

Psalm 107 “Redeemed People Have Reason to Speak”—part one [**](#)

Main Idea: We learn from Psalm 107 that redeemed people have reason to speak! There are three movements in the psalm which we'll examine carefully both this week and next, the Lord willing.

I. The psalm gives us an exhortation (1-3).

A. We're told to give thanks (1).

1. We should express our appreciation for what God is like.
2. We should express our appreciation for what God has done.

B. We're told that redeemed people ought to speak (2, 22, 32, 42).

II. The psalm gives us examples of God's redeeming work (4-42).

A. Consider what the Redeemer did for some desert wanderers (4-9).

1. He saw their helpless predicament.
2. He heard their cry.
3. He delivered them and gave them a safe place to live.
4. He deserves to be thanked!

B. Consider what the Redeemer did for some prisoners in chains (10-16).

1. He saw their rebellion.
2. He used hardship to get their attention.
3. He heard their cry and saved them.
4. He deserves to be thanked!

C. Consider what the Redeemer did for some sinful fools (17-22).

1. He allowed them to experience the consequences of their sin.
2. He heard their cry and saved them.
3. He sent His word and healed them.
4. He deserves to be thanked!

D. Consider what the Redeemer did for some merchants at sea (23-32).

1. He saw they were intent on making money.
2. He sent a storm that brought them to the end of themselves.
3. He heard their cry, stilled the storm, and brought them safely to harbor.
4. He deserves to be thanked!

E. Consider what the Redeemer did on other occasions (33-42).

1. He turned rivers into a desert (33-34).
2. He turned a desert into pools of water (35-38).
3. He brings down powerful people (39-40).
4. He raises up needy people (41).
5. His people respond with rejoicing, while the wicked respond with silence (42).

III. The psalm gives us a concluding explanation (43).

- A. Wise people give serious attention to God's deeds.
- B. Wise people give serious attention to God's love.

Make It Personal: Ask yourself two important questions...

1. What has the Redeemer done for you?
2. Are you responding in the way He deserves?

*Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed thro' His infinite mercy,
His child and forever I am.*

*Redeemed, and so happy in Jesus,
No language my rapture can tell;
I know that the light of His presence
With me doth continually dwell.*

*I think of my blessed Redeemer,
I think of Him all the day long;
I sing, for I cannot be silent;
His love is the theme of my song.*

*Chorus: Redeemed, redeemed,
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;
Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!
His child and forever I am.*

The author of that hymn, Fanny Crosby, understood a very important truth. Redeemed people have reason to *open their mouths*. As she put it, if you have been redeemed, you *love* to proclaim it! And if you've been redeemed, you *cannot be silent*.

Why then are we, silent, that is? Why are we—the redeemed people of God—why are we so often *silent*? Why at times do we not praise our Redeemer with mouth and mind fully engaged? And why do we so often forfeit opportunities to pray to our Redeemer and ask Him to do for our unsaved loved ones what He has done for us? And why, when our Redeemer opens the door for us to tell our unsaved neighbors about Him, do we far too often keep our mouths closed concerning that subject when we’ll talk to them about almost any other subject?

In reality, redeemed people *can* be silent. We can so quickly forget the work, or at least forget the *wonder* of the work that our Redeemer accomplished in our lives.

Thankfully, God has given us passages in His Word like Psalm 107. You see, we’re not the first redeemed people to struggle with the tendency to take God for granted. Psalm 107 is both a helpful psalm and a motivational psalm. It shows us what to do and gives us incentive to do it. There are three movements in the psalm which we’ll examine carefully, looking at the first half of the psalm this week and the rest next week, the Lord willing.

I. The psalm gives us an exhortation (1-3).

Verses 1-3 “Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say this— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe, those he gathered from the lands, from east and west, from north and south.”

You’ll notice in the heading that Psalm 107 begins the fifth book of the Psalms (Psalms 107-150). Many feel that these five books of the Psalms correspond to the five books of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible). Some also feel that Psalms 105, 106, and 107 form an anonymous trilogy, for they all begin with the same charge we see here in verse 1.[\[1\]](#)

A. We’re told to give thanks (1). To whom is the psalmist giving this exhortation? Commentators Keil and Deilitzsch and others believe this psalm was addressed to the Jewish exiles that God delivered from captivity in Babylon . That puts it in the sixth century B.C. In the second movement the psalm describes several examples of how God redeemed these exiles and brought them home to the land of promise.

It’s worth noting that at the end of the previous psalm, Psalm 106:47 records a prayer asking God to rescue His people out of the nations so that they could “give thanks” to Him. Psalm 107 shows how God answered that prayer and calls on His people to give thanks like they said they would!

But this psalm wasn’t just for the Jews five hundred years before Christ. That’s why this inspired psalm was included in Holy Scripture, so God’s people in the future, including us, could benefit from it. If you’ve been redeemed, this is for you.

We’re told to give thanks. Give thanks *to whom*? To Yahweh, the Lord. And why should we thank the Lord? The psalmist mentions two fundamental reasons...

1. *We should express our appreciation for what God is like.* We’re given two of God’s attributes in verse 1. He is *good*, and His *love* endures forever.

The psalmist uses a very significant word here. It’s translated “love” in the NIV, “steadfast love” in the ESV, and “mercy” in the KJV (although in verse 8 the KJV translates the same Hebrew word “goodness,” and in verse 43 as “loving kindness”). Why the different translations? It’s because this Hebrew word covers too much territory to be translated by only one English word.

The Hebrew word is *chesed*. It’s not an exaggeration to say that this is one of the most important words in the Bible. It appears hundreds of times in the Old Testament and represents a vital attribute of God Himself. God exhibits *chesed* towards His people. He always does what is in their best interest. He shows them love, yes, but more than love, *merciful* love that doesn’t treat them the way they deserve. And it’s an *enduring* and *unfailing* love, for it’s

demonstrated over and over again without giving up, hence a *loyal* love. And far from being grim and stoic, it's a *kind* love, hence the translation loving-kindness.

Think of a five year old child with a rare disease. A doctor will do whatever he can to help that child, including inflicting pain if necessary, such as a shot. That's *love*. But that child's parent would take the child's place, if he or she could. Is that love? Yes, and more than love. It's *chesed*.

Look through the psalm and you'll see the call to thank God for His *chesed* over and over again. Verse 8—"Let them give thanks to the LORD for His *chesed*." Verse 15—"Let them give thanks to the LORD for His *chesed*." Again in verse 21, again in verse 31. And the last verse of the psalm, "Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the *chesed* of the LORD."

Here's a second reason for giving thanks to the Lord, first for what He is like, and...

2. *We should express our appreciation for what God has done.* *Chesed* always takes action. Please notice the action that flowed out of God's *chesed* in the verses we just read. Verse 8—"Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love *and his wonderful deeds for men.*" Verse 15—"Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love *and his wonderful deeds for men.*" Again in verse 21—His *chesed* and *His wonderful deeds*. And in verse 31—His *chesed* and *His wonderful deeds*.

In just a moment we'll take a look at some of God's wonderful deeds, but for now, don't miss the obvious. When God does something for His people and puts His *chesed* on display, we ought to give thanks for it!

But that's not all. The exhortation in this psalm is quite specific...

B. We're told that redeemed people ought to speak (2, 22, 32, 42). Verse 2—"Let the redeemed of the LORD *say this*— those he redeemed from the hand of the foe." Redeemed people are supposed to open their mouths and use their voices to bring attention to their Redeemer.

What's a redeemer? A "redeemer" in Israel referred in one context to a kinsman who took action to rescue his close relative from slavery and debt. Remember Boaz? He saw the difficult predicament of the widows Naomi and Ruth and took action in their behalf. He paid the price to redeem them and provide for their care.

That's what the Lord did for us, says the psalmist. He redeemed us from the hand of the foe (verse 2b). He gathered us "from the lands, from east and west, from north and south" (verse 3), referring to what God did when He brought His people home from exile.

Let the redeemed of the Lord *say this*. Say what? Say "Thank you, my Redeemer!" I think the "this" in verse 2 points us back to the command to thank God for His *chesed* in verse 1.

Have you helped someone who failed to say thanks? Parents do a lot of taxiing, especially if their kids are in sports. Parents, have you ever felt sorry for a teammate of your child who needed a ride home from practice, gone out of your way to take the young person home, only to arrive at their home and hear the car door shut without a word of thanks? How'd you feel? Taken for granted? You got a very small taste of how God must feel when He does something for you and hears not a word of thanks.

Again and again in this psalm we hear a call for appropriate verbal response. Verse 22—"Let them sacrifice thank offerings and *tell* of his works with *songs of joy.*" Verse 32—"Let them *exalt* him in the assembly of the people and *praise* him in the council of the elders." And notice the contrast in verse 42, "The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths." Notice the difference between God's kind of people and wicked people. It shows up in their mouths. Redeemed people see the Redeemer at work and *rejoice*. The wicked *shut their mouths*.

When God has helped you, the appropriate response, at least in part, is to use your mouth to express appreciation to Him, particularly to express appreciation for His *chesed*.

Is that not why we sing about the cross? There has never been and never will be a more vivid display of God's incredible love, His *chesed*, than what He did for us when He sent His own Son, the Redeemer, to pay the redemption price for our salvation on the cross.

Edwin Excell penned these lyrics. He confessed...

*I have a song I love to sing, since I have been redeemed,
Of my Redeemer, Savior king, since I have been redeemed.*

This is your story, beloved. If you have put your trust in Jesus Christ, you have been *redeemed*. But I wonder, do you *love* to sing that song? Do you *love* to open your mouth express appreciation to your Redeemer? Sadly, if we're not careful, our love can grow cold. That's why we need an exhortation like we find in Psalm 107. Secondly...

II. The psalm gives us examples of God's redeeming work (4-42).

Notice verse 4, "Some wandered in desert wastelands." The psalmist is going to tell us what the Redeemer did to rescue a particular group of people. He tells us about their predicament (verse 5), their cry (verse 6), God's rescue (verses 6b-7), followed by an exhortation for them to give thanks (verse 8).

Then the psalmist gives another example, using the same pattern. Notice verse 10, "Some sat in darkness... prisoners suffering in iron chains." They too cried out (verse 13), and God rescued them (verse 14). They too are exhorted to give thanks (verse 15).

We see another group in verse 17, followed by another in verse 23. Commentator Derek Kidner suggests it is inaccurate to say we have four different groups identified in Psalm 107. He believes that the four scenes are "four ways of looking at the same reality, namely the disastrous situation from which Israel has now been rescued."^[2]

I see it differently. I see in Psalm 107 four different examples of people that God the Redeemer rescued. The fact is, God rescues sinners out of all kinds of perilous situations. As we enter the world, we are all sinners and hopelessly lost. But we are not all lost in the same way. That is, as we grow up our lostness manifests itself in a host of dismal predicaments.

When God redeemed me I was a fearful eleven year old, worried about what would happen to me when I died. I'd gone to church all my life, but the churches my family attended had a form of godliness that denied its power. Through my dad's providential job change, my family moved and God put us in a new church, one that preached the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. There was no lightning bolt experience, but God took away my fear and gave me incredible joy when Christ the Redeemer came into my life.

When God redeemed my wife, Sherry, she was eighteen and had very little church background. There was a huge void in her soul that nothing could fill, yet the Redeemer filled it when she trusted in Him!

Just as people are lost in similar, yet different ways, so consequently their story of God's rescue will involve similar, yet different details. That's what Psalm 107 shows us. Psalm 107 gives us four specific redemption accounts in verses 4-32, following by some general remarks concerning how the Redeemer works in verses 33-42.

Here are the four examples. We're invited to ponder what the Redeemer did, first, for some desert wanderers, next for some prisoners in chains, thirdly for sinful, physically sick fools, and fourthly for some merchants at sea. It's worth noting that these four types of people illustrate two categories of suffering. Some people suffer due to man's limitations in a sin-cursed world (like those wandering in the desert, category #1, or those in a storm at sea, category #4). Other people suffer due to their own sin (like those in prison in category #2, and those whose sinful choices led to sickness in category #3).^[3]

From a counseling standpoint, quite often these two categories are mixed. People suffer because of a combination

of living in a sin-cursed world *and* sinful choices they themselves have made. But the good news is that our Redeemer has a track record in saving suffering people no matter what the cause of their suffering, if they'll cry out to Him as did the examples we're about to see.

A. Consider what the Redeemer did for some desert wanderers (4-9). “Some wandered in desert wastelands, finding no way to a city where they could settle. They were hungry and thirsty, and their lives ebbed away. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He led them by a straight way to a city where they could settle. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things.”

Watch what the Redeemer did with the desert wanderers.

1. *He saw their helpless predicament.* They were out in the desert, hopelessly searching for a safe place to dwell. They were hungry, thirsty, and dying a slow death.

Does that describe people you know? They're alive, but the hardships of life are taking a toll, and they're dying a slow death, their lives ebbing away. Please know this. Our Redeemer sees them. They may be losing their grip on life, but He's still the author of life. And what happens when such people cry out to Him? The same thing that happened to the desert wanderers in Psalm 107.

2. *He heard their cry.* But He didn't just *hear* them.

3. *He delivered them and gave them a safe place to live.* He took them from the desert and put them in a city, a place they could call home. And because He did...

4. *He deserves to be thanked!* Verse 8—“Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.”

And the psalmist wants us to know it's still happening. Notice the shift from the past tense in verses 4-8 (they “wandered” and God “delivered” them) to the present tense in verse 9, “For he *satisfies* the thirsty and *fills* the hungry with good things.” The God who satisfied the desert wanderers five hundred years B.C. is still bringing satisfaction to desert wanderers even today.

By the way, please notice carefully, according to verse 8, who benefits from God's kindness. God does His wonderful deeds “for men.” He doesn't limit His kindness only to His covenant people, but does good things for all men, including those who ignore Him and even despise Him. As Jesus said, “He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good (Matt. 5:45).” Does that mean all men will enjoy His good gifts forever? God gives the gift of eternal life only to those who have cried out in faith to the Redeemer.

This reminds me of an elderly man I met fifteen years ago in the local apartment complex. Someone from our church introduced me. The man was housebound, suffering from a stroke. He'd moved here to be nearer a nephew, as I recall, but there he was, stuck in that apartment, a desert wanderer. As I shared the gospel with that man he told me he'd never heard the good news about Jesus before, and there in the wilderness of his apartment he cried out to the Redeemer who rescued him, and not long after that took him to a city where he could live safely forever.

B. Consider what the Redeemer did for some prisoners in chains (10-16). “Some sat in darkness and the deepest gloom, prisoners suffering in iron chains, for they had rebelled against the words of God and despised the counsel of the Most High. So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled, and there was no one to help. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He brought them out of darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their chains. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men, for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.”

We weren't told why the desert wanderers were in the desert, just that God saw them there and rescued them. Now we meet some prisoners and we are told why they were in prison. The reason? “For they had rebelled against the words of God.” They were in prison because of what God saw them do...

1. *He saw their rebellion.* They had “despised the counsel of the Most High.” But in His great love for these rebels God took action. What kind of action?

2. *He used hardship to get their attention.* These folks knew God’s Word. They knew what God wanted them to do, but they willfully and defiantly said *no*. God’s response? Verse 12—“So he subjected them to bitter labor; they stumbled and there was no one to help.” Simply put, God took a very drastic, yet necessary step to get their attention. He let them experience the consequences of their sinful choices. They wanted to violate His law, so He let them experience the consequences of their lawbreaking. He let them go where exactly their rebellious hearts wanted to go, away from Him and down, down, down, until they hit bottom. And there they were, all alone in the darkness of their prison, with clanking chains reminding them of their bondage.

And then they cried to the Lord. The text is specific. They cried *to the Lord*. Crying alone isn’t enough. Rebel sinners cry out, but that’s just because they don’t like the consequences of their choices. But broken and repentant rebel sinners cry to the Lord. And in the case of these prisoners watch what the Lord did...

3. *He heard their cry and saved them.* He brought them out of their darkness and broke the chains that bound them.

We tend to write off this kind of person. “He’ll never change. He made his bed. Let him sleep in it forever,” thinks the self-righteous man. But not God. God takes strategic steps to rescue undeserving sinners. First, he lets them taste the horrid consequences of their sin, and then, when they cry out to Him, He saves them!

Few have said it any better than Charles Wesley did...

*Long my imprisoned spirit lay,
Fast bound in sin and nature’s night;
Thine eye diffused a quickening ray—
I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;
My chains fell off, my heart was free,
I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.
Amazing love, how can it be?*

That Thou, my God shouldst die for me?

Yes, that’s the appropriate response when God sets a prisoner free!

4. *He deserves to be thanked!* Verse 15—“Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.” And once again, what God *did* for the prisoners in Psalm 107 He is *still doing*, verse 16 says, “for he breaks down gates of bronze and cuts through bars of iron.”

I think about the story of Harold Morris. He was serving a life sentence in the Georgia State Penitentiary, his life wasting away. Then someone told Him about the Redeemer, and Morris humbled himself and cried out to the Lord who set him free from his bondage to sin. And then the Lord graciously set him free a second time, as the governor issued a pardon, and Morris left that prison a free man, and then used his freedom to go back into prison and tell other prisoners the story of the Redeemer.

C. Consider what the Redeemer did for some sinful fools (17-22). “Some became fools through their rebellious ways and suffered affliction because of their iniquities. They loathed all food and drew near the gates of death. Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them from their distress. He sent forth his word and healed them; he rescued them from the grave. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.”

Verse 17 identifies these folks as “fools.” In the Bible the term ‘fool’ doesn’t mean that a person lacks intelligence. You can have a PhD and be a fool. A fool is a person who has a spiritual problem. According to Psalm

14:1, “The fool says in his heart, ‘There is no God.’” A fool denies God’s existence. How does a person become a fool? Our text tells us. “Some became fools *through their rebellious ways*.” When you know there is a God and you know what His Word says, yet you willfully choose to do what violates His Word, you’re heading down the fool’s path.

Now watch what God did in His effort to redeem these “fools”.

1. *He allowed them to experience the consequences of their sin.* Verse 17 says they suffered affliction *because of their iniquities*. Notice the downward regression their path takes. Rebellion led to suffering. Suffering led to dissatisfaction (they “loathed all food”). Dissatisfaction led to despair (they “drew near the gates of death”).

I wonder if, at times, we don’t ask God *too quickly* to take away people’s problems without allowing God the time to use those problems to serve their intended purpose. For instance, your friend loses his job. Is that a bad thing? Sure. But if our prayer is simply, “Lord, give him a job!” we just might be asking God to remove the very need He intends to use to get that friend’s attention. Better to pray, “Lord, have Your way in my friend’s life. He needs a job, but he needs *You* more than he needs a job. Make Yourself known to him through this difficult time, for Your honor!”

So first, God allowed them to experience the consequences of their sin. Next...

2. *He heard their cry and saved them.* He saved them “from their distress” (verse 19) and “from the grave” (verse 20). And notice specifically what He used to do this. Verse 20 states, “He sent forth his *word*.”

3. *He sent His word and healed them.* This is the means the Redeemer has chosen to use to restore broken lives. He works *through His Word*. Paul said in Romans 1:16, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.” What has the power to save people? The gospel does. What’s the gospel? It’s the message, the *word*, the good news about Jesus Christ, His perfect life, His death in the place of sinners, and His triumphant resurrection. God uses *words* about His Son to bring healing to sick, sinful fools.

And once again, when God takes action to redeem someone...

4. *He deserves to be thanked!* Verse 21—“Let them give thanks to the LORD for his *chesed* and his wonderful deeds for men.” What did God do for them? He did not give them what they deserved (that’s mercy), but instead gave them instead what they did not deserve (that’s grace), and put it all together and that’s *chesed*. Let them give thanks to the Lord for His *chesed*.

And not just with *words* either. The psalmist calls for more in verse 22, “Let them sacrifice thank offerings and tell of his works with songs of joy.” In Bible times, thank offerings were special gifts of livestock and produce that the Jews raised, took to the temple, and gave to God. It was a tangible expression of thanks. Do that! the psalmist says. And do this, too. Tell of your Redeemer’s works with *songs of joy*. Mindless liturgy won’t cut it. Put your mind into it—write songs that tell what God has done. And put your heart into you—sing those songs *with joy!*

Next time we’ll consider...

D. Consider what the Redeemer did for some merchants at sea (23-32). And...

E. Consider what the Redeemer did on other occasions (33-42).

And we’ll finish the psalm by pondering a concluding explanation in verse 43.

Make It Personal: Ask yourself two important questions...

1. *What has the Redeemer done for you?* Desert wanderers, prisoners in chains, sinful fools, that’s what we were, brothers and sisters in Christ. And what did the Redeemer do for us? I found a hymn written by Anne Steele in 1760

that reminds us where we were and what our Redeemer did for us.

*Enslaved by sin and bound in chains,
Beneath its dreadful tyrant sway,
And doomed to everlasting pains,
We wretched, guilty captives lay.*

*Nor gold nor gems could buy our peace,
Nor all the world's collected store
Suffice to purchase our release;
A thousand worlds were all too poor.*

*Jesus, the Lord, the mighty God,
An all sufficient ransom paid.
O matchless price! His precious blood
For vile, rebellious traitors shed.*

*Jesus the Sacrifice became
To rescue guilty souls from hell;
The spotless, bleeding, dying Lamb
Beneath avenging Justice fell.*

*Amazing goodness! Love divine!
Oh, may our grateful hearts adore
The matchless grace nor yield to sin
Nor wear its cruel fetters more!^[1]*

2. *Are you responding in the way He deserves?* One of the things that redeemed people ought to do is *pray*, pray and ask our Redeemer to do for others what He graciously did for us. And that's what we'll be doing in this evening's church family service. We're going to have a church family conversation with our Heavenly Father. We're going to pray for the people in our families that are not right with Him—for some, it's a parent, for others it's a spouse or a child, maybe a grandchild or an uncle or a cousin. We're going to ask the Redeemer to rescue people tonight. I encourage you to prepare your heart this afternoon and then come and pray with your church family at 6:00. It's a tangible way of affirming that you believe that Psalm 107 is true, that redeemed people have reason to speak!

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church . It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

^[1] Observation by Keil and Deilitsch, p. 163.

^[2] Derek Kidner, p. 384.

[3] Observation by Willem VanGemenen, p. 682.

[4] Anne Steele, “Enslaved By Sin and Bound in Chains,” taken from *www.cyberhymnal.org*