

No matter who we are as a believer, no matter how strong we may be as a believer, the truth is we will all have moments when we will be in situations that will make our heart ache. There will be sad times in our lives when we will experience sorrow and grief.

One morning you can get up and be happy and excited and in one moment of time, with one phone call from a doctor or a police officer, your entire world can cave in and your smiles can be turned to tears.

Sad times, sorrowful times and grieving times are things even God's best will experience. Heart aches will hit you no matter who you are. Someone you thought loved you will abandon you or leave you or die.

We are not sure what prompted Psalm 116, but there are certain clues we may glean from the text that help us get a rough idea as to what was happening. Apparently some near-death experience had occurred in the life of the writer (**116:3, 8, 15**). It is very possible that the writer had just lost a loved one who had died. It is also possible that he, himself, faced death. Perhaps he was surrounded by enemies who made him think he was going to die. Regardless of specifics what we do see is critical:

THE KEY TO BECOMING STRONG AND JOYFUL WHEN WE ARE WEAK AND SORROWFUL BECAUSE OF DEATH IS TO CONTINUE TO COMMUNICATE WITH GOD PRIVATELY AND CONTINUE TO WORSHIP GOD CORPORATELY.

Let us put this into our dispensation. A critical key to getting out of depression, when we are hit with any death scene, is to continue to pray and talk with God and continue to come to church to worship God. In fact, in this very Psalm it starts with distress and sorrow, but it ends with "Praise the LORD."

How does this happen? How does such spiritual agony become such spiritual ecstasy? How does such misery end in such majesty? The writer continued to talk to God and continued to worship God.

There are two main topics that are developed in this Psalm:

TOPIC #1 – Why we should love the Lord in times of sorrow and trouble. **116:1-11**

Verse 1 opens with the statement "I love the LORD." If you can say that, you can cope with anything. The situation is bleak. Things in the life of the writer of this Psalm were sad, but one thing He wanted us and God to know is that "I love the LORD."

No matter what we face in life, whether good times or bad; whether times of prosperity or poverty; whether high times or low times, we should never forget to tell God we love Him.

Now the writer gives two reasons why he loved the LORD:

Reason #1 - Because God hears and answers our prayers. **116:1-2**

If one does not pray, one will never be able to say this or experience this. If you don't pray, you are missing out on one of the great blessings of God.

When you are hurting and you pray to God because you love Him, God, as it were, stops all of His Infinite governmental work in this universe to pay attention to what we are saying. This reality right here is staggering and it is all the impetus we need to pray. Almighty God hears and answers our prayers when we are hurting.

Most people pray wanting an answer, few pray after they get an answer.

Reason #2 - Because God graciously delivers and rescues us from horrible things. **116:3-11**

Now we need to observe the terrible circumstances that surrounded this writer:

- 1) He was gripped by death. **116:3a**
- 2) He was terrified. **116:3b**
- 3) He was in distress and sorrow. **116:3c**
- 4) He was very low. **116:6b**
- 5) He was shedding many tears. **116:8b**
- 6) He was about to stumble in his walk with God. **116:8c**
- 7) He was greatly afflicted. **116:10**
- 8) He was alarmed to discover that all men connected to him were liars. **116:11**

Obviously, you cannot get much lower than this description of things. He felt afraid and alone. **It was precisely in these circumstances that he cried out to God for help and deliverance.**

In **verse 4** he asks God to "save my life." Eight words of prayer can move God to help you: "O LORD, I beseech You, save my life."

The writer knew about the attributes of God that would make this possible. According to **Verse 5**, he knew that God was a gracious and righteous and compassionate God. Notice he says "our God." God is this way to His own.

According to **verse 6**, God is in the business of preserving His people no matter how simple or foolish His people have been. God's people do foolish things.

You do not have to be some perfect scholar to see God answer your prayer. God delights in answering the prayer of those who have been foolish or simple.

Now in **verse 7** the writer admonishes himself to “return to your rest” which is the LORD. In the midst of the terrible turmoil and trouble, his soul found rest in his relationship with God. When your soul loses its rest and tranquility, it is time to pray to God. It is time to return to a focus on a relationship with God.

Verse 8 says God is the one who rescues a soul from death. God is the one who rescues the tears from the eyes and He is the one who can keep His people from stumbling.

Verse 9 is important because the writer is promising God that he will walk before the LORD in the land of the living. He is promising that He will walk on a path of righteousness. In fact, one cannot have peace until that happens.

Verses 10-11 show us that this writer came to the conclusion that the one to trust in times of trouble is the Lord, and not men. God is true to His Word. He will come to rescue His people when they turn to Him.

The One to depend on and trust is the LORD. He will hear our prayer and He will rescue us and bless us.

TOPIC #2 – How we should respond when the Lord grants His deliverance. **116:12-19**

There are four specific responses that we should have in regard to the blessings and benefits of God:

Response #1 - We should publicly declare truth about God. **116:12-13a**

The idea of “lift up the cup of salvation” is the idea of openly declaring that God alone saves.

Response #2 - We should call on the name of the LORD. **116:13b**

Response #3 - We should pay what we owe to the LORD. **116:14-18**

Now no one can ever repay God for what He has done for us. But we can do certain things that tell Him thank you.

A “vow” (**v. 14**) was a solemn promise made to God, in which you commit yourself before God.

In this series of verses there are at least six tangible debt items we owe God for delivering us from death:

(Debt Item #1) - We owe God corporate worship. **116:14b, 18b**

(Debt Item #2) - We owe God a life of godliness until the day we die. **116:15**

Do not overlook the fact that it is the death of one “godly” that is precious. When a godly believer dies, it is precious to God. No statement is given about when we will die or how we will die, but we do learn how God views it when we do die.

(Debt Item #3) - We owe God servanthood. **116:16**

God sets us free from the bonds of sin and one reason why is so we may serve Him.

(Debt Item #4) - We owe God offerings. **116:17a**

Giving sacrificial offerings to God should not be a burden, but a wonderful privilege.

(Debt Item #5) - We owe God thanksgiving. **116:17b**

We should always be thankful people for all God has given to us.

(Debt Item #6) - We owe God communication. **116:17c**

We have a responsibility to communicate with God. These are things God’s people owe God because of all He has done for them.

Response #4 - We should praise God. **116:19**

God wants His people to gather together to praise Him. People who are right with God have a desire to publicly worship God.

There are three key applications to make:

- 1. When threatened and depressed, privately pray.**
- 2. When threatened and depressed, publicly worship.**
- 3. When threatened and depressed, personally pursue Biblical righteousness.**