His protection, His provision, His favor, His grace, and His kindness. It's all here in Psalm 105, as we shall see in a bit.

On to verse 3, ...

g. Glory in His holy name;

To glory in the name of God simply means that we praise His name. We lift Him high. We rejoice in His greatness. We enjoy the fact that He is utterly different than we are. We are sinful, but His ways know no sin!

h. Let the heart of those who seek the LORD be glad.

This is the first of three phrases calling us to "seek the LORD." With the phrases, the emphasis isn't so much about telling others about the greatness of God. It's beyond that; it's into His presence, where we actually experience Him. We are treasure hunters on quest for a treasure, which is God, Himself! And in the process of searching and in the finding, our hearts will be made glad.

Verse 4, ...

i. Seek the Lord and His strength;

All of us need help in this life. We are not sufficient in and of ourselves. But, He, the LORD can give us everything we need. We aren't going to find that help in a doctrine or in a philosophy or in a new way of thinking. We are only going to find it in the LORD and in His strength. And God will be found by those who seek for Him with all of their hearts (Jeremiah 29:13; Deuteronomy 4:29).

And this isn't a one-time thing. We are to ...

j. Seek His face continually.

That means all the time. This is an identifying characteristic of a child of God. He's not going through life alone. Rather, he is continually seeking the presence of God. He is continuing to walk with God. He is continuing to learn from God. He is continuing to love God. Seeking and praying throughout everyday for the LORD's presence to be evident through the day.

And finally, in verse 5, we come to the crux of the Psalm.

k. Remember His wonders which He has done, His marvels and the judgments uttered by His mouth,

This is Psalm 105. It is a Psalm of remembrance. It is a Psalm that looks back in history to the wonderful things that the LORD has done for Israel. But, it's not merely an intellectual look at history. It's a history that gives glory to God. It's a history that ought to stir our hearts to sing the praises of God. We put fuel into cars to make them go. When we think on God's faithfulness in history, it will propel us forward.

It's a good word for us this morning. When you are seeking to worship the LORD, looking to fuel the passions of your heart for Him, look to the wonderful things that the LORD has done for His people. It is like fuel for our worship.

That's why reading the historical books of the Old Testament can lead us into praise of God. Because we can rejoice in the ways that He has worked in the past, trusting in Him to work in similar ways in the future. We can read the book of Acts, which tells the history of the early church, and rejoice at what He did to begin His church, trusting that the LORD will continue His work in the future. We can study church history to see the ways that God took a few men, the disciples of Jesus, and "turned the world upside down" (Acts 17:6) with the gospel that has spread all over the world.

Are you a student of history? Do you know "His story"? Have you read any church history? [\[1\]](#)

Yes, this Psalm looks back to Israel's history. And it's not as if God merely acted back then in Israel's history. He has been working all down through history. He is working today. And the more that we would see it, the more, I believe, we would worship the LORD with the passion of this Psalm.

Well, let's move on to my second point to see the fuel of our worship. We are to glorify God (verses 1-5). As we ...

2. Remember His Faithfulness (verses 6-45).

We begin with a summary statement (in verses 6 and 7).

Psalm 105:6-7
O seed of Abraham, His servant,
O sons of Jacob, His chosen ones!
He is the LORD our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.

These words prepare the way for the short history lesson in the Psalm. Calling on Israel to know the sovereign ways of God.

In fact, the theme of the sovereignty of God is developed throughout the rest of the Psalm. As you read this summary of the history of Israel, you quickly discover that it was really "His story" from start to finish. It is God who initiated the covenant with Abraham (verse 9-11). It is God who carried out the covenant (verses 12-15). It is God who brought famine upon the land (verse 16). It is God who sent Joseph to Egypt to preserve the Jews (verse 17). It is God who caused the people of Israel to flourish in Egypt (verse 24). It is God who turned the hearts of Egypt against the Hebrews (verse 25). It is God who sent Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh (verse 26). It is God who brought all of the devastating plagues upon Egypt (verses 28-36). It is God who brought the people out of Egypt (verse 37). It is God who protected them in the wilderness with the cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night (verse 39). It is God who satisfied them with the manna (verse 40). It is God who gave them water to drink when they were thirsty (verse 41).

And all of this leads us to praise the LORD. See, God is sovereign over the affairs of men. Oh, in this Psalm, we see God's sovereignty over the history of Israel. But, what He did with Israel, He does with all nations. "His judgments are in all the earth" (verse 7). And then comes verse 8, the key statement of the Psalm. Verse 8, ...

Psalm 105:8
He has remembered His covenant forever,
The word which He commanded to a thousand generations,

That's why God was faithful to Israel: because He has made a covenant with them. These are words that we ought not to take lightly. They tell us that God made a promise, and that he's sticking to it. He is sticking to it to a thousand generations. In other words, forever. You say, "What promise did He make?" Verse 9, ...

Psalm 105:9-11
The covenant which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac.
Then He confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel as an everlasting covenant,
Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the portion of your inheritance,"

This takes us back to Genesis 12, when God chose Abraham, from Ur of the Chaldeans (modern day Iraq). The LORD said to Abraham, ...

Genesis 12:1-3
"Go forth from your country,
And from your relatives
And from your father's house,
To the land which I will show you;
And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed."

God said, "I will give you land. I will make you a nation. I will bless you. Your blessing will extend to all the families of the earth." God repeated this covenant on a number of occasions (Genesis 15:5, 18; Genesis 17:1-8). He repeated it to Isaac (Genesis 26:2-5). He repeated it to Jacob (Genesis 28:13-15). And God kept that promise. Israel became a great nation. Israel was given the land. The Jewish people have been blessed of God more than any other ethnic group on the planet. Which, by the way, is why they are hated so much by many today.

And we are called to remember that God remembered His covenant. In fact, this is what was repeated at the end of the short history lesson. Look at verse 42, ...

Psalm 105:42
For He remembered His holy word
With Abraham His servant;

But, there's more than that for us. Because, just as Israel looked to the covenant that God made with them and to God's faithfulness throughout their history, do also might we look at the covenant that God has made with us and to God's faithfulness throughout church history to that covenant. And just as Israel was to be turned to praise, so also might we be turned to praise as well.

You say, what covenant did God make with us? It's called the "New Covenant," which was prophesied in Jeremiah. It is the covenant in which God promised the day when He would put His law upon our hearts, changing us from within, and saying, "I will be their God, and they shall be My people" (Jeremiah 31:33). This covenant was fulfilled in Jesus.

Do you remember the words of Jesus when He instituted the Lord's Supper? He held up the cup in His hand and said, "This cup is the new

covenant in My blood" (1 Cor. 11:25). His death upon the cross was going to bring in a new era of salvation history, the new covenant. Jesus would pay the penalty for what our sins deserved, and we would know full forgiveness -- something that the law could never provide (Hebrews 10:2). And God would work in the hearts of men to change them from the inside out through repentance for forgiveness of sins (Luke 24:47).

And down through the ages, God has been faithful to the New Covenant that He made with all who believe in Jesus. Just as Israel looked back to God's faithfulness to the covenant He made with Abraham and rejoiced, so also do we look back to God's faithfulness to the new covenant, which Jesus inaugurated with His blood, and it stirs our souls to rejoice in God!

And so, what I want to do in my little time remaining is to work quickly through this Psalm and bring out some parallels in church history that would stir our hearts to give glory to the LORD.

Verses 12-15 describe the process that God used. It began small, with only Abraham and Sarah. But God protected them that His promise might prevail.

Psalm 105:12-15
When they were only a few men in number,
Very few, and strangers in it.
And they wandered about from nation to nation,
From one kingdom to another people.
He permitted no man to oppress them,
And He reprov'd kings for their sakes:
"Do not touch My anointed ones,
And do My prophets no harm."

The nation of Israel began with one man and one woman. They were past their nineties before they had their first child. And yet, God's hand of protection was upon them. Remember their encounters with Pharaoh and Abimelech, when Sarah was taken into the harems of the king? God brought plagues against Pharaoh (Genesis 12:17) and visited Abimelech in a dream (Genesis 20:3). He said, "Do not touch My anointed ones."

Then, down through the ages, God prospered them and they grew larger and larger and eventually settled in the land of Israel. And through that time, God protected His people, saying "Do not touch My anointed ones." Now, I know that this verse is often used by preachers who want to avoid criticism. But, here in verse 15, it refers to all of Israel, that is, all of God's people. God protected them, especially in the early days of the nation, when their numbers were few.

God did a similar thing with the church. He began with a small number (a dozen disciples). To these few men Jesus made the promise, "I will build my church" (Matthew 16:18). In the early days, God protected them, "Do not touch My anointed ones."

When Peter and John stood before the Sanhedrin, they were not put to death. The counsel listed to Gamaliel who said, "Stay away from these men and let them alone, for if this plan or action is of men, it will be overthrown; but if it is of God, you will not be able to overthrow them; or else you may even be found fighting against God" (Acts 5:38-39). And so, they were released. And the message spread.

Do you remember when Peter was in prison, soon to be executed? An angel of the Lord appeared to him, leading him out of prison to safety where he could continue to spread the gospel (Acts 12:7, 17). And God's judgment came upon Herod, who was eaten by worms (Acts 12:23). Do you remember when Paul was constantly on the run? He was soon to leave Corinth, but the Lord appeared to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city" (Acts 18:10).

Now, that's not to say that God's people have always escaped trial and difficulty. They haven't. Case in point, verse 16.

Psalm 105:16-23
And He called for a famine upon the land;
He broke the whole staff of bread.
He sent a man before them,
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.
They afflicted his feet with fetters,
He himself was laid in irons;
Until the time that his word came to pass,
The word of the Lord tested him.
The king sent and released him,
The ruler of peoples, and set him free.
He made him lord of his house
And ruler over all his possessions,
To imprison his princes at will,
That he might teach his elders wisdom.
Israel also came into Egypt;
Thus Jacob sojourn'd in the land of Ham.

These verses tell the story of Joseph, a man of God, who endured great suffering. He was sold into slavery by his brother. He was falsely accused by Potiphar's wife and unjustly imprisoned for several years. He was betrayed by fellow prisoners who failed to keep a promise. But, through it all, God exalted him to ruler of Egypt, second only to Pharaoh. And it was his position of authority that eventually rescued Israel from the famine that God brought upon the land (verse 16).

Just when things looked bleak, God rescued Jacob and His family. And throughout church history, this has always been the case. Even when things look bleak, God has always had a remnant. In the days of Elijah, God said that there were still 7,000 who hadn't bow their knees to Baal (1 Kings 19:18).

And in the dark ages, when the witness of the church was small, there was always a flicker of light. God raised up men in their day and in their time to build the church of God -- John Wycliffe, John Hus, Martin Luther, John Calvin, key men in the days of the reformation, the fruit of which we are reaping today.

And you might think about today and the crisis in Iraq, where Christians are being forced to leave that country or die. God knows what's going on. He will build His church. Throughout history, there have always been times when the church struggled. And there have always been times when the church flourished.

In verse 24, we see Israel flourishing.

Psalm 105:24
And He caused His people to be very fruitful,
And made them stronger than their adversaries.

This is talking about the four hundred years in Egypt, when the Jews grew from 70 people who lived in Goshen to a million or two. And their success bred hatred on the part of the Egyptians.

Psalm 105:25
He turned their heart to hate His people,
To deal craftily with His servants.

Note that it was God who turned the hearts of the Egyptians against the Jews. Apart from their adversity, they would never have left Egypt. And it is through the difficult times of life, that God often brings about a wonderful result. The result in this case was the opportunity for the LORD to demonstrate His power in Egypt and to rescue His people from the bondage of slavery in Egypt.

Verses 26-41 give a summary of what took place in those days.

Psalm 105:26-41
He sent Moses His servant,
And Aaron, whom He had chosen.
They performed His wondrous acts among them,
And miracles in the land of Ham.
He sent darkness and made it dark;
And 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 a swarm of flies
And gnats in all their territory.
He gave them hail for rain,
And flaming fire in their land.
He struck down their vines also and their fig trees,
And shattered the trees of their territory.
He spoke, and locusts came,
And young locusts, even without number,
And ate up all vegetation in their land,
And ate up the fruit of their ground.
He also struck down all the firstborn in their land,
The first fruits of all their vigor.

Then He brought them out with silver and gold,
And among His tribes there was not one who stumbled.
Egypt was glad when they departed,
For the dread of them had fallen upon them.
He spread a cloud for a covering,
And fire to illumine by night.
They asked, and He brought quail,
And satisfied them with the bread of heaven.

He opened the rock and water flowed out;
It ran in the dry places like a river.

If we had the time, we could certainly dissect these verses and show the glory of our wonder-working God. How God gave opportunities for Pharaoh to let the Jewish people go. But, in their refusal, he brought plagues upon them (verses 26-36; Exodus 7-11). How Israel plundered the Egyptians as they left the land (verses 37-38; Exodus 12:35, 36). How God provided for their every need -- a covering to protect them from the heat (verse 39a); a pillar of fire to guide them in the night (verse 39b); food and water to sustain them in the wilderness (verses 40-41). They came out of the land with joy (verses 42-44).

And when we think of our redemption from our sin (of which the Exodus is merely a picture). God has acted in a similar way. He has drawn us by His power. He has blessed us greatly in Jesus. He has provided for our every need. He has put joy in our hearts.

It would do us well to reflect upon how faithful God has been to us.

Psalm 105:42
For He remembered His holy word
With Abraham His servant;

So, what is the end?

Psalm 105:45
So that they might keep His statutes
And observe His laws,
Praise the LORD!

Praise and obedience. We come each Sunday to give praise to God. We ought to leave each Sunday desirous to obey the LORD.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on August 10, 2014 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] Here are some recommendations of books about church history.

Church History in Plain Language, by Bruce Shelley. This is a simple, one volume work that is very well done.

The Story of Christianity (2 volumes), by Justo Gonzalez. With two volumes, this book can go deeper into matters of church history than the book above. It is also easy reading.

Biographies. Read biographies of those who have gone before us. See the ways in which God has worked.