

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

Main Idea: We learn from Psalm 107 that redeemed people have reason to speak! There are three movements in the psalm. We looked at the first half of the psalm last time and we'll ponder the second half this week.

*Review from part one...*

- I. The psalm gives us an exhortation (1-3).
- 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).
  - B. Consider what the Redeemer did for some prisoners in chains (10-16).
  - C. Consider what the Redeemer did for some sinful fools (17-22).

*Breaking new ground...*

- 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 evaluation (43).
  - A. Wise people give serious attention to God's deeds.
  - B. Wise people give serious attention to God's love.

Take Inventory: In light of what the Redeemer has done for us...

- 1. We need to think about Him in all we do.
- 2. We need to thank Him for all He does.
- 3. We need to tell others about Him.

Donald Grey Barnhouse tells the story about a conversation he had with a friend while riding in a car. The subject of music came up and his friend asked, “What’s your favorite symphony?” “Brahm’s First” was Dr. Barnhouse’s reply. “How does it go?” asked the friend. In response, Dr. Barnhouse began to whistle the main theme of the symphony. “Then suddenly,” he recalled, “I was overcome with how ridiculous it was that I should be trying to communicate that great musical composition with my weak whistle.” And then Barnhouse explained, “But by the wonder of the human brain, my weak whistle was changed in my friend’s mind into the strings and percussion and brass of the full symphony orchestra.”

That’s exactly what happens when we try to preach, as Barnhouse explains, “Every time I stand up to teach the Bible, I’m overcome with how ridiculous it is that I should be trying to communicate God’s Word... It would be hopeless, except for one thing: The Holy Spirit is in me, teaching through me; and He is also in the men and women... who listen. So He turned my weak little whistle into the fully symphony of God’s revelation in their minds and lives.”[\[1\]](#)

May the Lord be pleased to do just that as we open His Word and I begin to preach the second part of a message on Psalm 107. Psalm 107 is a magnificent psalm. From a literary standpoint, its structure is compelling, its word pictures vivid, and its illustrations heart-gripping. For instance, the psalm gives four examples of people that God redeemed. We saw the first three last time, and we’ll look at the fourth in a moment. But count the number of verses devoted to each example and you’ll discover a significant verse pattern: six verses to tell about the desert wanderers (verses 4-9), seven verses to tell about the prisoners in darkness (verses 10-16), six verses to tell us about the sick, sinful fools (verses 17-22), and ten verses to tell about the merchants at sea (verses 23-32). As the *NIV Study Bible* footnote indicates, “The verse pattern of these four stanzas (six-seven-six-ten) makes deliberate use of the significant numbers seven and ten.”[\[2\]](#) The very structure of the psalm gets our attention.

But why? It’s because its message is so vital. Simply stated, Psalm 107 wants us to know that *redeemed people have reason to speak!* As we saw last time, the psalm begins with an exhortation...

*Review from part one...*

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

We’re told to give thanks in verse 1. We’re also told that redeemed people ought to speak in verse 2, and the call for verbal response appears again in verses 22, 32, and 42. And why are we to give thanks? Because of two related reasons mentioned at the beginning of the psalm and repeated over and over in the psalm: first, because of God’s *chesed* (His unfailing love), and second, because of what God’s *chesed* moved Him to do in behalf of sinful men, namely, He *redeemed* them.

Like a ringing bell the chorus of the psalm is repeated again and again. In verses 8, 15, 21, and 31, “Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.”

I mentioned last time that we’ve run into one of the most important words the Bible. So full is its meaning, no one English word can capture its essence. The Hebrew word *chesed* appears nearly 250 times in the Old Testament, which the KJV translates variously as “mercy” 149 times, “kindness” 40 times, “lovingkindness” 30 times, “goodness” 12 times, “kindly” five times, “merciful” four times, “favour” three times, “good” once, “goodliness” once, “pity” once, “reproach” once, and “wicked thing” once.[\[3\]](#)

What is *chesed*? Here is a definition. *Chesed* is “loyal love, unfailing kindness, devotion, i.e., a love or affection that is steadfast based on a prior relationship.”[\[4\]](#)

The most effective way to grasp its meaning is to ponder the various ways the Bible uses it. Here’s a sampling of the term *chesed* in the Bible...

Right after God had redeemed the Israelites from bondage in Egypt, Moses led God's people in singing this song, recorded in Exodus 15:13, "In your **unfailing love** you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling."

Several centuries later *chesed* would be the attribute of God that motivated Israel's army to go into battle. In fact, King Jehoshaphat put an ensemble of singing men at the front to lead his army into battle. And what did they sing? 2 Chronicles 20:21 tells us, "Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: 'Give thanks to the LORD, for his **love** endures forever.'"

David faced his share of challenges in life, from Goliath who threatened to feed him to the birds, later from a father-in-law who on multiple occasions tried to kill him, and still later from enemy nations, and even a wayward son, who all wanted him dead. What kept him going? God's *chesed* did, as he confessed again and again...

*Psalm 13:5-6* "But I trust in your **unfailing love**; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the LORD, for he has been good to me."

*Psalm 52:8-9* "But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God; I trust in God's **unfailing love** for ever and ever. I will praise you forever for what you have done; in your name I will hope, for your name is good. I will praise you in the presence of your saints."

*Psalm 59:16-17* "But I will sing of your strength, in the morning I will sing of your **love**; for you are my fortress, my refuge in times of trouble. O my Strength, I sing praise to you; you, O God, are my fortress, my **loving** God."

Four centuries after David, this attribute inspired Jeremiah to trust God while in prison. Remember, Jeremiah was the prophet through whom God revealed to His people that judgment was coming, that the Babylonians were going to destroy their land and take them into captivity. For preaching that message, Jeremiah ended up in prison with the charge of treason. It was at this low point for Jeremiah that God spoke to him these encouraging words of hope, in Jeremiah 33:10-11, "This is what the LORD says: 'You say about this place, "It is a desolate waste, without men or animals." Yet in the towns of Judah and the streets of Jerusalem that are deserted, inhabited by neither men nor animals, there will be heard once more the sounds of joy and gladness, the voices of bride and bridegroom, and the voices of those who bring thank offerings to the house of the LORD, saying, "Give thanks to the LORD Almighty, for the LORD is good; **his love endures forever.**" For I will restore the fortunes of the land as they were before,' says the LORD."

After the exhortation come the examples in Psalm 107. In verses 4-42...

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

First, the psalmist invites us to **consider what the Redeemer did for some desert wanderers (4-9)**. He saw their helpless predicament. He heard their cry. He delivered them and gave them a safe place to live. And therefore, He deserves to be thanked!

Next, we're encouraged to **consider what the Redeemer did for some prisoners in chains (10-16)**. He saw their rebellion. He used hardship to get their attention. He heard their cry and saved them. So consequently, once again He deserves to be thanked!

In the third example we're given the opportunity to **consider what the Redeemer did for some sinful fools (17-22)**. He allowed them to experience the consequences of their sin. He heard their cry and saved them. He sent His word and healed them. Therefore, as in the first two cases, He deserves to be thanked! Redeemed people have reason to speak up and speak out!

*Breaking new ground...*

**D. Consider what the Redeemer did for some merchants at sea (23-32).** “Others went out on the sea in ships; they were merchants on the mighty waters. They saw the works of the LORD, his wonderful deeds in the deep. For he spoke and stirred up a tempest that lifted high the waves. They mounted up to the heavens and went down to the depths; in their peril their courage melted away. They reeled and staggered like drunken men; they were at their wits’ end. Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble, and he brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm to a whisper; the waves of the sea were hushed. They were glad when it grew calm, and he guided them to their desired haven. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men. Let them exalt him in the assembly of the people and praise him in the council of the elders.”

Notice the first line again in verse 23, “Others went out on the sea in ships.” We westerners read that statement and say, “That’s nothing special.” But to the Israelites, those were eye-catching words. The Israelites possessed the promised *land*. They were not comfortable on the sea. Spurgeon explains, “Navigation was so little practiced among the Israelites that mariners were invested with a high degree of mystery, and their craft was looked upon as one of singular daring and peril.”<sup>[5]</sup>

For us, the sea represents potential recreation. We go to ocean for vacation. We take cruises on the ocean, but you don’t read of people in the Bible taking a pleasure ride on a boat at sea. You might go to the sea if you needed transportation from point A to B, or as in this case, for business purposes.<sup>[6]</sup> Why were these folks out at sea? They were *merchants*, the text says, “merchants on the mighty waters.” Literally that phrase reads, “doing business in many waters.”

Now think of this scene from God’s perspective. When God saw these folks...

1. *He saw they were intent on making money.* That’s what merchants do. They make money. And that’s why these merchants left the shores of Israel, got on a ship, and headed out to sea.

Is there anything wrong with getting on a ship and wanting to make money? No. But it does take you one step closer to something that *is* wrong, to the possibility of unjust gain. Or to something even worse, to becoming such a successful merchant that you *forget God*, or at least forget how much you need Him.

Listen to this serious warning about the love of money in 1 Timothy 6:9-10: “People who want to get rich [is that why these individuals got on that ship? Not necessarily, but perhaps...] fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.”

For what reason did the merchants in Psalm 107 board their ship? The text doesn’t tell us. Maybe it was the love of money, or maybe it was simply the desire to provide for their families. Whatever the motive, God saw it and He sent a teachable moment their way.

2. *He sent a storm that brought them to the end of themselves.* Verse 25 says the Lord spoke and stirred up a tempest. Amazing. God’s word brought a storm. God spoke and the result was a severe storm that made the merchants feel like they were riding on a weightless piece of cork. Their ship mounted up to the heavens and then dropped to the depths.

The description reminds me of the time Sherry and I went Whitewater rafting on the New River in West Virginia. Our guide warned us things would get a little turbulent when as we hit the next “hole,” and did they ever! The nose of our raft dropped almost straight down, then hit the bottom of the hole, and shot straight up into the sky, like a roller coaster ride.

“Their courage melted away,” says the text of the merchants (26). They reeled and staggered like a drunkard. The storm shattered their pride and self-reliance and brought them “to their wits end” (27). In the Hebrew it reads, “*and all their wisdom was swallowed up.*”

God knows how to get a person's attention, for sure. As Derek Kidner observes, "The hurricane shakes us into seeing that in a world of gigantic forces we live by permission, not by good management."<sup>[7]</sup> That's worth repeating, brothers and sisters. We live *by permission*, not by *good management*.

Young people, did you get good grades this grading period? Make sure you remember who gave you your brain and the opportunity to go to school in the first place. Business owners, have you had a profitable year? Don't forget who gave you the knowledge, the contacts, the health, the time, and everything else that goes into making a profit. We live by God's permission, not merely by our good management.

I can still picture the huge ship sitting one mile from the ocean shore's edge in Kao Lak. I was standing in Thailand in March 2005. The fierce tsunami that hit southeast Asia had literally picked up that massive boat, carried it inland, and dropped it in the backyard of a business district. Thousands perished in that storm. Indeed, we live by permission, not by good management.

Verse 28—"Then they cried out." Then—in the middle of the storm. Then—when they were at their wit's end. That's when they cried out. They cried out to the Lord *in their trouble*. Please realize that trouble alone isn't enough, for trouble can make a person turn in two directions. It turns some *away from God*, while for others it's *to God*. And what happened when these merchants cried out to the Lord?

3. *He heard their cry, stilled the storm, and brought them safely to harbor.* God sent the distress, and then, after it had accomplished its intended purpose, He removed it. He hushed the raging sea and turned it into a whisper. Remember, this storm started when God spoke, and now at God's command this fierce storm becomes silent. The timing is His. And once the Sovereign Lord has obtained the attention of the merchants, He not only stops the storm, but He takes them *to their desired haven* (30). See His mercy in these words. God took them where they wanted to go.

Remember the story of the storm that hit the Sea of Galilee, the one that petrified the disciples? They woke up the sleeping Savior with the cry, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?" His response? Mark 4:39 states, "He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, 'Quiet! Be still!' Then the wind died down and it was completely calm."

Does this not describe what the Lord does with all His disciples at times? He takes them *into the storm* to teach them that He can carry them *through the storm* because He has authority *over the storm*. Spurgeon writes, "We should long ago have been wrecked if it had not been for his preserving hand, and our only hope of outliving the storms of the future is based upon his wisdom, faithfulness and power."<sup>[8]</sup>

Now answer this. What should happen when the Lord does deliver us out of a storm?

4. *He deserves to be thanked!* Hence, the exhortation comes again in verse 31—"Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men." When God rescues people, it's not because they deserve it, for there's never been a person who deserved the help of a holy God. No, it's always because of His unmerited, unfailing love, His *chesed*.

But private thanks isn't enough. That's why in verse 32 the psalmist exhorts the redeemed merchants to exalt their God in the assembly of the people, and praise Him in the council of the elders. When God does something for you, make sure you give Him the honor. Exalt Him. Glorify Him. And do it publicly, for He's worth it!

At this point the pattern breaks in the psalm.<sup>[9]</sup> The four examples are finished, yet there's more to be said, there's always more to be said about the Redeemer! And so the psalmist invites us to...

**E. Consider what the Redeemer did on other occasions (33-42).** Here are five accomplishments...

1. *He turned rivers into a desert (33-34).* "He turned rivers into a desert, flowing springs into thirsty ground, and fruitful land into a salt waste, because of the wickedness of those who lived there."

That's shocking. The Redeemer turns rivers into deserts? Yes. The Sovereign Lord is the ultimate source of

everything that happens in His universe. *Everything*.

Lamentations 3:37-38 records, “Who can speak and have it happen if the Lord has not decreed it? Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that both calamities and good things come?” What’s the source of good things? The Mouth of the Most High. What’s the source of calamities? The Mouth of the Most High is (remember Psalm 107:25? “He *spoke* and stirred up a tempest”).[\[10\]](#)

Why would the Redeemer turn rivers into a desert? In this case, the psalmist tells us, “Because of the *wickedness* of those who lived there.” God is simply doing what He said He would do. He told Adam, “Eat from the tree, and you will die (Gen. 2:17).” He told the Israelites, “If you do not obey me, your land will be cursed (Deut. 28:15ff).” He told us the same, “The wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23).”

2. *He turned a desert into pools of water (35-38)*. “He turned the desert into pools of water and the parched ground into flowing springs; there he brought the hungry to live, and they founded a city where they could settle. They sowed fields and planted vineyards that yielded a fruitful harvest; he blessed them, and their numbers greatly increased, and he did not let their herds diminish.”

God brings desolation, yes, but when people repent and turn to Him He also brings restoration. He can turn a desert into pools of water. See 2 Kings 3:17 for an example. See what He did for the returned Jewish exiles in the sixth century B.C., and more recently in 1948 with the formation of the nation of Israel, for still other examples.

I received a thought provoking letter in April from Dr. Michael Loftis, president of ABWE. He points out a vital principle, stating, “God increases our wealth not just to raise our standard of living but also to raise our standard of giving.” And then he shared this application. “During this tax season many Americans will receive thousands of dollars in tax returns and, additionally, an economic stimulus tax rebate check that will amount to hundreds or thousands of dollars per household. No one expected our government to do this. I wonder if God is not up to something big again just as He was out in the desert of Sinai 4,000 years ago [referring to Exodus 25:1-2]. I wonder how many of us will consider raising the standard of our giving?”

A good question, isn’t it? When God turns rivers into desert, it’s to remind us that He is God and we need Him. When God turns a desert into pools of water, it too is to remind us that He is God, as well as a test to see if we truly believe in Him.

3. *He brings down powerful people (39-40)*. “Then their numbers decreased, and they were humbled by oppression, calamity and sorrow; he who pours contempt on nobles made them wander in a trackless waste.”

God brings down the proud. In this case, “*their* numbers decreased,” apparently referring to the people whose numbers He increased in the previous verse. He “pours contempt on nobles,” indicating that God isn’t pleased when powerful people live independently of Him.

4. *He raises up needy people (41)*. “But he lifted the needy out of their affliction and increased their families like flocks.” As Willem VanGemenen puts it, “He can reverse the condition of anything and therefore the way of life of everybody!”[\[11\]](#) God brings down, God lifts up. He is God.

5. *His people respond with rejoicing, while the wicked respond with silence (42)*. Notice the stark contrast in verse 42, “The upright see and rejoice, but all the wicked shut their mouths.” Here we see a basic, fundamental difference between a person who is right with God, and one who is not. The upright see the works of God *and rejoice*. Conversely, the wicked see them and keep their mouths shut tight. No glory to God, no expression of thanks to God, no word of encouragement to others about what God did, no song of praise, no prayer of appreciation. Nothing. Not a sound. Just an unspoken, “Look what I’ve accomplished with my life! Am I good, or what?!”

Which brings us to the punchline. We’ve pondered the exhortation and the examples. Now...

### III. The psalm gives us a concluding evaluation (43).

Verse 43—“Whoever is wise, let him heed these things and consider the great love of the LORD.” Do you want to be a wise person? Then take note. Wise people take heed to two subjects. They study them. They research them. They meditate on them. What are the subjects? Verse 43 says, “Let him heed *these things*.” There’s the first. And the second? “Consider the great love of the LORD.”

**A. Wise people give serious attention to God’s deeds.** That’s what “these things” are referring to, the things the psalmist has told us in the previous forty-two verses, the things the Redeemer God has done. When God does something for His people, He wants us to give attention to it. And if we are wise, we will do so.

I like the way Derek Kidner puts it. He warns against a “shallow response to what God has done in depth.”<sup>[12]</sup> Don’t settle for shallowness. Don’t settle for a shallow understanding of God. Instead of being a red letter Christian, be a student of the whole counsel of His Word. And be a student of His works, especially His work of redemption.

**B. Wise people give serious attention to God’s love.** “Consider the *chesed* of Yahweh.” Consider it. The psalmist has jump-started us with four accounts of God’s *chesed* in Psalm 107. God delivered some desert wanderers. God reached down and broke the chains of some guilty prisoners. God saved some sinful, sick fools out of their distress. And God brought some merchants through a storm to safe harbor. God did it all because of His love.

Consider those testimonies to God’s *chesed*. Consider them, but go further. For as wonderful as these deeds for men were, these were just warm-up for our God. The greatest demonstration of God’s redeeming love that the world has ever seen took place on a hillside outside Jerusalem five hundred years after the psalmist’s pen dried...

When God the Father gave His only begotten Son, when He *so loved* the world, that was *chesed*. And when His Son, the innocent God-man, Jesus the Christ, carried a criminal’s cross down the Via Dolorosa, that was *chesed*. And when He who created all men and trees allowed wicked men to nail His hands and feet to that tree, that was *chesed*. When the Son of God died in the place of sinful men, women, and children, that was *chesed*. When God’s Son endured the fury of His Father’s just wrath in the place of the sinners who deserved that wrath, that was *chesed*. When He cried out, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” and when He refused to cry out to waiting angel forces to release Him from that forsaken cross, that was *chesed*. When He who knew no sin became sin for us, that was *chesed*. When He went to hell so that we sinners who deserve hell won’t have to, that was *chesed*.

Yet it’s not just what He *did*, but what He *does*. When He says to wayward children, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28),” that is *chesed*. When He says (in John 10:27-28), “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish,” that is *chesed*. And when He says (in John 15:5), “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit,” that is *chesed*.

And it’s not just what He *did*, and what He *does*, but what He *will do*. When He says (in John 14:3), “If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am,” that is *chesed*.

Yes, it’s evaluation time. Consider the great *chesed* of the Lord...

#### Take Inventory: In light of what the Redeemer has done for us...three simple responses are in order...

1. *We need to think about Him in all we do.* Consider Him. Consider His amazing love extended to you today. He’s allowed you to hear again from His precious Word. Trust Him. Make sure you are trusting in Christ the Redeemer. Has He rescued you from your sins? If He has, then take Him home with you. Take Him to work with you this week. Think about Him in all you do.

2. *We need to thank Him for all He does.* Hear the exhortation again, “Let them [let *us*] give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.” When God does something for you, thank Him. And thank

Him publicly when you gather with His people. And one more thing...

3. *We need to tell others about Him.* We're going to sing in a moment, "There Is a Redeemer." But so many don't know there is a Redeemer. They don't know about His unfailing love. We need to tell them. We need to pray for them. We need to give sacrificially so others can tell them.

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**\*\*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] Story told by Joseph Baily, in *A Voice in the Wilderness*.

[2] *NIV Study Bible*, p. 894.

[3] Strong, J. (1996). *The exhaustive concordance of the Bible* : (electronic ed.) (H2617). Ontario : Woodside Bible Fellowship.

[4] Swanson, J. (1997). *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains : Hebrew (Old Testament)* (electronic ed.) (DBLH 2876, #1). Oak Harbor : Logos Research Systems, Inc.

[5] Charles Spurgeon, p. 404.

[6] Again, I'm indebted to Spurgeon for this observation; p. 404.

[7] Derek Kidner, p. 386.

[8] Spurgeon, p. 406.

[9] The pattern has been *trouble*, then *cry*, then *deliverance* by God the Redeemer, then *thanksgiving* by the redeemed. Now the pattern breaks.

[10] It's important to see this verse in light of an earlier verse in Lamentations 3:33, "For he does not willingly [the Hebrew lit. reads 'from the heart'] bring affliction or grief to the children of men." And to see the previous verse, Lamentations 3:32, "Though he brings grief, he will show compassion, so great is his *unfailing love* [*chesed*]."

[11] Willem VanGemen, p. 687.

[12] Derek Kidner, p. 387.