

Psalm 107:1-43

“O give thanks unto the LORD, for *he is good*: for his mercy *endureth* for ever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness. Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, *being* bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and *there was* none to help. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder. Fools because of their transgression, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto death. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, *and* he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered *them* from their destructions. Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing. They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit’s end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves

thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. O that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt him in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders. He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; and sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, *where there is no way*. Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh *him* families like a flock. The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.”

Introduction: God is the God of Great Reversals

“Psalm 107, the first Psalm in the 5th book, in the Book of Psalms, comprised of 5 sections. And the first song in this last section is Psalm 107. It divides very interestingly as we look into it. Some feel that it is written after the Babylonian Captivity. I can see that clearly, I don’t have a problem with that. But as we get to **verse 3**, if you’ll look there, we’re gonna kind of look at a little overview here, and then we’re going to study through it. It says, “**and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south.**” so there’s some questions about that, when was Israel gathered from all of those directions, an interesting question. And then there’s the putting forth of God’s goodness in the delivering of his people. In **verse 4**, he begins to tell about the weary pilgrim, so all of that’s applicable to our lives. Ah, **Romans chapter 15** says ‘*the things written aforetime were written for our learning, our instruction, upon whom the end of the age is come, that we might have hope.*’ Certainly all of us are pilgrims, we’re going to find that it

talks about the weary pilgrim. Then it says that they cried to him, in each of these sections there's prayer, then there's divine help, and then there's praise. We're going to read four times, if you'll notice in **verse 8** it says **"Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"** That's in verse 8, it's in verse 15, it's in verse 21, and it is in verse 31. We're going to hear that they cried unto the LORD in their trouble for each of these four pictures. So the first one, the weary pilgrim, the second one, beginning in verse 10, is the prisoner, that needs to be set free, in verse 13 they cried unto the LORD in their trouble. And then in verse 15, they're delivered, **'O that men would praise him.'** In verse 17 we have those that are afflicted, it seems like they're in physical difficulty, and it says it's because of their own sin and so forth. But the LORD is presented as the healer of afflicted souls. And again they cried to him [in prayer], and he heard them, then he delivers them, there's divine help, and then there's praise. **Verse 23** begins, **"They that go down to the sea in ships" "those who find themselves in a storm,"** and the LORD is the one who is the stiller of the storms of our lives. So we find them in trouble, in praying we find them delivered, and then we find them, **'Men should praise him for his goodness.'** And then in verse 33 to the end of the Psalm it basically tells us, look, God is sovereign over the natural world, and over the world of men, he's the one who deals with us in these two areas. So listen, in **verse 43**, look what it says there, so it says, **"Whoso is wise, and will observe these things,"** or consider these things, or discern these things? who is the person that's wise, that will consider these things, these pictures that we're going to look at? **"even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD."** So, there's an exhortation at the end, wisdom, you know whose wise? And it's the person who considers these things that the Psalmist places in front of us.

*"O Give Thanks Unto The LORD, For He Is Good:
Let The Redeemed Say So"---Don't Let Society
Muzzle Your Witness*

He begins by saying **"O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever."** (verse 1) And again, in those four places **'O that men would praise the LORD for his goodness'** and in each one of those cases, here's the weary pilgrim, no strength left, here's the person whose in imprisoned, incarcerated, and here's the person who is afflicted, here's the

person who finds himself in some unbearable storm, so in all of those circumstances, Satan is going to challenge the truth that God is good. That's just the way it's gonna go. You know, we have our own human definition of goodness, and we have this perception that God is good, he's a God of love, and he is, the Bible tells us that, that he's on the throne, that no terrible thing should ever happen in our lives, and that when something difficult comes along, the devil is right there, as he always is, to accuse the LORD, to challenge that truth that God is good. And this Psalm wonderfully takes us through these stages, putting the picture in front of us in fact that God is good as a matter of fact. So, **"give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good:"** if you're wise, at the end of the Psalm you're going to consider these things, **"for his mercy endureth for ever."** it doesn't fail in difficult days, when we're going through difficult circumstances, his mercy endures for ever. Now look what it says, it says, **"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;" (verse 2a)** we should acknowledge him. We shouldn't live with quiet mouths, we shouldn't let the culture we're in dictate to us that we can't say anything about what we believe, that's nonsense, we have complete freedom in this country to speak up about what we believe. And it says here, ***"that men would praise him and thank him for his goodness, because his mercy endures forever, so let the redeemed of the LORD speak up, let them say so!"*** We should acknowledge that if it's true in our lives, shouldn't we? We should acknowledge him. I mean, he took the heat for us, he hung on the cross for us, there isn't any way we shouldn't be willing to speak up for him. I mean, what are they going to do to us, put us in the guillotine? that sounds fast and easy to me. **"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy;" (verse 2)** and he certainly has done that in our lives, he's destroyed hell and death, he has given us victory over the grave, and so forth, **"and gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south." (verse 3)** God has gathered his people.

1. The Weary Pilgrim

Verses 4-9, "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way, that

they might go to a city of habitation. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.” And now in **verse 4** it begins to give us the first set of circumstances, describing his people that have been gathered, that have been liberated by him. God’s goodness in delivering his people is given to us in a number of different pictures. Here in verse 4 the first one down to verse 9, is a picture of God guiding the weary pilgrim, or the one whose lost in his way. It says **“They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in.”** Look what it says in **verse 5**, **“Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.”** So wandering, not sure of their direction, not sure where they’re going, and they find no security, they find no solace, they didn’t find any city to dwell in. Look, understand we’re in a vastly different culture as the Psalmist puts this to the page. They’re in a culture where there is no police force, there’s no policeman out in a cruiser, there’s nobody looking out for you. What you would look for as you traveled was something with walls, you would want walls around you at night. We see that throughout the Scripture, where they would invite somebody into the city. So it says here, here’s a picture of a pilgrim making his journey through this world. How often do you and I feel like really alone, solitary? [all the time, spiritually and emotionally speaking] **‘I’m kind of somewhere, I want to tell other people, but I can’t describe, even in my own heart, my own mind, I don’t have the vernacular to make it clear, I’m really going through this, I can’t find any walls, I can’t find a place where I feel like I can take a breath and I can rest, where there’s security, there’s no walls.’** [he just described the way I feel most of the time] And he said **“Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.” (verse 5)** Look, we’re going to find this as we go. In each prayer that we come to here, four times it says **‘they cried unto the LORD.’** That defines the place that they’re in. And that is the place where God meets us, when we cry unto him, when there is that measure of genuineness and sincerity. How likely is God to meet with us with some half-hearted prayer, we’re more busy with this world, we’re more busy with our sin, we’re more busy with compromise, we really don’t care what he has to say in a given circumstance. How likely is he to meet you, you know, in a half-hearted kind of lukewarm *‘Oh hey God, how about helping me out today.’* No, no, when we come to that place, and our prayer is genuinely a cry, a heart-cry, **‘I got no walls, I’m alone, this journey is wearing me out, I got no gas in my tank, I got nothing left, Lord, I can’t go any**

further, my hands are empty, I have nothing.’ That’s the meeting-place, that’s the meeting-place. That’s when he comes and says ‘I’ve been waiting for you show up with nothing in your hands, I’ve been waiting for you to run out of your own stuff so we can get down to business here. I’ve been waiting for you to be that empty so I can show you who I really am, so you would praise me for my goodness and my extraordinary works to the sons of men.’ Their soul fainted within them, ever feel that way? just inside you, you just got nothing, **“their soul fainted in them.”** **“Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.”** (verses 5b-6) Isn’t it sad that we have to get soul-fainting sometimes, before our prayer’s a cry. **“Then they cried unto the LORD”** notice **“in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses.”** So you have the trouble, then you have the prayer, the cry, and then you have him, divine help comes, he delivers them out of their trouble. And look what it says, **“He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.”** (verse 7) they were in a solitary way, a lonely place before, **“he led them by the right way,”** notice, **“that they might go to a city of habitation.”** He puts them in a place where there’s walls, he puts them in a place where there’s a measure of security, God there around them. You think of Martin Luther, *‘a mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark neverfailing,’* with a whole country wanting to kill him, with all the powerbrokers who were out for his life. He finally realized, he was held up in Wurtberg in the castle, I was there and saw where he was held, and finally he said, *‘No, I don’t need these walls to protect me.’* And he wrote *‘A Mighty Fortress Is Our God, A Bulwark Neverfailing.’* And here he says **“He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation.”** (verse 7) and then [once the deliverance has been given] the praise, the question, **“Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!”** (verse 8) [Comment: You can’t praise him until your prayer has been answered, by bringing us into that walled city, there’s an order to these events, a sequence. You can’t be expected to praise till the Lord has delivered you, answered your prayers. That would be extremely foolish to praise before the answer, God doesn’t expect that. Praise comes after the answered prayer, when we’ve been put in that walled city.] He began by saying **‘O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good,’** when you’re in a lonely place, no walls, Satan’s gonna come and challenge that fact. But it says here that God’s the one that delivers and redeemed them, verse 2, from the enemy. So here the plain

picture is when we're in that place, whatever the cause, and you know, in some of the other places, they're in that place because of their rebellion, they're in that place because of their sin, and it says the same exact phrases, **'they cried unto the LORD, he heard them and delivered them.'** Here he hears the one whose in a circumstance of no blame of their own, and he also hears as readily the rebel, who cries in sincerity. He is just as willing then to respond to that person. So, **"Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"** (verse 8) Here's the reason, **verse 9, "For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness."** Why should he praise him, **"for he satisfieth the longing soul,"** the Hebrew is beautiful here, **"he satisfies the dried out soul, and he fills the hungry soul with goodness."** So it's the soul that's had no moisture, it's the soul that's had no nourishment, not the physical belly, the soul, the dried-out soul, the hungry soul. **'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be satisfied,' 'He satisfieth the dried out soul, he filleth the hungry soul with goodness.'** Tonight, I don't know everybody here, I usually go through my own stuff in a very lonely place. Is your soul satisfied tonight? **"he satisfieth the dried-out soul, he filleth the hungry soul with goodness."** (verse 9) Is your soul satisfied? If it isn't, go back over these verses. And when you come to the place that says in God's Word that you're willing cry out to him, he comes, and says, he delivers, he leads forth by the right way, he brings you to a city, to walls, habitation, he does those things, so praise the LORD for his goodness, his wonderful works to the children of men, why? Because he does satisfy the dried-out soul, and he fills the hungry soul with goodness, he satisfies.

2. The Prisoner, The Rebellious

Verses 10-16, "Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron; because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High: therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the sons of men! For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of

iron in sunder.” Now the next picture. Verse 10, this is a picture of those who are incarcerated, who are in imprisoned. Certainly those in Babylonian Captivity would be able to relate to this readily. Down in **verse 16** he says the reason they should pray, **“For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder.”** similar to Isaiah’s description of Babylon. But there’s more than that here. So, for **“Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron;” (verse 10)** and by the way, look, a prison wall or a jail is not the only means to be incarcerated. The most secure prison in the world is made of human skin. The most difficult place to be bound, sometimes, is in the human skin, that surrounds the inward things that go on inside of you deeply. How many people commit suicide because of loneliness? How many people commit murder because of some frustration? We see it on the news. People are bound in many ways, there are people that are happier incarcerated than other people who are supposedly free, who are tortured every day. Because you can be completely incarcerated in this bag of bones and skin, and when it’s that way, there is no escape, except here, except here [he’s probably holding up his Bible]. It says **“Such as sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron;”** now it tells us, **“because they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned the counsel of the most High.” (verses 10-11) ‘or despised or distained the counsel of the Most High.’** By the way, that’s still true. That is still true. This is not just talking about a physical prison. This is talking about those who find themselves in darkness because they hate the light, they don’t want the light. They find themselves bound in some situation and in the shadow of death, because they don’t want to hear the Word of the LORD. they don’t want to hear his counsel. It says here, the reason that they’re in that situation is because they **“they rebelled against the words of God, and contemned---distained---the counsel of the most High:”** look what it says, **“therefore he”** the LORD, the one whose mercy endures forever, the one who demonstrates his goodness to men, **“therefore he brought down their heart with labour; they fell down, and there was none to help.” (verses 11-12)** God won’t let one of his children, somebody he loves, live in rebellion to his Word and disdain his counsel and bless him [or her], because he loves them. He can never bless that, he can never let you flourish out there thumbing your nose in his face, *‘I ain’t gonna listen to you anymore, I don’t care what you say, I don’t care what your Word says, I’m gonna live however I want to live,’* go to it, that’s the long way around the barn, you’re gonna say Uncle, I guarantee

ya, I've tried it. You ain't gonna win that wrestling match, because it's his love that wrestles with you. You might be a conniver, a heel-catcher, but you're finally going to say to him in your wrestling, I'm not letting you go until you bless me. Isn't it interesting here, it says **"Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses."** (verse 13) the same thing as the weary pilgrim, **"they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder."** (verses 13-14) He delivered them, wait, they're in the mess, verse 11, because they rebelled against the words of God, and because they disdained or despised his counsel, they end up in a mess because of that. But when they're genuine, like Manasseh in Babylon, and they cry to the LORD, it says here, when that happens, that he brings them out, when they cry in their trouble, **'he saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of their darkness, the shadow of death, he broke their bands asunder,'** **"Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"** (verse 15) Here again, here's the reason, **"For he hath broken the gates of brass, and cut the bars of iron in sunder."** (verse 16) If you're here this evening, and you feel bound, nobody else knows, but you're here this evening, and you think *"I messed up, what I did is so wrong, he's done with me, I'm never gonna get out of this place, I rebelled against him, he says rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, stubbornness like idolatry, that's me, never gonna get out of here, I disdained his counsel, I mocked it."* It doesn't say that anywhere. It says here, **'if you're wise, you'll consider the things that are written here, and you'll learn about the goodness and the lovingkindness of the LORD.'** It doesn't say you'll learn about how he acts when it gets ticked off, it says you'll learn about his lovingkindness and his goodness, because this person whose in a mess because of their rebellion cried to the LORD, and they're delivered the same way the pilgrim is before this, and he delivers us, he uses the same verses, he delivers. Look, if I said that to you, of my own will, it would be blasphemous. If I sat here tonight and said, *'You know, those of you, and you know your own rap sheet, those of you who rebelled against him, thumbed your nose at him, despised his counsel,'* if I said to you, *'No biggy, cry to him in genuineness, he'll set you free,'* I have no authority to say that. I didn't write this. This is his Word, it abides forever, like his lovingkindness. And he says to that person, whose through with it now, Jesus

came to set the captives free. The anointing of the LORD was upon him for that. It says here, ***‘they cry, and he brings them out of the darkness, the shadows, he breaks their bands asunder,’*** great reason to praise him, ***‘Oh that men should praise the LORD, for his goodness and his wonderful works to the children of men! because he’s broken the gates of brass,’*** the idea is, no one can do that, ***‘he’s cut the bars of iron asunder.’***

3. One For Fools

Verses 17-22, ***“Fools because of their transgression, because of their iniquities, are afflicted. Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat; and they draw near unto the gates of death. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses. He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.”*** Look, it gets worse, here’s the one for fools, I get included. And this is those who are so afflicted in their souls, they need to be healed, and he’s portrayed as the healer here. A fool in the Old Testament is not the same as a fool in our culture, when somebody says *‘Hey fool’* or *‘You fool.’* A fool in the Bible is somebody who won’t receive instruction. It says ***‘A fool says in his own heart there is no God.’*** In the Bible, someone is a fool for moral and spiritual reasons. And these fools here, because of their transgressions, fools because of their transgressions, because of their iniquities, the trouble, their own twisted nature, are afflicted. That’s still true, that hasn’t changed. ***“Fools because of their transgressions, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.” (verse 17)*** and you know what, the funny thing is, I hear people all the time, *‘If God loves me, why is he letting this happen to me?’* *‘Well what do you think, you were taking drugs, weren’t ya!?’* *‘Ya,’* *‘You were sleeping with your girlfriend, weren’t ya?’* *‘Ya’* *‘You were going out and getting drunk, weren’t ya?’* *‘Ya’* *‘What do you mean, how can God let this happen to ya!? You did this!’* It says ***“Fools because of their transgressions, and because of their iniquities, are afflicted.”*** they go together, they’re reaping what they’ve sown. ***“Their soul abhorreth all manner of meat;”*** they’re so blown out they don’t want to eat, there wasn’t anything that would satisfy their soul, ***“and they draw near unto the gates of***

death.” (verse 18) everything, that’s how bad it all looks, that’s just where they feel like where they are, their soul, the deeper part of their being. And then look what it says, same thing as the other places, **“Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble,”** which they’ve caused and brought onto themselves, **“and he saveth them out of their distresses.” (verse 19)** Look, **“He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”** He sent his Word. How many times have you and I, if we’ve walked with the Lord for any length of time, find ourselves doing something stupid, we get into a mess, we’re wrestling, the devil’s there to condemn us and tell us that God is not good, somehow in devotions or on the radio, as we sit alone with the Word, our eyes come across a passage, and it breaks all of the chains, it sets us free. It rises off the page, the tears begin to flow, and you think, *‘Lord, you are here, you do love me, Lord.’* And that’s what it’s saying here. **“they cry”** because their soul is troubled, which they caused themselves, **“unto the LORD in their trouble, and he saveth them out of their distresses.”** he delivers them. The way he does it, **“He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.” (verse 20)** I encourage you, if you’re this person, I know nobody is, but maybe somebody in another part of the earth will hear this study somewhere in cyberspace and it will apply to them, but somebody whose foolish because they’ve transgressed, because they’ve been in their own iniquity, and they’re afflicted, and their soul is cast down, they’re not even hungry within, they feel like *‘This is it, I’m done,’* they’re at the gates of death, and finally they can’t take it anymore, their prayer’s not kind of a *‘Hey Lord, if you kind of want to help me,’* no, no, these are people that are falling down and crying out. And the heart can cry out without the voice [that’s me], the Spirit maketh intercessions where it’s sometimes with groanings too deep to be uttered, they’re unutterable, the Father knows, you know. **‘They cry, he sends his Word, he heals them and delivers them from destruction.’** **“Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!” (verse 21)** and the previous two challenges, afterwards it says **“for he satisfies,” “for he has broken,”** here in verse 22, and then down in verse 32, the response is an appeal. **“And let them”** so here they come, they cause their own problems, they don’t want to go any further, they’re broken down inside, their soul, they’re at the point of death, **‘they cry, he sends his Word, he heals them from destruction, he takes them from that place, O that they should praise the LORD for his**

goodness' and so forth, verse 22 it says they should go further, **"Let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing." (verse 22)** You know, come to the Temple precincts, let the blood flow, offer the sacrifices, realize, yes, God, this is his Word, he has said there is a means of redemption, there is atonement, there is the death of an innocent substitute, let them come, let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving and so forth, ah, beautiful picture.

4. *'Those Who Get Caught In The Storms Of Life'- --Storms Of Instruction*

Verses 23-32, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven. Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders." Verse 23 now, down to 32, it talks about those who get caught in the storms of life. It doesn't say here it's their fault. You know, Jesus said to the disciples, **'Take the boat, go over to the other side of the lake,'** he didn't say *'Go under to the other side of the lake,'* which is where they thought they were going, he said **'Go over...'** And in the one journey he's sleeping in the back of the boat. How many times do you and I feel like we're in a storm, and Jesus is sleeping? No one here has ever felt that way? Just me...I feel lonely, I'm gonna go back to the first problem. And when you look in the Scripture, look, there are storms of correction, Jonah was in one of those. He was in rebellion, so God sent a storm to correct his path. But there are storms of instruction. The disciples were in the storm because they were obedient, Jesus told them to get in the boat, go across the lake. They obeyed him, they did exactly what he told them to do, and they ended up in the middle of a storm because of their obedience. That was not a storm of correction, it was a storm of

instruction. And Jesus is gonna get up and rebuke the wind and the sea, and it says there's a great calm, they're more afraid of the calm than they were of the storm, and they said **'Who is this now, that even the wind and the sea obey him?'** And here's the interesting thing, of course, this storm, they were fishermen, he was a carpenter. They said, *'Don't worry, we'll take care of you, you're used to driving nails, we grew up on the Sea of Galilee, we know how to handle it, you just go to sleep, we'll take care of this.'* Isn't it interesting, sometimes, in the place we're most confident it is where he has to see us fail, so we can understand who he is. So imagine the disciples in that storm. I'm sure they knew these verses. Look, it says **"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;" (verse 23)** it doesn't say that they're doing anything wrong, as you watch TV, *The Most Dangerous Catch*, you see those crazy people that fish for King Crabs, who wants to do that? Everytime I watch the show I think *'What photographer would go out there to film this?'* But anyhow, **"They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; these see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep." (verses 23-24)** the ocean freaks me out, I am a shepherd, I like it on the land, that's where I belong, **"For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end." (verses 25-27)** I get seasick just reading that, up and down, **"They mount up to heaven, they go down again to the depths"** and look what it says, **"their soul is melted because of trouble." 'Lord, don't you care that we perish?'** **"They reel too and fro, and they stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end."** that's the whole point, isn't it? **"Then they cry"** why do we have to wait till we get to our wit's end, to cry? **"Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." (verses 28-29)** You know the disciples that night went back and read this Psalm after that day. Is he your storm-stiller? Look, it's easy just to say *'Ya,* it's easy to have a theory about it. But life, as it goes on, wears us down, doesn't it? I don't like storms. I'd rather take the correspondence course. I've had *Storm 101, Storm 102,* I hope I don't need *Storm 103* for a Degree here, but he is and has been the *Storm-stiller* in my life. But sometimes they come, I find myself saying *'Lord, this is deeper water than I've ever been in*

before. *Your grace has been sufficient to me in my pilgrimage, and the measure of your grace that I know has been sufficient relative to the depth of trouble I've known. But now all of a sudden you've taken me to a storm, and I've never seen anything like this before. And if you don't hold me up here, I'm gonna drown. If you don't take hold of my heart and my thoughts here, all the your waves, all of the billows, they're going over me.'* **"He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."** (verses 29-30) it tells us in the Gospel of John, when Jesus got in the boat, remember he came walking on the water, Peter said, ***'If that's you, like we've had other people walking around on the Sea of Galilee in a storm, if that's you, bid me come to you on the water,'*** and the whole process, and when Jesus gets back in the boat with Peter, it says the bow of the ship crunches up on land. They were three and a half miles from land, they were in the midst of the Sea we're told, seven miles wide up in that northern end. When Jesus steps into the boat, then they're where they want to be. And when he steps into the boat with us, we're where we want to be. He gets into the boat, ***snap!*** the boat crunches up on the shore, the bow crunches up. That's the way it is, it says **"Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."** (verse 30) the challenge again, **"Oh that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!"** here's the appeal, **"Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders."** (verses 31-32) because you know, I was in one of those situations, you're out of that storm, and you're saying *'I promise, if you let me get back to land, I will never come out here again,'* I was 14-years-old in one of them, and I said *'Lord if you will get me back to land, I will never...'* and I haven't, *'I will never come out here again.'* [landlubber! Sorry, I'm just an old submarine sailor] *'I just want to sit in church, Lord, I just want to sit there on solid ground and praise you and sing.'* It says that, when he delivers them, **"Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people, and praise him in the assembly of the elders"** that's so much better than being out there in that storm. Again, the ocean freaks me out. When you're out there far enough from land, you can't see the shore, and the boat's going up on the wave, and when it gets up at the top of the wave, the prop comes out of the water, and a boat that's 100 foot long is going *g-g-g-g!* until it sinks down in the trough and then...and then it turns around kind of in the

right direction again, then the wave comes, and the whole boat goes up again and it goes *g-g-g-g!* when the prop comes out of the water, everybody was inside throwing up, I didn't want to go inside [laughter], that was worse than outside, I was terrified. [I went on a whale-watch out of Annesquam during a Feast of Tabernacles that was like that, started out six feet and building for wave-height, ended up out there around 20 foot waves, my young son and I loved it, my little daughter put up with it ok, a lot of others from our church were inside heaving their guts out, my son and I were hanging off the bow looking 30 to 40 feet down into the trough, seeing the green bottom seaweed off Georges Bank from whenever the boat was on top of the waves, before it came crashing down (I was wondering whether or not the boat was gonna bottom-out and hit the bottom). The crazy whale-watch people should never have taken anybody out that day, and they did cancel all whale-watches the next day. I knew as a sailor they'd make a huge mistake taking people out that day. But it was fun for me and my son.] And I wasn't a believer then. I said *'Lord, if you'll get me back to land, I'll never come out here again, I just want to sit in the congregation here, and praise you with the assembly of the elders, just be there Lord,'* that's a wonderful thing.

He's The God Of Great Reversals

*He's Sovereign In The Physical Realm, He's Sovereign
In The Spiritual Realm*

Verses, 33-43, "He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein. He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; and sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease. Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, *where there is no way*. Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh *him* families like a flock. The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth. Whoso is wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the

lovingkindness of the LORD.” Now look, verses 33 down to 42, he’s gonna say, now look, **‘understand, in all of these things, God is sovereign, he’s sovereign in the natural realm, and he’s sovereign in the world of humanity, understand this,’** is what the Psalmist is saying now, this is going to be part of the challenge in the last verse. He says, look, **“He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the watersprings into dry ground;” (verse 33)** into a desert is the idea, verse 33 to 38, he’s telling us relative to soil, and then from 39 to 42 he tells us relative to soul. And in both situations he describes barrenness verses fruitfulness. He says he’s the one that turns the rivers into a wilderness, into a desert, and the watersprings into dry ground, **“a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.” (verse 34)** Look, it says, because of **“for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.”** He has the means to do that. [Comment: God is not a deist, that created everything in the beginning, like creating and winding up a watch, and then stepping back and having nothing to do with his creation. God is intimately involved in both the physical creation and his ongoing spiritual creation.] And in all of these circumstances, it was so they would turn back to him and cry out, and when that cry was genuine, he delivered them, **‘O that men would praise him for his goodness’** and so forth. It says he does that deliberately. And then, he’s the same one, **“He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into watersprings. And there he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they many prepare a city for habitation; and sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly; and suffereth not their cattle to decrease.” (verses 35-38)** it says, look, he’s the one in the natural realm, you know, when people are wicked, it says here in their wickedness they turn away, he can cause the moist ground to become a desert, he can dry up watersprings, he can shut it all down, so that the hearts of men, who are dependent on that, will turn to him. And he says, he’s also the one that turns the desert into standing water and dry ground into watersprings, he does it in the natural, then he’s going to say he does that in the soul too. And he’s just got done telling us that. How many times people turn away in wickedness, and it says they end up dried up, they end up afflicted, they end up thirsty inside. And he’s saying, **‘This is the LORD that does this.’** He doesn’t do it out of vindictiveness, he’s never vindictive, he’s never saying *‘I can’t believe you did this, I expected more of you,’* because he knows the end from the beginning, you can’t surprise him, you can’t let him down. You can surprise

yourself, cause you thought you were way more than you is. You can let yourself down, but he knows the end from the beginning. Yes, the Scripture tells us, he can be grieved, he feels pain in his heart because he loves us. But we can't surprise him. So he's the one that then deals in our circumstances to turn our hearts back. We cry, then he can turn the desert into standing waters, the dry ground into watersprings, **"he maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation" 'he blesses the crops,'** and so forth. Then look, here it says in **verse 39, "Again, they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow."** the idea is, now he talks about the humbling or the prospering of the soul itself. It's the same God that's sovereign in the natural realm that's sovereign in the spiritual realm. **"they are minished and brought low through oppression, affliction, and sorrow. He poureth contempt upon princes, and causeth them to wander in the wilderness, where there is no way."** (verses 39-40) and he's the same one then that, **"Yet setteth he the poor on high from affliction, and maketh *him* families like a flock. The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice: and all iniquity shall stop her mouth."** (verses 41-42) and the Hebrew says, **"all perversity shall stop its mouth."** I like that. That would eliminate a lot of news channels. **"The righteous shall see *it*, and rejoice: and all"** literally, **"perversities shall stop"** not "her" **"its mouth."** **"all perversity shall stop its mouth."** That'll be some day, won't it, when it comes? Now, here's what it tells us, as he wraps this up. **"Whoso is wise, and will observe these *things*, even they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD."** (verse 43) or **'will observe or consider these things? even they, if they do, think through these things, this is what they shall understand, they shall understand the lovingkindness of the LORD.'**

In Closing

So he begins, **"O give thanks unto the LORD, for *he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever.*"** it's never gone. The days come when it seems like his mercy isn't there, it isn't, he's good, his mercy endures forever. **"Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,"** it should come out of our mouths, we should affirm that. And it says because he delivers us from the enemy. Then he takes us from the north, south, east, west, he gathers us to himself. And look, in his gathering, it says those that are weary, those that are out of the way, they don't know where they are going, they have no rest in their soul, there's no rest

inside, they don't have any walls, there's no protection, they don't feel secure, they're worn out, they're empty, they got nothing going, and it says, but what that does, that type insecurity, even the ground under your feet is not certain, it says it puts them in a place where they cry to the LORD, their cry is genuine. And he hears them, and he delivers them. And then he sets them in a secure place where there are walls, he puts them in a habitation, **'O that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, for his mercy endures forever, his wondrous works for the children of men.'** Because he does that very thing. And then he goes on and he says, what about those that are incarcerated, as it were, their soul here is what it gets around to saying, they're in this place of darkness, and they're actually there because they rebelled against his words, and they mocked his counsel. What about them? You know, he's good, he's gathered them from the north, south, east, west, what about those? And it says here, you know what, when they get to that place, where they're reaping what they've sown, when they have to down their own medicine, he, in their rebellion, brought them down to that place, where there was none to help, it says **'When they cried unto him,'** just the same phrase as the other ones, he heard them, and he delivered them, when that cry is genuine, and he sets them free, breaks asunder all the bars, **'O that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, his wondrous works for the children of men, he breaks the bars of brass,'** and so forth, **'the gates of brass, the bars of iron.'** Then he said, **'What about the fools?'** it's a long journey here, what about the fools? and they're afflicted because of their own sin, their own rebellion, their stupid actions, what about them? where they get to the point, there isn't any hunger, inside of them there's nothing that'll satisfy, they feel like they're sitting at the gates of death, **'you know, I'm gone, there's nothing...'** what about them? And it says they cried, and he heard them. They're in misery because of their own actions, and yet when they cried to God, who is good, in his lovingkindness he hears them, and he delivers them, he heals them, he sets them free. He does them good. They should go to the sanctuary and offer sacrifices in worship, speak of his kindness. What about those who get into some situation in life, where they find themselves in a storm, and that storm is overwhelming? And it was a place maybe they were confident before, and in their own confidence they all of a sudden find, *'I'm not the smarty-pants that I thought I was. I thought I was good here, I got nothing to offer in this situation.'* And even those, it doesn't say they're in sin, it just says there are storms that come to us in life sometimes, and it says they

cry to the LORD, he delivers them. There's a great still, they're in awe, they see what's happened. And it says, let them praise the LORD, let them come to the congregation, let them come to the assembly and praise him. And he says, understand this, God is the one who can take a verdant valley with water and lakes and all, and he can dry it up when the people are wicked, for their well-being. And then he's also the one, when they cry unto him, that he brings it, he makes the desert a watered place, and there's springs in the valley, and the crops come forth, and the cattle don't decrease. He does all of that. And then he does it in the soul of men, the same thing, he can make that barren land, he can make that verdant and fruitful, what's inside of us. He does it. And he says, the day is coming, ***'the righteous are going to see this, they're going to rejoice, and all perversity shall have its mouth stopped, whose wise? Who wants to consider these things? those that understand the lovingkindness of the LORD,'*** listen, what's the lesson? ***He is the God of great reversals.*** He is the God of miraculous deliverance. ***He is the God who reverses even those things that we bring upon ourselves. He is the God of great reversals.*** He's the God of the cross, that was the greatest reversal in eternity, that human beings that were sinful, he took our place and bore our sin, so that we could be set free and be righteous. He's the God of great reversals. Listen, when the leper comes to him, the leper's got nothing to lose. The leper cries out, ***'If you will, you can make me clean,'*** it's not some kind of lukewarm prayer, *'Hey man, I heard you're pretty cool with the afflicted, what about me? How about if I send you a selfie?'* no, lepers don't do that. When you realize you have something that's incurable, and deforming you, and ruining your life, your prayer's a cry. And when it's genuine, ***'Lord if you will! I believe Lord if this is your will, you can make me clean! You can make me clean! no medicine, no doctor, no institution, no human being, no resource on earth can do this, but Lord, if you will, you can make me clean!'*** He's the God of great reversals. Whoever considers that, is wise, and they learn of the lovingkindness of the LORD. ***'I'm crippled, I've been laying here for 38 years, every year I try to get down there where the angel stirs the water and I can't do it.'*** ***'Do you want to walk?'*** ***'Ya' 'Take up your bed and go home.'*** Bartimaeus, ***'THOU SON OF DAVID!!!'*** ***'Shut up! Leave him alone, he's busy.'*** He cries the louder, ***'THOU SON OF DAVID, HAVE MERCY ON ME!!!'*** He's crying out, it's genuine. The whole entourage thumbing by, everything stops, Bartimaeus is listening, he hears ***'The Master calleth for thee, the Master***

calleth for thee. Whose wise? I need to be wiser. Who is wise? Who will consider these things. I don't care what kind of a mess you're in this evening, if it's self-inflicted, if it's something you don't understand that's overwhelming, if it's because of your rebellion, if it's because in your pilgrimage you're just so lonely and so lost you have no answers, and all this soul stuff, deep inside, where people can't see, you're dressed up, you put on your good face, but you know inside you got nothing, you got nothing. What a wonderful thing, this song about his lovingkindness, his mercy, his goodness. Is your cry genuine? His lovingkindness is genuine. His willingness to deliver is genuine. Is your heart-cry genuine. It will be, he always gets us there, doesn't he? *'Alright, one more lap then,* you know, how stubborn can you be? Look, it took Jonah till the third day, *'I'm going down the whale's throat, I'm already dead-serious, I'm sliding down and the light's disappearing behind me, O God, O God, O God, O God, O God, I'll go to Nineveh, I promise, I promise, I promise, I promise.'* He took three days! Imagine that. *'O, let me think about it again, swish, swish, swish with the seaweed,'* you gotta be kidding me! Human beings can be like that. This is a song filled with examples. The last note of the song is, the wise person will consider these things, and what they'll come away with, they will learn of the lovingkindness of the LORD. Isn't that a great lesson? He's the God of great reversals, he's the God of great reversals. Let's stand, let's pray...[transcript of a connective expository sermon on Psalm 107:1-43, given by Pastor Joe Focht, Calvary Chapel of Philadelphia, 13500 Philmont Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19116]