

Love Story Part III Payments of Praise

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Good morning, Lighthouse, are you ready for the Word of God this morning?

Psalm 107:21-22

21 Oh that *men* would praise the LORD *for* his goodness, and *for* his wonderful works to the children of men!

22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

Fools on the edge of destruction; reaping the consequences of their sin; they cried unto the Lord in their distress...and with unreasonable mercy, He saved them out of their trouble. Most of us here at Lighthouse have a very similar story to this. We were lost and undone, our lives were a disaster. We cried unto the Lord; some with only the inner cry of a broken heart. He sought us; He found us; He sent us His Word; He saved us and now He loves on us every day!

I don't know how you feel about it, but I owe the Lord an incredible debt. I am deeply in debt to the Lord, but not only to the Lord. I owe Brother Louis Turk, who is now in heaven: He was the messenger of God who brought me the Word. I owe Trinity Baptist Church in Merriam, Kansas; that gave me a place to belong; a place of nourishment where I could grow up in the Lord. I owe Lighthouse Baptist Church, who sort of purchased that note when you gave me the privilege of serving as your Pastor. I owe Brother Lester Hutson, who has been my friend and mentor through countless difficult times. I owe many of you individually, who love and encourage and pray for me daily, especially my own dear wife.

Oh, yes, I am deeply in debt. So, how does one pay such a debt? When you are bankrupt as we all were, all we can do is the American way...we make payments.

1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.

In **Psalm 116** we find the place where John, perhaps, learned this.

Psalm 116:1-10

1 I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.

3 The sorrows of death compassed me, and the pains of hell gat hold upon me: I found trouble and sorrow.

4 Then called I upon the name of the LORD; O LORD, I beseech thee, deliver my soul.

5 Gracious *is* the LORD, and righteous; yea, our God *is* merciful.

6 The LORD preserveth the simple: I was brought low, and he helped me.
7 Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the LORD hath dealt bountifully with thee.
8 For thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling.
9 I will walk before the LORD in the land of the living.
10 I believed, therefore have I spoken: I was greatly afflicted:

With God, love is not just some feeling; it is a verb, it is action. **Verse 8** is a picture of God working in my life.

8 For thou hast delivered **my soul from death**, mine eyes from tears, *and* my feet from falling.

He delivered **my soul from death**.

Five times that I know of, God has delivered me from certain death. For an infant in 1950 to contract a disease called Pertussis, better known as whooping cough, was a death sentence...but I somehow survived it. I was drafted in 1968 to be sent to Vietnam. I was so young and dumb I wouldn't have lasted a week over there. But God gave me just enough hearing to get by but not enough to pass a military physical. I lost my right kidney to Advanced Stage Renal Cell Carcinoma in the 80's; a cancer that almost no one survives. We survived a storm at sea in a small boat with a whole string of miracles that kept us alive. I survived a high-speed truck wreck in the 90's where a tenth of a second difference either way would have meant certain death. The Lord only knows how many other times He has saved me that I didn't know of.

He delivered **my eyes from tears**.

I won't get into the details of all the heartache I have seen in my life except to say that, thanks to Jesus, the tears I shed today are almost all tears of joy.

He delivered **my feet from falling**.

Even as a Christian, I have failed God in so many ways that many would consider me unfit to serve the Lord. But God has made me to stand.

Romans 14:4 Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand.

Psalm 37:23-24

23 The steps of a *good* man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.
24 Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD upholdeth *him* with his hand.

I can only speak for myself. Maybe you were really a pretty good person as men go and even though God saving you was great, maybe your debt to Him is a lot smaller than mine. I don't

know what you are going to do about the debt you owe the Lord, but I can tell you what I am going to do about mine.

Psalm 116:12 deals directly with our response to the amazing benefits the Lord has bestowed in our lives.

Psalm 116:12-19

12 What shall I render unto the LORD *for* all his benefits toward me?

13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.

16 O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant; I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD.

18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people,

19 In the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

What shall I render unto the Lord? First of all:

I. I will accept the salvation of the Lord.

Psalm 116:13

I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

A. The Lord sent His Word:

1. When the Lord sent Brother Turk to my house on visitation night back in February of 1977, he told me all about the Lord's cup of salvation.
2. He explained who Jesus is and why He went to the cross.
3. I saw for myself in God's Word that Jesus' death, burial and resurrection was for me; that He paid for my sins.
4. Brother Turk invited me to call upon the Lord and so, gladly, I did!

B. Many people think that calling on the Lord has to mean we are asking for something.

1. Sometimes it does and sometimes it does not.
2. Accepting God's salvation is not a matter of asking for something, it is a matter of trusting Him for something.
3. I can't remember what I said out loud, but I know what I said from my heart.

4. I said, "Lord I just read your promise, so I'm trusting you right now to save me!"
5. And I have been calling upon His name ever since.

II. I will keep my word to the Lord.

Psalm 116:14 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people.

A. Many of us made some promises to God back when we were crying out to Him.

1. Things like going to Church.
2. Things like righting wrongs we have done.
3. What did you promise God back then?

B. My advice to new Christians (and old ones):

1. When God speaks to you about something He wants you to do or about some issue in your life... just say "YES" to God.
2. Don't procrastinate, don't fight it; just say "Yes, Lord".
3. We have all made promises and commitments to the Lord since we have been saved.
4. God expects us to keep those promises and certainly to seek His forgiveness when we fail.

C. And where it is fitting and proper, we are to do so in the presence of His people.

1. Our tithing and giving is to be brought to the Lord's house.
2. Our sacrifices of praise and thanksgiving are to be offered in the courts of the Lord's house.

Psalm 116:17-19

17 I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD. 18 I will pay my vows unto the LORD now in the presence of all his people, 19 In the courts of the LORD'S house, in the midst of thee, O Jerusalem. Praise ye the LORD.

3. Presenting ourselves in service to the Lord is to be done in the midst of His people.
4. This is why we are commanded in

Ephesians 3:21 Unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

D. Some of you want to be more reserved and do your praising in private.

1. There is an age-old question of philosophers that asks, “If a tree falls in the forest and there is no one there to hear it, does it make a sound?”
2. Some day if you get really bored, google this question.
3. There are discussions of everything from “mechanical sound waves”; to “why does it matter”; to “the Lord hears everything”.
4. The question was never really meant to be answered.
5. The point is that if there is no one there to hear it, what difference does it make?

E. In many cases, our bringing glory to God requires an audience.

Matthew 5:16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

1. When we glorify God by keeping our commitments to Him and serving Him and offering sacrifices of praise to Him...
2. It's like the tree falling in the woods; where is the glory if there is no one there to see it?

Psalm 107:22 And let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving, and declare his works with rejoicing.

3. Who are you going to declare His good works to if you only praise Him in private?

III. I want to die serving Him!

A. No one knows the future, but my intent is to die serving the Lord.

Psalm 116:2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live.

Psalm 116:15-16 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD *is* the death of his saints.
16 O LORD, truly I *am* thy servant; I *am* thy servant, *and* the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds.

B. A lot of Christians just give up and quit in their later years.

1. I say this not in judgment of them, but in hope and intent for myself.
2. As a longtime pastor I have seen many come and go.
3. Some, when it gets difficult, just quit coming to Church.
4. They go to the doctor's office.
5. They still go to the grocery store.
6. Some even still go out for entertainment.
7. "Well, I can get Church on TV", they say.
8. That's when I know I failed in teaching them.
9. And then I see believers like Jane and Larry; hurting so badly they can hardly move sometimes...and yet, here they are.
10. Still here, making payments of praise on that huge debt of love we all owe.

Conclusion:

Psalm 116:1-2

1 I love the LORD, because he hath heard my voice *and* my supplications.

2 Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon *him* as long as I live