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PSALM 105-106

Psalms – Book IV – Series

[PRAYER] Our Heavenly Father, we come today as weak people. I suppose there are some who don't feel weak and I pray that you would remind each one of us of our weakness and our humility before you. But most of us are in touch with our weakness in one way or another. It may be a physical or a mental issue. It may be a financial issue or a relationship issue. It could be a number of different things that just causes us to feel overwhelmed in the course of our week and we need to know how to live our lives in a way you designed us to live. Lord, we are grateful that you created us, that you placed us in this world, that you are sovereign, you're in control, and that you redeemed us and you saved us, and you've given us so much. For that we are grateful and we thank you for those things.

But Lord, taking those things that we're grateful for then and putting them into our lives when we're under pressure, when life doesn't meet our expectations is hard sometimes. We forget. We forget the benefits that you provided for us. So remind us of who you are and what you're doing and what you want to do.

Lord, today we ask that as we look at this passage of scripture that you would teach us and you would speak to us and you would resonate in our hearts what you want for us to learn today. We ask that we would go away changed people. We ask that you would be working deep in our hearts in those places where we tend not to want to go, we tend not to want to think about but that you want us to think about and you want us to turn those over to you. So today we come as weak people, needing you as our God and trust you to come in and do that deeper work inside of us. Bless us today, Lord, as we look at your word. In Jesus' name, amen.

Today we're going to look at Psalm 105 and 106. So if you would take your Bible and open it or turn it on (whatever the case may be for you) and look at Psalm 105 and 106. These are sister psalms. That's why we're going to take them both at the same time. I'm going to go through them both today and I want you to see that they are both looking at the history of Israel.

These are historical psalms, but they're looking at it from different perspectives. So if you're at one place looking at the psalm you would look at it from Psalm 105, and if you were at another place you would look at it from Psalm 106. In Psalm 105 when you look at it you look at it from God's faithfulness and how all throughout Israelite history God was faithful and He was in control and He did all these things for them. But then in Psalm 106 you look at this from man's perspective and how man keeps messing up. God's doing these things, but men forgot about God's greatness and sin began. So we see both of those as we go forward.

Psalm 105 is where we want to start, so open your Bibles to Psalm 105:1. Notice it says, *Give praise*. That's not our word *baruch*, to bow down, and it's not our word shine or *hallel* from hallelujah, like we just sang. It's not that word which means to shine out. It's a different word that means thanks. So some of your translations may even say, *Give thanks to the LORD*, which is a good translation. *Give thanks to the LORD, proclaim his name; make known among the nations what he has done. Sing to him, sing praise to him; tell of all his wonderful acts.*

Now I want you to notice in the passage in the first verse here that your spirituality is not private. Society tells us spirituality is private. You don't talk about your faith or politics. That is not true. You want your spirituality to be positive and to be outgoing. You want people to know.

I encourage families to ask the question – What did you see God do today? As they ask the question in their family kids are making observations, parents are making observations.

But I think it's also appropriate for us to say to other people, "Here's what I saw God do today." Wouldn't that be an interesting way to witness. You may have all kinds of ways that you share the gospel with people. What about saying to someone, "Wow, I really like watching God work today in a particular way." I think it's really interesting because the psalmist now is going to recount the works of God.

One of the reasons I like coming here on Sunday morning is because I get to hear stories about how God is working. It's fun to hear the stories and I hear about them during the week sometimes when people tell me about them.

I really liked hearing the story that Nancy Foss told this week on Facebook where she told the story of how Cindy Innocenzi from our church had this program where she had umbrellas. I don't know if some of you took the umbrellas. They had little notes on them about Calvary Chapel Living Hope and gave them to people who were in the rain and they needed an umbrella. "Here's an umbrella." Oh and look at that, there's an umbrella. You even carry them with you. How amazing. Didn't even know I was going to say this, did you.

It says: "This umbrella will shelter you from the rain, snow, and wind, but who will help you through the storms of life? (Then the verse from Isaiah 41:13.) *For I am the Lord your God who takes hold of your right hand and says to you, Do not fear; I will help you.* You need hope? Join us at Calvary Chapel Living Hope."

Isn't that cool? What a neat way!

So Nancy Foss tells this story on Facebook that she saw a guy in the rain without an umbrella. So she stops her car, turns around, runs out, gives him the umbrella, doesn't want to stand there in the rain and talk to him about anything, but it has a note on it right there. I'm thinking, "Wow, there's God working again." How fun it is to see the Lord work.

That's what he's saying here. *Tell of his wonderful acts.* See what God is doing.

Verse 3 says, *Glory* (now that's the word praise, *hallel* or shine like in hallelujah, shine) *in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice. Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always.*

Notice in verse 3 it says *praise and rejoice*. Our lives get complicated. We get discouraged in life. We get overwhelmed at times and we can go through life complaining or we can praise God and rejoice. That's what verse 3 is talking about.

But I like verse 4 in particular because it says, *Look to the LORD and his strength; seek his face always*. Is that what we're doing? In the course of our day every day, every month, do we seek His face? I think our thought patterns would go a lot better in our lives if we were thinking of the Lord all the time.

I think that's in part because of verse 5. The first word there gives us something that we need, a word that we need. We tend to forget, so the word is *remember* in verse 5. *Remember the wonders he has done, his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced.*

Now the whole psalm is going to go through and tell us some of His miracles and judgments. We're going to see those developed in the psalm.

It starts in verse 6 – *you his servants, the descendants of Abraham, his chosen ones, the children of Jacob*. So the idea of just remembering is so important. Our memories are a beautiful thing, or our memories can be a problem for us. So we want to have our minds focused on the Lord and remember the beautiful things, the wonders He has done, and that will help us in our thought patterns and the way that we handle our lives.

Verse 7: *He is the LORD our God. Yahweh is His personal name, that's LORD. He is Yahweh our God; his judgments are in all the earth. He remembers his covenant forever.*

Now the covenant here is the covenant with Abraham, which I'll talk about briefly. But let me read the rest. *He remembers his covenant forever, the promise he made, for a thousand generations, the covenant he made with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac*. As the psalmist is calling those who are part of this song, he's calling everybody to worship. He's saying remember what God has done and it's based on the covenant that He's made.

Now this covenant was an unconditional covenant. Abraham was promised that he would have descendants that would be greater than the stars of the sky. He would have a name, he would have a land. The focus is going to be on the land here, that God would give him the Promised Land. It's going to be passed on from Abraham.

Notice in verse 9 – *the covenant he had with Abraham, the oath he swore to Isaac*. There are four patriarchs. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. So Jacob is going to be mentioned in the next verse, verse 10. *He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree*, and down in verse 17 we're going to hear about Joseph and that's going to be elaborated upon just a little bit.

The covenant is important because it has to do with identity. Now take with me, just for a moment, this idea of identity. It's a very important concept I've been pondering most recently because I'm getting ready to write my next book. Joanne and I are going to write a book on ten traits of a successful family. What does that have to do with Abraham and his identity? Let me explain to you how we're getting there.

As the psalmist is developing this idea, he's saying I want you to remember who you are. Your identity is this covenant relationship with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph. There was this whole identity the Jewish people had.

In the New Testament we are part of the church, and the church has an identity. In fact the word church means *ecclesia*, called-out ones. The word called-out from something because we are different. The church is different from the world.

The principles I'm trying to draw here for the new book that I'm pondering now is this: God has a family. He calls it the church and there are several things that make the family (His church) successful. He's outlined those things for us in the epistles in the New Testament. If we can study the church that God has created as His family and find out what the success principles are for His family, maybe we can glean some things out of there for our own earthly families that will make our early families successful. So the title of the book is something like this: *Ten Traits of a Successful Family Based on God's Family, the Church*. We're going to take those principles and apply them to our earthly families.

Principle number one is that we have an identity. So we're going to talk about an identity that the family has. Every family has an identity. We're going to see as we look in the book of Numbers starting in a couple of weeks that the Israelites had an identity, but then they're broken down. There's twelve tribes. The Kohathites were different in their identity than the other groups of people within the Israelite people.

I would suggest that every family has an identity that makes them different, makes them unique. As we develop that identity and establish that mission statement as a family, it's one of the things that makes our family successful. It's one of the things that makes our church successful as we realize how God has called us and our identity. It is certainly one of the things that the Israelites are called to remember that God has given them an identity as Jewish people with the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph.

Let's keep reading in verse 10. *He confirmed it to Jacob as a decree, to Israel as an everlasting covenant* (and now he's going to tell us the part of the covenant he's going to emphasize in verse 11): *"To you I will give the land of Canaan as the portion you will inherit."*

When they were but few in number, few indeed, and strangers in it, they wandered from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another. So Abraham just had his few people there. He didn't have a lot of people and they moved around a lot. Sometimes they even had to leave Israel for a bit. They went to different places before they really became this nation and God protected them, as in verse 14 it says, *He allowed no one to oppress them; for their sake he rebuked kings.*

There are stories about Abraham going into a place and he calls Sarah his sister, so the king wants to take his sister as his wife and God protects him in the midst of that. Disciplines Abraham, all those things happen, but God protects them. *He rebuked kings* (verse 15): “*Do not touch my anointed ones; do my prophets no harm.*”

So one of the things we’re seeing in the psalm here is that God is in control. He’s overseeing the decree that He’s given to Abraham, protecting them as they’re moving around and so on.

Verse 16: *He called down famine on the land and destroyed all their supplies of food; and he sent a man before them—Joseph, sold as a slave.*

This is a one-verse summary of what happened, but, as you know, Joseph was sold into slavery by his brothers. He went to Egypt and unbeknownst to that, the family being under pressure because there was no food, went to Egypt to get food. Who do they find? Joseph. But of course Joseph wasn’t instantly the second in command in Egypt. He had to go through some real trials himself described in the next verses.

Verse 17: *He sent a man before them—Joseph, sold as a slave. This is about Joseph. They bruised his feet with shackles, his neck was put in irons* (that means he was slaved for awhile and he was in prison before he got to be this ruler in Egypt), *till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved him true.*

Do you remember he had this dream that said that the sun and the moon and the stars would bow down to him – referring to his family members that they would bow down to him, and his family members were jealous and saying quit telling us about these dreams. But he says, *till what he foretold came to pass, till the word of the LORD proved him true.*

Verse 20: *The king sent and released him, the ruler of peoples set him free.* So he came out of the dungeon. In one day he moved from being a prisoner in a dungeon that nobody knew about to being the second in command of all of Egypt. *He made him master of his household, ruler over all he possessed, to instruct his princes as he pleased and teach his elders wisdom.*

So that’s the story of Joseph, the fourth patriarch, rising to power because God was preparing a leader to rescue the people – in this case Jacob and his family that were in a famine, they came and they got food. So God was preparing a leader for that.

Verse 23 says, *Then Israel* (that’s his name for Jacob – his name was changed to Israel in all his family) *entered Egypt.* So this is the story of how they came from Palestine, they went into Egypt, then they got rescued out of there and they are wandering toward the Promised Land. That’s basically the story that we’re covering in just the few verses. We’ll look more in depth in that story as we study the book of Numbers.

Verse 24 says, *The LORD made his people very fruitful.* So while they’re in Egypt they start populating quite a bit. This group of people now is growing in number. *He made them too numerous for their foes, whose hearts he turned to hate his people.* So not only did he start

hating the Israelites, they made them slaves. That's a real problem. These people who were destined for the Promised Land are slaved in Egypt, *to conspire against his servants*.

Verse 26: *He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen*. So now God in His divine providence sends some more leaders who are going to rescue them out of Egypt. *He sent Moses his servant, and Aaron, whom he had chosen. They performed his signs among them, his wonders in the land of Ham*. I know that sounds like a deli, but the land of Ham is the place in Egypt where they lived. That's just the name for it there.

It says there that *they performed these signs* or plagues took place at that time. Now there are some examples of the plagues. They're not in order, but these plagues are mentioned starting in verse 28.

He sent darkness and made the land dark—for had they not rebelled against his words? He told them, they didn't respond, so He sent them the darkness plague.

He turned their waters into blood, causing their fish to die. Their land teemed with frogs, which went up into the bedrooms of their rulers. So here we have an infestation of frogs. I would not like it if there was an infestation of frogs. Frogs jumping on my bed, frogs every time I opened the cupboard, frogs all around everywhere. Every time you move something there's a frog. That's what's going on here.

He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and gnats throughout their country. Here's an infestation of flies and gnats.

Verse 32: *He turned their rain into hail, with lightning throughout their land; he struck down their vines and fig trees and shattered the trees of their country. He spoke, and the locusts came, grasshoppers without number; they ate up every green thing in their land, ate up the produce of their soil*. Grasshoppers. Plague of those things too. So he's describing all these plagues that Egypt went through.

Verse 36: *Then he struck down all the firstborn in their land* (that's the tenth plague), *the firstfruits of all their manhood. He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold, and from among their tribes no one faltered*. So now he's going to bring them out with silver and gold and they're going to come out of Egypt.

We're just quickly going through the history in the psalm of what's going on. Okay. He says, *Egypt was glad when they left, because dread of Israel had fallen on them*.

Verse 39: *He spread out a cloud as a covering, and a fire to give light at night*. What happened is that as the Israelites left Egypt they were led in the wilderness by a cloud. Now it appears that the cloud was a covering. You're in the hot area of the world there, a lot of sunshine, and the covering of the cloud was there. It appears that when the cloud as a covering moved they would move under it. "Oh, we've got to keep going with the cloud." So that's the kind of cloud that's leading them. It may not have been just a cloud in the distance they were following but more of

this covering of a cloud they stayed underneath and they followed that way. Or the fire at night if they needed to move at night.

Verse 40: *They asked, and he brought them quail; he fed them well with the bread of heaven. He opened the rock, and water gushed out.*

These are just three stories in the book of Numbers we're going to look at. He gives them quail, He gives them manna, He gives them water out of the rock. All of those stories we'll look at more, but the point is He is providing for them. God is in control. He's taking care of these people. That's what the song is all about. God is great. He takes care of all of His people.

So He opened the rock, and water gushed out, it flowed like a river in the desert. For he remembered his holy promise given to his servant Abraham. His actions aren't random, they're based on this promise that He made to Abraham.

It's really great to know that we serve a God of order. I don't know if you started reading the book of Numbers, but it's one of those books you go, "Whoa! Whoa! Why did He do that?" Because people are getting killed off here, and they didn't do that, and there's all kinds of law and rules and lots of numbers in the book of Numbers that we're going to see. God is a God of order. God expects certain things. I think we'll be impressed as we study the book of Numbers about the requirements that God had for His people. This isn't just some "let's all feel good" kind of thing. Very particular about what God required of His people.

Verse 43: *He brought out his people with rejoicing, his chosen ones with shouts of joy; he gave them the lands of the nations, and they fell heir to what others had toiled for—that they might keep his precepts and observe his laws.*

This whole beautiful thing that took place is all being described from God's perspective. We don't even get to hear about all the problems they had on the way because the references are all about God's greatness and how He was in control.

Do you see how Psalm 105 ends? Look at it there. Do you see it there? It says, *Praise the LORD*. That's the word hallelujah. Say that with me. Hallelujah. We need some practice there. Let's say it again. Hallelujah. Right. Okay. This isn't a Baptist church now. Come on, you can talk out a little bit. Psalm 105. That's the end.

We're going to look at Psalm 106. Now Psalm 106 is the last of the psalms in Book IV of the Psalms. Started with Psalm 90, ends with Psalm 106. Psalm 90 starts with, in the very first verse, *from everlasting to everlasting*. That's how it starts in Psalm 90. Psalm 106 at the very end, the last psalm ends with *from everlasting to everlasting*. It just kind of wraps up. Those are the bookends in this book of the Psalms.

Now in this particular book we have all of these from 90-106 and they reference really the book of Numbers because they're the fourth book of the Psalms and Numbers is the fourth book of the Pentateuch.

Let's dig into Psalm 106 for just a few minutes. In Psalm 106 it starts the same way that it ends. If you see the very first words. What are the first words there? It says, *Praise the LORD*, which is hallelujah. Let's say that together. Hallelujah. Good. Alright. And it ends the same way – hallelujah. So it starts and ends Psalm 106 with hallelujah, which is from *hallel* which is to glorify or shine and *Jah*, which is the beginning of Yahweh. *Praise the LORD*. That's what it means.

It says in Psalm 106:1, *Praise the LORD. Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.*

That word *love* is *chesed*. I hope that you've learned over our study time in this book of Psalms that the word *chesed* is a very important word for the Hebrew people. I think it's a very important word for us too.

It's important for the Hebrew people because it represents the grace of God. It represents the faithfulness of God based on His covenant. That God has made a covenant with Abraham and it's this love that really is the valuable thing that underlines everything that God is doing for us.

Verses 2-5 are a call for us to give thanks to the Lord. Let me read those. *Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the LORD or fully declare his praise? Blessed are those who act justly, who always do what is right. Remember me, LORD, when you show favor to your people, come to my aid when you save them, that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may share in the joy of your nation and join your inheritance in giving praise.*

So God is just this call, amplifying God and who He is at first. Because we're going to come to verse 6. If you look at verse 6 the very first part of verse 6 is something we all need to come to in our lives. We need to recognize we are weak people. Verse 6 says this: *We have sinned.*

We have a tendency to blame our problems on other people, to justify our actions, to defend ourselves, to rationalize. We need to come to this place where we say *we have sinned*. Every one of us needs to come to that place whether we're young or old, married or not married, man or woman. We all need to come to this. *We have sinned.*

The psalmist is leading us into this place where we're recognizing the sin in the history of Israel. So let's go through some of these stories and see what happens.

We have sinned, even as our ancestors did; we have done wrong and acted wickedly. When our ancestors were in Egypt... Now we're back to the same history. Now they're in Egypt. God's doing amazing things through them. He's providing these miracles. He's doing all kinds of things to get them out of there. *When our ancestors were in Egypt, they gave no thought to your miracles; they did not remember your many kindnesses, and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea.*

This is a really interesting story because one of the things we're going to learn in the book of Numbers is God is taking this people who don't know how to trust Him yet. They've been cared for or subjected and everything decided for them in Egypt. Now they're out on their own and

they're having to learn how to trust God in the midst of the problems that they face, and they don't know how to do it. So they keep forgetting God's grace. We're going to see that all through the book of Numbers, but it's illustrated right here in this psalm.

It says *they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea*. This is a story about how they got out, God rescued them dramatically, the Egyptians are giving them all kinds of gold, silver. "Just get out of here. We don't want you guys here." They head on their way and they got the Red Sea in front of them and they're trapped. Behind them is the Egyptian army and they don't know how to handle this, so they get upset and they start complaining.

I just want to read it to you from the Bible out of Exodus 14. It says this: *As Pharaoh approached, the Israelites looked up, and there were the Egyptians, marching after them. They were terrified and cried out to the Lord. They said to Moses, "Was it because there were no graves in Egypt that you brought us to the desert to die? What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? Didn't we say to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; let us serve the Egyptians'? It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"*

Moses answered the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand firm and you will see the deliverance the Lord will bring you today. I mean this is plaque material. I need this on the plaque of my heart. I need to know this. The Egyptians you see today you will never see again. The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."

Oh if I could learn that. If I could learn to just be still and let the Lord fight for me. Wow I love that. Exodus 14.

That's the story here that's being described because they rebelled by the sea. They just didn't have the faith necessary, so God's going to take them on this faith journey, which I think God is doing in our lives. That's why Numbers is going to be such an interesting study for us because the things those people are experiencing, the Israelites in this book of Numbers as they're walking around the wilderness, are things that we experience as well.

Back to Psalm 106:8. *Yet he saved them for his name's sake, to make his mighty power known. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it dried up; he led them through the depths as through a desert. He saved them from the hand of the foe; from the hand of the enemy he redeemed them. The waters covered their adversaries; not one of them survived. Then they believed his promises and sang his praise.*

That's *hallel*, where we get hallelujah from. They *sang his praise*. They realized "God is so great. He just rescued us from the Egyptians. This is so fun. I'm glad I'm a Christian. I'm glad I serve the Lord."

Look at verse 13. *But they soon forgot what he had done* (this is the whole story of Numbers right here) *and did not wait for his plan to unfold*. Oh man. Stop the presses. Look at that verse. I go, "Whoa I need to meditate on this myself for a minute." This is what I do. Look at that. *They soon forgot what he had done and did not wait for his plan to unfold*.

Sometimes I take control and I say, “God, I’ve got to do it now.” I need to wait for God’s plan to unfold, and when it unfolds it all fits together properly. What a great verse. I just spent some time meditating on that this week. We don’t have time to do a lot of that right now. Let’s go on to get through this psalm. But it’s just a great pausing moment there. They *did not wait for his plan to unfold*. Man, I need that.

Verse 14. They had some problems and they’re going to work these problems out and God’s going to do this. The first problem is in verse 14. *In the desert they gave in to their craving*. That’s scary. What cravings do we have? They gave in to their craving.

This is about the food. They were unhappy with the manna, they were tired of manna-cotti and manna-splits and manna everything. They wanted something different than manna, and so God gave them quail. But their desires were craving it in a way that was unhealthy. It was not right what they were doing. So God says, “Oh you want quail? I’m going to give you quail.” They had so much quail it made them sick. There was even a plague that killed some of them.

In the desert they gave in to their craving, in the wilderness they put God to the test. So he gave them what they asked for. That’s always scary. Maybe we should pray, “God, don’t give me what I ask for if that’s not what I need.” Sometimes we’re saying, “God give me this.” Lord, don’t give it to me if it’s not what I need.

So he gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease among them. It was part of the discipline because they were more focused on their desires than serving the Lord in that. We’ll learn more about that as we get into Numbers.

Verse 16: *In the camp they grew envious of Moses.* Problem number two that they were envious of leadership. *In the camp they grew envious of Moses and of Aaron, who was consecrated to the LORD.*

So the story is that these guys that are mentioned in the next verse, Dathan, Abiram, they came before Moses and basically they said to him, “Look, just because he’s your brother doesn’t mean he’s holy. Aaron – what makes him so special?” God had consecrated the Levites to do a particular job under Aaron’s leadership, but they were feeling like, “Well God can speak to any of us and we can lead.” That was the wrong thing for them to do. God was not leading through them, He was leading through Aaron. So God had them bring all their rods together and Aaron’s rod budded, demonstrating that Aaron is the one that God chose.

There was this terrible judgment at that moment. *The earth opened up and swallowed* all these people up and their families. We’re going to look at it all in Numbers. You’ll see it. But that’s what’s described here. *The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan; it buried the company of Abiram.* And then there were others that were part of this rebellion against the leadership, so there was a fire on the outskirts of the camp that burned up a bunch of them, and there were a lot of them. *Fire blazed among their followers; a flame consumed the wicked.* So that’s problem number two being described there.

The next one is they worshiped something different. *At Horeb they made a calf and worshiped an idol cast from metal. They exchanged their glorious God for an image of a bull, which eats grass.*

In case you don't know what a bull is, it eats grass. I want you to know this is not one of those interesting bulls. This is one of those common bulls that eats grass. That's what they decided to worship, in case you were wondering.

Verse 21: *They forgot the God who saved them, who had done great things in Egypt, miracles in the land of Ham and awesome deeds by the Red Sea. So he said he would destroy them—had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.*

The next two verses tell us about the next problem they had. They complained. We'll see a lot of complaining in the book of Numbers.

Then they despised the pleasant land; they did not believe his promise. They grumbled in their tents and did not obey the LORD.

It's interesting that *grumbled in their tents*. They took their grumbling back home. If we see a lot of grumbling in your tents at home, maybe there's a problem. We should at least ask some questions there. We'll learn more about grumbling and how to deal with it in the book of Numbers.

Verse 26: *So he swore to them with uplifted hand that he would make them fall in the wilderness, make their descendants fall among the nations and scatter them throughout the lands. They yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor and ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods; they aroused the LORD's anger by their wicked deeds, and a plague broke out among them. But Phinehas stood up and intervened, and the plague was checked.*

So they made a very terrible decision about being affected by those around them. Not obeying God and getting rid of all of the bad, getting rid of all of the people, they didn't do it and so consequently the bad infected them. We're going to see in the book of Numbers God's going to say, "Go in there and kill everybody. Everybody. Just kill them all. Don't put up with any of it." We go, "Whoa. That's really serious." Which leads us to a very important conclusion about God, as we'll see in the book of Numbers, that God is pretty serious about sin.

You better be careful about the people that you hang around with. If your best friend is a person who's not following the Lord actively, you better watch out. Because the tendency is for that person to affect you or infect you. It's a dangerous place to be. Be careful.

This one guy, Phinehas, in the story he actually stood up and he killed these two people who were in sin and then the plague stopped. So the picture is all developed there for us in the psalm. Verse 31: *This was credited to him (Phinehas) as righteousness for endless generations to come.*

By the waters of Meribah they angered the LORD, and trouble came to Moses because of them; for they rebelled against the Spirit of God, and rash words came from Moses' lips.

This is the story about how the people complained to Moses because they didn't have water. So God says to Moses, "I want you to go and I want you to speak to the rock." But Moses in the past had used the rod to hit the rock, so this time he's mad. He says some things to the people and hits the rock twice and water comes out. The people don't know the difference.

We're going to see in this particular story as we look at it some more that sometimes the results that come out are not an indication of whether the action was justified or not. In this case Moses sinned and this is why Moses didn't get to go into the Promised Land, because he didn't obey the Lord. He used human methods or used his own emotion to try to get something done.

In the New Testament in James 1:20 it says, *For the anger of man does not produce the righteousness that God desires.* We can often get kids into the car by yelling at them, but maybe the methodology we need to consider. We'll look at those kinds of things as we'll see what Moses did and the mistakes that he made.

Let's go on. Verse 34: *They did not destroy the peoples as the LORD had commanded them, but they mingled with the nations and adopted their customs.* Be careful with the people you hang around with.

In the New Testament we have the word church, which is *ecclesia*, which means separated ones. We are separate. We are different. We are not like those other people.

Be careful about the friendships that you have. If you're hanging around with people who are not believers, they could be good people. They might be nice people, but eventually their customs, their ideas, their whatever can infect you. That's what happened. This became very serious. This is unbelievable to me what actually happened in the end. As I talk to people I realize today people start down a path and it just gets worse and worse and worse. Look what happened. *They worshiped their idols* (that's the first thing they did), *which became a snare to them.*

And then notice – *They sacrificed their sons and their daughters to false gods.* In those particular places when they worshiped these other gods they would sacrifice their children as a way of demonstrating their dedication to the god. Those children would be sacrificed to these gods. It was just a terrible thing.

Verse 38: *They shed innocent blood, the blood of their sons and daughters, whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan, and the land was desecrated by their blood.* It was just terrible.

You might think that in our world Christians are kind of narrow. We believe in certain things about this and that. You've got to understand the world we live in is a terrible place in a number of ways. Just look at abortion. I mean I'm just comparing they're killing their children here. You look at abortion in our country – exceeded 50 million abortions.

I saw this, I didn't get a chance to check on this, but they were saying if you are under eighteen years old you need to know that half of your generation has already been killed. Most dangerous

place to live is in the womb. You might check that before you quote me on it, but I just find it fascinating that we in our society can find ourselves in that same place. It's just a terrible place.

That's what happened to God's chosen people. With the *chesed* of God and His faithfulness, and they're rejecting God and bad things are happening.

Verse 39: *They defiled themselves by what they did; by their deeds they prostituted themselves. Therefore the LORD was angry with his people and abhorred his inheritance. He gave them into the hands of the nations, and their foes ruled over them.*

So they went into captivity with the Assyrians of the northern kingdom and the Babylonians for the southern kingdom. They were taken off into captivity and *their foes ruled over them. Their enemies oppressed them and subjected them to their power. Many times he delivered them, but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sin.*

Whoa. Those words, you need to mark them. Because a person who isn't following the Lord is going to *waste away in their sin*. That's what happens. It's not that God actively comes and judges them necessarily. He may. But sometimes they're just wasting away in their sin. That's what's happening.

That's why we need verse 44 because now we've just talked about all this bad stuff. Maybe you're all depressed now. But now go to verse 44 because now we get the deliverance.

The word saved is used here, *yada*. In verse 44 – *Yet he took note of their distress when he heard their cry; for their sake (what did He do?) he remembered his covenant and out of his great love (His chesed) he relented.* It's not because they did anything. We don't come to God and earn our salvation before God. It's because of His covenant, His character. That's why we have what we have.

Verse 46: *He caused all who held them captive to show them mercy.*

Verse 47: *Save us.* That's the cry of all of our hearts when we recognize our weakness, we recognize our sin. We come to God and we say, "Save us. Save us. Lord, we need help. Save us. We cannot save ourselves."

Save us, Yahweh our God, and gather us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise.

This is how the psalm ends in a really beautiful way, which causes us all to go, "Yes! This is the good ending of the story." Because every one of us has this tendency to wander in our hearts, to be influenced by the world, to find ourselves saying, "Well the world isn't so bad. I can hang around with this person. They're not going to hurt me." And we find ourselves moving in a place that's dangerous and affecting us tremendously.

But the beautiful thing is God had designed the whole world so that Jesus Christ would die on a cross to take the punishment for our sins so that when we ask Jesus Christ to come into our

hearts we experience salvation. We recognize, “Lord, I’m a sinner. I’m weak. I need you. I need you to save me.”

That’s the word there, save me. *Yada. Save us, LORD.* I need you to save me, to redeem me because I can’t do it myself.

Those who think they’re going to earn their way to heaven are making a serious mistake because all of us have sin and that sin prevents us from enjoying the beauty of God and the relationship with Him. So we need to be saved, every one of us. We come to that and we go, “Yes! God has saved us.” Wow. We all who are Christians already go, “Yes, that is great.” And all of God’s people said what? Let’s practice that.

Notice the next verse. *Praise (that’s baruch, bow the knee) be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Let all the people say, “Amen!” Praise the LORD.* Hallelujah is the next line. So all God’s people said [congregation: “Amen.”]. You all get 100. That’s great. The next one, *Praise the LORD, hallelujah, say that with me.* Hallelujah.

See, the response of the psalmist for all of the mistakes that people made is that we have a God who saves us, rescues us from ourselves and gives us this great inheritance because of His faithfulness and His love for us. We all come to that and we go, “Amen! Praise the Lord! This is so cool!” I love it.

It’s out of this psalm, Psalm 106, that we have a song that we sing, *Let the People Say Amen.* It’s a fun song that we like to sing, but as you listen to the song and watch the words you’ll hear they’re inspired by this particular psalm of all the great things that God has done. He’s redeemed us. We’ve messed up. God has given us salvation and so because of that we say amen, we say hallelujah. That’s what we say as we come before this particular song.

Well, that’s a great ending to this book of the Psalms, Psalm 90-Psalm 106. Maybe at another time we’ll take Psalm 107-Psalm 150, the next book of the Psalms, the final book. It corresponds to the book of Deuteronomy. Maybe we’ll look at that another time.

But the important thing is for us each to recognize how this applies to our own lives. I hope you’ll take it away, apply it to your own heart. If God is speaking to your heart today and you’d like prayer, maybe you’d like to ask Jesus Christ to come into your life today, we will have counselors on the sides. As we sing this next song just go over there and pray with a counselor and allow them to lead you into the presence of God and accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior today. Okay?

Let’s all stand together and sing this song. Amen.

[PRAYER] Heavenly Father, we do thank you for your great and marvelous works. We’re grateful for what you’ve done for us and we are privileged to be your children, and in that vein we sing about that and praise you as our Lord and our Savior. In Jesus’ name, amen.