

Psalm 107 (1-43) – This is How to Testify

Intro: school colors, insignia, “honk if you love...” bumper stickers, t-shirts: testify, identify, if you are for this or that “let me hear you say...”. I made a statement in a sermon 11-29-09 – we don’t want God or need God until all we have is God. The very next day I saw a quote from John Wesley – When you have nothing left but God, you begin to learn that God is enough. It is saying the same thing, but it was quite a confirmation of where I was going.

You will find this happening in your Christian walk many times and in many ways. These divine coincidences point to the truth that it is the same God that leads us on, and we find the same old paths as saints of old, whether it be me, John Wesley, or the people described in this Psalm, it is still relevant because the scenarios are still as real as life today, it is relevant because God is relevant and His Word is relevant.

- Vs.1 – the Testimony of the Psalm – The Steadfast Love of the Lord
- Vs.2 – We say “so” by giving thanks. Here we have examples of redemption, things to be thankful for, and ways to give thanks, the ways to say “so”.
- Vs. 3 – declares the truth that the providence of God gathers us all together, He is Almighty and He is good, and we have the testimony of the Psalm being rehearsed through the testimonies of men.

Hymn of testimony, 5 stanzas – see if you find yourself in here, and see that there is a way out

(Vs.4-9) – God gives guidance

- 4-5 – Wandering, lost, destitute, tired
- 6 – They cry out to God, He answers them
- 7 – He leads them on a straight path, travelling mercies
- 8 – repeats opening testimony
- 9 – Give thanks because God satisfies the soul

(Vs.10-16) – God gives freedom

- 10 – Prisoners, miserable, shackled by sin and circumstance
- 11 – Rebellious, rejecting God’s Word
- 12 – God humbles them so they see their misery
- 13 – They cry out to God, He answers them
- 14 – He gives them light, life, and liberty
- 15 – repeats opening testimony
- 16 – Give thanks because God gives deliverance

(Vs.17-22) – God gives joy

- 17 – Foolish and depressed
- 18 – Rejected any help, suicidal
- 19 – They cry out to God, He answers them
- 20 – He gives them hope, health, helps them out of their hurt
- 21 – repeats opening testimony
- 22 – Give thanks to God by sacrifice and singing joyful songs

(Vs.23-32) – God gives rescue

- 23 – Involved in commerce
- 24 – Investigating creation

- 25-26a – Danger appears
- 26b-27 – Courage disappears, skills insufficient
- 28 – They cry out to God, He answers them
- 29-30 – He silences the storm, their hearts were glad, they find their way home
- 31 – repeats opening testimony
- 32 – Praise God among all the people, both publicly, and formally – encourage laymen, encourage leaders

(Vs.33-43) – God is God and He is good

The remaining verses also focus us on God, not simply what He has done for us, but who He is, that is why He can and does do what He does for us. We see here that God is over nature, over people, and over situations. He stops evil men and helps humble men. He is Almighty and He is perfectly good. To testify is not to simply revel in our good blessings, but to reveal His character, that is our cause. The testimony of the Psalm is played out through the testimonies of men. Wise men will consider the steadfast love of the Lord, and will turn to Him in trust.

Too often when we testify we think we are ministering but we are only gloating, glorying only in how God delivered us instead of glorifying in God Himself who did the delivering (cf. Galatians 6:14). We wound other tender consciences when we exalt our triumph instead of exalting Christ. Yes we should be excited to hear of great stories of God’s hand of help, if not such Psalms and stories wouldn’t be in the Bible at all, but in doing that we must remember the bottom line is about God.

You are called to glorify God with all you do. It is not, “look what I did” or “look what I can do for God”, and not simply “look what God can do through me” (I was delivered, I am ministering, etc.), but it is “look at God through me” (Matthew 5:16). It is not just that my life points to the power of Jesus, but that it points only to Jesus; it is an ongoing and improving testimony. It is not just the testimony of what God has done in you, but the testimony of who God is through you. Do people see Jesus, the real Jesus, in you? Do they see more than before?

Unbelievers and immature (and even mature and maturing) Christians don’t only want to see what God has done for you, but who God is, what He is like through you so that they too can believe for that same deliverance. Otherwise they may think you are some special case, and not that we have a special God. “Good for you, but it won’t work for me”; perhaps you have heard that before, and not only from unbelievers.

This also means we have to keep on growing in grace if our lives are to reveal the God who gives us grace, otherwise people will wonder how much grace we get before it wears out, and wonder if that limited grace is enough to help them.

Paul told Timothy to keep improving so that his people wouldn’t have to suffer as much as they would have if he didn’t, they could see his progress and be able to avoid pitfalls themselves (1 Timothy 4:15-16). To live and testify rightly helps our witness to the outside world, but it also gives growing and struggling Christians both comfort and hope, comfort because we see it is a process, hope because we see it can be done (Romans 15:4).

A continuing witness is an important factor in the testimony of any individual and certainly for the local church. Is it real, and does it last? You may have been delivered once, but are you still in delivery, on your way to heaven? Paul told the Corinthians that he had been delivered, was being delivered, and would be delivered again (2 Corinthians 1:10). Is it real, and does it last? Those are the questions the world wants to know, needs to see, and we need to be, because the Bible tells us in no uncertain terms that God expects us to act like what we are, the redeemed, whose whole lives point to the Redeemer. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Amen.