

126. TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE: Psalm 126

INTRODUCTION: Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, friends and visitors,

RQ1. Have you been redeemed or delivered from *anything* by God—sin's penalty? sin's enslaving power? suffering? hardship? trouble? Lies? sadness? depression? anxieties?

RQ2. Is there anything you need to be redeemed or delivered from by God—sin's penalty? indwelling sins? suffering? hardship? trouble? Lies? sadness? depression? anxieties?

If you can answer yes to any of these questions then Psalm 126 is for you!

Now, no matter who you are you can answer yes to at least one of these questions, and likely more. **Therefore this Psalm is for you, and me, and everyone.**

CON(TEXT)/THEME: Notice the title: "*A Song of Ascents.*" This simply means it was a song God's people would sing as they traveled to Jerusalem to worship the Lord at the Temple.

We are not positive when this Psalm was written and who it was written by. It may have been written by Ezra shortly after God's people were released from captivity in Babylon and allowed to return to the promised land. What we know for sure is that this Psalm should be divided into two parts.

Part 1 (vv. 1-3): The Psalmist sings about a past deliverance or redemption by God on behalf of His people, and the results of it. **Read Psalm 126:1-3.**

Part two (vv. 4-6): The Psalmist petitions the Lord in prayer for deliverances or redemption, and the results of those prayers. **Read Psalm 126:4-6.**

DOCTRINE. Though Christians may plant with many tears, they will reap with shouts of joy.

BOYS AND GIRLS [explain].

Though Christians may have extremely hard and sad lives, Jesus will one day chase away all sadness and give them never-ending joy.

HENRY. "It will be easy, in singing this psalm, to apply it either to any particular deliverance wrought for the church or our own land or to the great work of our salvation by Christ." — **Henry, Matthew. Unabridged Matthew Henry's Commentary on the Whole Bible (best navigation). OSNOVA. Kindle Edition.**

The first question we need to ask to study and apply this Psalm is this:

I. HOW SHOULD THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN REDEEMED BY CHRIST RESPOND TO HIS DELIVERANCE? (Psalm 126:1-3)

The first answer is the longest because it lays the foundation and it is where we will do our application. Then answers 2,3, and 4 are short and sweet exhortations!

Have we been redeemed by Christ?

I) Christians should *think* "this is too good to be true!" (Psalm 126:1).

Psalm 126:1

"When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream."

(I) Think how Christ has redeemed us from the penalty and power of sin!

BOYS AND GIRLS: The good news of Christ Jesus sounds too good to be true!
But it is in fact true.

Christians, think how good is sovereign election, forgiveness of sins and imputed righteousness through Christ, reconciliation with God, the presence of the Jesus, fellowship with the saints, the protection of providence, and the promise of heaven!

– **Just think, beloved. Is this really true?**

- 1. The One who breathed out the planets first breathed out our names because of sovereign love in the covenant of redemption,** so that his purpose of election would stand, never for a second leaving our salvation or his glory in it to chance!
- 2. The Sovereign One emptied himself of his glory by becoming a man,** even a zygote at conception, a fetus in the womb, a child laid in a manger, a boy submitting to his parents, a young man working his trade, a man then preaching and healing, thereafter suffering and dying to redeem his lost sheep who were drowning in misery!
- 3. The Law-giver became to the Law-keeper** to count righteous the Law-breakers!
- 4. The Wrathful One against sin has become the substitute sacrifice for sin** so that we who should be rightly condemned would be mercifully pardoned; **the Holy One—Jesus Christ—was treated on the cross like the unholy ones—**sinners like you and me—so that we who should be rightly burned to death in perpetuity would be blessed to life for all eternity!
- 5. The Author of life submitted to death** so that He could rise from the grave and destroy our last enemy, which is death!
- 6. The seated Judge of all the earth has become the ascended**

Advocate of all who believe so that we would forever have perfect access to God!

7. **The One with all authority in heaven and on earth has condescended to be with us by the Holy Spirit, through the Scriptures, even in the Lord's Supper,** so that he would sanctify, strengthen, and sustain us to the end of the age!
8. **The One who walked in the Garden of Eden will shine in the City of New Jerusalem** so that we who believe would see his face forever in happy holiness!

- **Think how Christ has redeemed us from the penalty and power of sin! And then say,** "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream."

(II) Think also how Christ has redeemed us from enslavement to sin!

- **BOYS AND GIRLS:** When Jesus saves a person he frees them from being a slave to sin.
 - ***Saints, think of the sins that used to have you by the throat and you thought you would never be free of! I do not know what they were for each of you, but I know if you are truly in Christ you can fill in that blank, remembering the once-enslaving power sin, and evens specific sins, had over you before you were born again or before you were as sanctified as you are now.***
 - **Was it love of money?** Was it love of ease and comfort? Was it apathy and indifference? Was it pride? Was it selfishness? Was it man-pleasing—fear of man? Was it indulging in sinful worry and anxiety? Was it food? Was it drink? Was it drugs? Was it anger? Was it passiveness? Was it impatience? Was it desires for men or women that you were not in covenant with by marriage—sexual immorality? Was it self-righteousness? Was it the idol of your reputation among your family, peers, or society at large? Or did it not seem like any of these things to you because you were so indifferent to righteousness?
 - **I know there are surely many sins you are still struggling to put to death,** beloved, and it must seem like every time you bury it the corpse puts its hand through the grave and climbs out again.
RQ. But what about those sins that God has enabled you to kill that stay dead? I think if you look back on where you used to be, you would surely be able to say, "I never thought I would NOT be dominated by that! But Christ has set me free from that enslavement!"
 - **1 Peter 1:17** "You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers." **Romans 6:17** "Thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart."

- **Think, believers, how Christ has redeemed us from enslavement to sin!** If you would think for a while, and God would be gracious in reminding you of what you used to be enslaved to and how you now enjoy freedom, you would say "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream."

(III) Think also how Christ has redeemed us from past sufferings!

All of you, think of the past afflictions you have been delivered from that at one time you thought would drown you! *You who are younger may not have as many. The older we get the more we can look back on.

Q. What seasons of suffering have you been through and come out on the other side?

- Sickness?
Experiencing a "downcast spirit" (**Psalm 42:5**)? (What people in our day call depression)
Losing a loved one?
A broken heart over the lost?
Betrayal or Gossiping or Slander and the hurt that comes with it?
Making a mess of your life in some way by reaping what you have sown for some sin?
Loneliness?
- **Think, all of you, how Christ has redeemed us from past sufferings!**

Q. Have you been redeemed by Christ from sin's penalty and power? sin's enslavement? some suffering or hardship? You should then think, "This is too good to be true!" But it is.

II) Christians' mouths should be filled with laughter and our tongues with joy (Psalm 126:2).

Psalm 126:2

"Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;"

- **BOYS AND GIRLS:** Jesus' people are the happiest people on earth! He fills our mouths with laughter and our tongues with joy!

BTW. The nations will look upon we who are in Christ and testify (Psalm 126:2b).

Psalm 126:2b

"then they said among the nations,
'The Lord has done great things for them.'"

III) Christians should praise the Lord by telling of his great works for us (Psalm 126:3a).

Psalm 126:3a

"The Lord has done great things for us;"

- **THOMAS CASE:** "When God loads us with mercy we should load him with our praises."

IV) Christians should praise the Lord by telling of *the results* of his great works for us (Psalm 126:3b).

Psalm 126:3b

"we are glad."

- **PLUMER.** "The conversion of the soul from sin to holiness is itself a greater wonder of mercy than God ever works for the unbelieving world. Indeed the whole work of redemption is so stupendous, in its scheme, execution and application, that to eternity God's people will not cease to admire it. How can the poor sinner, saved by grace, snatched as a brand from the eternal burning, ever cease to celebrate the amazing love of God and the wonders he has wrought?" — **Plumer, William Swan. Studies in the Book of Psalms (p. 2012). Counted Faithful. Kindle Edition.**

USE FOR INSTRUCTION

Joy is not necessarily dependent on the present. Joy is anchored in past providences and borrows from future promises.

If you remember the past providences of God's grace as well as trust the future promises bought by Christ's blood, you can have joy even in the midst of life's greatest storms.

We need Christian meditation coupled with simple faith, and the river of joy will never run dry.

The second question we need to ask to study and apply this Psalm is this:

II. HOW SHOULD THOSE STILL AWAITING REDEMPTION BY CHRIST THINK AND ACT AS THEY WAIT? (Psalm 126:4-6)

Are we still awaiting redemption by Christ?

I) Christians should cry out to God in prayer for more (Psalm 126:4).

Psalm 126:4

"Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like streams in the Negeb!"

- **TRAPP.** "These April showers bring on May flowers, and make the heart

to be like a watered garden, besides an access of glory; for they that weep with men shall laugh with angels; their tears shall be turned into triumphs, their sadness into gladness, their sighing into singing, their musing into music." — Trapp, John. **John Trapp's Complete Bible Commentary** (p. 7334). Kindle Edition.

- **Sanctification**—Turn Phil 1:6 into a prayer.
- **Suffering.**
- **Sadness.**
- **Renewal in the individual.**
- **Revival in the church.**
- **Reformation in the world.**

Are we still awaiting redemption by Christ?

II) Though a Christians' eyes may be filled with tears, we must not lose heart because we have great promises (Psalm 126:5).

Psalm 126:5

"Those who sow in tears

shall reap with shouts of joy!"

- **BOYS AND GIRLS**, sowing means planting and reaping means plucking or harvesting. Have you ever planted something and then gone out to pick it once it grew? Have you ever been to a farm where they let you pick blueberries or maybe even choose a pumpkin from a pumpkin patch?
- **CALVIN**. "All true believers have a common interest in this prophecy, That God not only will wipe away tears from their eyes, but that he will also diffuse inconceivable joy through their hearts." — Calvin, John. **Calvin On The Bible: John Calvin's Bible Commentary** (p. 4235). Kindle Edition.

(I) You who need to be redeemed from the penalty and power of sin—forgiven and reconciled to God: Can you weep for your sins—your rebellion to God? Do you want to be forgiven? Do you want to be embraced in love? Do you want to have eternal life that begins now and lasts forever?

- **BOYS AND GIRLS: (ask the same questions again)**

John 6:40 "For this is the will of my Father, that everyone who looks on the Son and believes in him should have eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day."

If you will sow in tears of repentance and go to Christ in faith, he will deliver you and you shall reap with shouts of joy.

(II) You who need to be freed from certain sins that constantly get the mastery over you: can you weep for those sins? Can you, like Peter after he denied Christ, "Go out and weep bitterly"? **(I.)** May God give us all a true

sorrow for and hatred of the indwelling sins we still seek to put to death daily.
(II.) May he also give us hope in **verse 5**: "Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!"

If you are truly in Christ, you will not weep for your indwelling sin forever! It is sanctification time now, but the time of glorification is coming and you shall reap with shouts of joy!

(III) You who need to be delivered from present afflictions, though you weep now you will reap shouts of joy!

All of you, think of your current afflictions—what you are suffering through right now—that seems like it might drown you!

Q. What is it? Think! Let it make the tears well up in your eyes and then look at **verse 5** and trust God's promise: "Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy!"

USE FOR COMFORT

Dear ones,

***There is no flood of suffering Jesus' hands will not dam up;
there are no harms He will not heal;
there is no sadness His face will not cause to melt away;
there are no tears sown that He will not make grow into shouts of joy!***

Now in **verse 6** the Psalm transitions from the plural "we" to the singular "he."
This is a promise for you, believer!

III) As a Christian, do your duty, even through tears, because you will reap if you do not give up (Psalm 126:6).

Psalm 126:6

"He who goes out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his sheaves with him."

USE FOR EXAMINATION

- QI.** Have you let your tears keep you from sowing good works?
- QII.** Have you allowed your weeping keep you from proclaiming?
- QIII.** Have you let your suffering choke out your duties?

BELOVED, HEAR THESE THREE EXHORTATIONS TO CONCLUDE TODAY:

- **I)** Do not let your tears keep you from sowing good works.
- **II)** You must not let your weeping keep you from proclaiming the truth of

God's world and word, His Law and His Gospel.

- **III) You cannot let your suffering choke out your duties.**

Psalm 126:6

"He who goes out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his sheaves with him."

STUDY AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Introductory Questions

These questions align with the sermon's introduction and aim to engage participants with the personal relevance of Psalm 126.

- **Personal Redemption Experience:** The sermon asks, "Have you been redeemed or delivered from anything by God?" Reflect on a specific instance in your life where you experienced God's deliverance (e.g., from sin, suffering, hardship, or emotional struggles like depression or anxiety). How did this experience impact your faith?
- **Current Needs for Redemption:** The sermon also asks, "Is there anything you need to be redeemed or delivered from by God?" Identify one area in your life (e.g., a specific sin, suffering, or emotional burden) where you are currently seeking God's redemption. How can you bring this need to God in prayer?
- **Universal Relevance:** The sermon states that Psalm 126 is for everyone because all can answer "yes" to at least one of the redemption questions. Why do you think this Psalm's message is universally applicable? How might it speak to someone who feels far from God or unfamiliar with the concept of redemption?

Study Questions on Psalm 126:1-3 (Past Deliverance)

These questions focus on the first part of the Psalm, which reflects on God's past deliverance and how Christians should respond.

- **"Too Good to Be True":** The sermon emphasizes that Christians should respond to Christ's redemption by thinking, "This is too good to be true!" (Psalm 126:1). Reflect on the list of redemptive acts in the sermon (e.g., sovereign election, forgiveness, reconciliation, promise of heaven). Which of these aspects of Christ's redemption feels most "too good to be true" to you, and why?
- **Freedom from Sin's Power:** The sermon highlights how Christ redeems us from the enslaving power of sin (e.g., love of money, pride, anxiety,

etc.). Share an example of a sin or habit you've been freed from through Christ. How does reflecting on this freedom encourage you to trust God with current struggles?

- **Deliverance from Suffering:** The sermon asks, "What seasons of suffering have you been through and come out on the other side?" Recall a time when God delivered you from a specific hardship (e.g., sickness, loss, betrayal). How did this experience shape your perspective on God's faithfulness?
- **Laughter and Joy:** Psalm 126:2 says, "Our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy." How have you experienced joy or laughter as a result of God's deliverance in your life? How can you cultivate this joy even when life is challenging?
- **Testimony to Others:** The sermon notes that the nations will say, "The Lord has done great things for them" (Psalm 126:2b). How can your personal story of redemption serve as a testimony to others? What practical steps can you take to share God's great works with those around you?
- **Praising God's Works:** According to Psalm 126:3, Christians should praise God by telling of His great works and their results ("we are glad"). How can you make praising God a regular part of your life? What specific "great things" has God done for you that you can share with others?

Study Questions on Psalm 126:4-6 (Awaiting Future Redemption)

These questions focus on the second part of the Psalm, which addresses how Christians should think and act while awaiting further redemption.

- **Crying Out in Prayer:** Psalm 126:4 calls believers to pray, "Restore our fortunes, O Lord." The sermon suggests praying for sanctification, relief from suffering, renewal, revival, and reformation. What specific area of your life or community are you prompted to pray for God's restoration? How can you turn this into a regular prayer?
- **Sowing in Tears:** Psalm 126:5 promises that "those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy." What does it mean to "sow in tears" in the context of your current struggles (e.g., repentance, perseverance, or serving others despite hardship)? How does this promise give you hope?
- **Repentance for Salvation:** For those needing redemption from sin's penalty, the sermon encourages weeping over sins and turning to Christ (John 6:40). If you or someone you know is seeking forgiveness and reconciliation with God, how can tears of repentance lead to the joy of salvation? Discuss practical steps for sharing this hope with others.
- **Sanctification Struggles:** The sermon addresses Christians who are battling indwelling sins, noting that "sanctification time" will lead to

"glorification" (Psalm 126:5). What specific sin are you currently seeking to overcome? How does the promise of future joy motivate you to persist in this struggle?

- **Enduring Present Afflictions:** The sermon encourages those suffering to trust that their tears will lead to joy (Psalm 126:5). What current affliction feels overwhelming to you? How can you hold onto God's promise of future joy while enduring this hardship?
- **Doing Your Duty:** Psalm 126:6 speaks of an individual who "goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing" and returns with joy. What "seeds" (e.g., good works, sharing the gospel, faithful service) is God calling you to sow, even through tears? How can you stay faithful in these duties?

Application and Exhortation Questions

These questions draw from the sermon's concluding exhortations and practical uses for instruction, comfort, and examination.

- **Joy in All Circumstances:** The sermon states, "Joy is not necessarily dependent on the present. Joy is anchored in past providences and borrows from future promises." How can reflecting on God's past faithfulness and future promises help you find joy in your current circumstances? Share a practical example.
- **Christian Meditation and Faith:** The sermon suggests that "Christian meditation coupled with simple faith" keeps the "river of joy" flowing. What does Christian meditation look like for you? How can you incorporate it into your daily routine to sustain joy?
- **Comfort in Suffering:** The sermon offers comfort: "There is no flood of suffering Jesus' hands will not dam up; there are no harms He will not heal." How does this truth comfort you in your current struggles? How can you share this comfort with someone else who is suffering?
- **Examination of Duty:** The sermon asks, "Have you let your tears keep you from sowing good works? Have you allowed your weeping to keep you from proclaiming? Have you let your suffering choke out your duties?" Reflect on these questions. In what ways might your struggles be hindering your faithfulness, and how can you overcome this?
- **Exhortations to Action:** The sermon concludes with three exhortations: (1) Do not let tears stop you from good works, (2) Do not let weeping stop you from proclaiming God's truth, and (3) Do not let suffering choke out your duties. Which of these exhortations resonates most with you, and what specific action can you take this week to live it out?

Questions for Children

These questions are tailored for younger audiences, based on the sermon's explanations for boys and girls.

- **Good News of Jesus:** The sermon says, "The good news of Christ Jesus sounds too good to be true! But it is in fact true." What part of Jesus' story (e.g., His love, forgiveness, or promise of heaven) sounds amazing to you? Why?
- **Happiness in Jesus:** The sermon teaches that "Jesus' people are the happiest people on earth!" What makes you happy when you think about Jesus? How can you share that happiness with a friend or family member?
- **Planting and Harvesting:** The sermon explains sowing as planting and reaping as harvesting, like picking blueberries or pumpkins. If you could "plant" something good (e.g., kindness, prayer, helping others), what would you plant, and how do you think it would grow into joy?
- **Weeping for Sins:** The sermon asks kids if they can weep for their sins and want to be forgiven. What does it mean to say "sorry" to God for something you've done wrong? How does knowing Jesus forgives you make you feel?

Group Discussion Prompts

These prompts are designed to spark deeper group conversation and application.

- **Sharing Redemption Stories:** Share a personal story of how God has delivered you from sin, suffering, or hardship. How does sharing these stories encourage others in the group to trust God?
- **Corporate Prayer for Restoration:** The sermon encourages praying for renewal, revival, and reformation (Psalm 126:4). As a group, discuss specific needs in your church or community where you can pray for God's restoration. Spend time praying together for these needs.
- **Encouraging Perseverance:** The sermon emphasizes not giving up on good works, proclamation, or duties despite tears (Psalm 126:6). How can your group support one another to stay faithful in these areas, especially during difficult times?
- **Testimony to the Nations:** Psalm 126:2b notes that the nations will see God's work in His people. As a group, brainstorm ways your church or community can visibly demonstrate God's redemption to those outside the faith.

Personal Reflection Questions

These questions encourage individual introspection and application.

- **Meditating on Past Providences:** Spend time reflecting on a specific instance of God's past deliverance in your life. How does this memory strengthen your faith for current challenges?
- **Trusting Future Promises:** The sermon highlights that joy borrows from

future promises. Read a promise from Scripture (e.g., John 6:40, Philippians 1:6). How does this promise give you hope for the future, and how can you cling to it today?

- **Sowing Through Tears:** Identify one "seed" you can sow this week (e.g., a kind act, sharing your faith, serving someone) despite personal challenges. Write down a plan to follow through and reflect on the outcome.
- **Examining Obstacles:** The sermon's examination questions ask if tears, weeping, or suffering have hindered your duties. Honestly assess where you've allowed struggles to hold you back. What steps can you take to move forward in faith?

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, friends, and visitors, let me begin today as before we dig into Psalm 126 and ask you a couple of questions. Have you been redeemed or delivered from anything by God? Have you been redeemed or delivered from anything by God? Redeemed or delivered meaning you were enslaved to something or you're in this terrible situation and the Lord sets you free from it. Delivers you from whatever it may be like sin's penalty. The penalty for sin that you deserve for your rebellion against God. Have you been redeemed? Have you been delivered from sin's penalty? What about sin's enslaving power? Have you through faith in Christ Jesus alone and by the work of God the Holy Spirit been set free from slavery to sin? So that sin though it still bothers you and though you still have indwelling sin, but it no longer rules over you, dominates you. It's not been totally rid from you, but it's been dethroned in you. Have you been redeemed or delivered from some kind of suffering, from some kind of hardship or trouble? Have you been redeemed or delivered by God from lies that you used to believe? from sadness or depression or anxieties.

Another question is, is there anything you need to be redeemed or delivered from by God? Is there anything you look at yourself right now? Maybe some of you say, "I'm I'm not sure that I have been redeemed or delivered from sin's penalty. I'm not sure I have been forgiven by God. Or some of you maybe looking at your own life, you're saying, I I can more easily see indwelling sins that I need to be delivered from than I have been delivered from. Maybe that's all that's consuming your mind. There are indwelling sins that you say, "I need to be set free from these. I need to be sanctified." Maybe you're in the midst of suffering right now and you're saying, "I can look back and see things." Yes, but I'm looking at something right now. I need to be set free, redeemed, delivered from this suffering, from this hardship, from this trouble, from these lies I'm believing, from this sadness I'm experiencing,

from this depression I'm sinking in, or from these anxieties that I'm struggling to cast on the Lord. If you can answer yes to any of that, to even one part of any of those questions, then Psalm 126 is for you. Psalm 126 is for you. Now, to be clear, no matter who you are, every single person in this room, every single person that exists can actually answer yes to one of those questions that I just asked you. Like, well, have you been delivered from sin's penalty? Yeah. Okay, great. It applies to you. Have you not been delivered from sin's penalty? If you say, "Yeah, like all right, this applies to you. Have you been redeemed from uh indwelling sins?" Great. This applies to you. Have you not? Well, this applies to you, too. If you can answer yes to any of those, and everyone can answer yes to at least one of these questions, and likely many, if not most, this psalm is for you. It's for me, it's for everyone. Now, notice the title of this psalm. Look in your own Bible so you can see it with your own eyes. That uh restore our fortunes, O Lord, that's not the title. That's just what the translators put in there in that bold print to give us a general idea about what the psalm is about as we're just looking through the Psalms. But that next part that says a song of ascent, like ascending, a song of ascent, that is scripture. And that simply means that this was a psalm, a song that was written for God's people to sing as they traveled to Jerusalem to go and worship the Lord at the temple or the tabernacle. That's what a song of ascent means. As they are ascending, uh Jerusalem is up on a hill on a mountain in a mountain range. And so it's we're going up. And so it's a song of going up to the Lord's temple under the old covenant to worship the Lord at the temple or the tabernacle. That's all we know about this psalm. That's all we know about this psalm. We do not know who wrote it. We do not know the context in which it is written. It simply tells us it's written as we go to worship the Lord with his people. We're not positive when it was written. Who's it written by? It may have been written by Ezra. Ezra the prophet shortly after God's people were released from captivity in Babylon and they were thrown into captivity by the Lord for their sins. And then the Lord works in the king there and they get to come back to Jerusalem. It's perhaps written in that time. And many commentators think that makes the most sense. But we don't know that for sure. We don't know who it's written by. We don't know why it's written. We only know that the Lord's people have been delivered. They've been the Lord has worked a redemption for them in something and they are very thankful for it and showing that what just happened to us is too good to be true. That's verses 1 through 3. So we don't know all the specifics, but we know there's two parts to this psalm. The first part is about past deliverances or redemption by God on behalf of his people and then the results of that. So verses one through three, look in your Bible. This is about what the Lord has done and how the people respond and should respond to it. Verse one, when the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, that's another way to say God's people, not the fortunes of the land or what people now call Zionism. No, Zion in this sense is talking about God's covenant people, the Lord's people, the Christians under the old covenant. Now we are Christians under the new covenant. So when the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter.

Verse two, and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, the Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us. We are glad. So verses 1 through three, you should be able to see right now. It's about a past deliverance and how they respond to it. Then look at verses 4-6 and see then it transitions to the psalmist praying, asking God for something. It's a petition. He's petitioning the Lord and showing us through singing this song that we should petition the Lord for deliverances or redemption that still needs to take place in the future. So verses 1-3, thank you Lord. And this is the effects of what the Lord has done for us and past deliverances and redemption. And then verse four transitions to Lord, we need more. We need more help. There are more things that need to happen and we need you. Look at it. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the Negeb. So go back to verse one. When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Past. Now verse four again. Restore our fortunes, O Lord. Like streams in the neg. Like which is it? I thought he did it. Verse one, the Lord did it and made us so happy. Verse four, we need the Lord to do it. It's it's the same thing that you know in your Christian life. Like the Lord has for here's one example. I used to be dominated by this sin and thought I would never be free from it. The Lord has set me free from just that domination by that particular sin. The Lord restored my the fortunes of Zion. And then you can that's verse one. And then you can go to verse four and go, "Lord, please restore my fortunes because you've got other sins you're dealing with." Or that sin maybe creeps back in and you bow down to it. Lord, help me kill that sin. I'm believing this lie. Lord, set me free. Ah, I'm trapped by another lie. Lord, please set me free. So, which is it? It's both. He has delivered, but there are still things that believers need to be delivered from. And so this psalm goes looking back to what the Lord has done and also looking forward and asking the Lord for help and then the promises that should be believed when you ask the Lord for help. So verse four transitions to that future. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the NB. Those who sew in tears shall reap with shouts of joy. He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sewing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheav with him. So what should we learn from this psalm? What's the overarching doctrine we should learn? Hear me very simply and plainly. Though Christians may plant with many tears, they will reap with shouts of joy. Though Christians may plant with many tears, they will reap with shouts of joy. And if you are like like some and say, I am not great at understanding metaphor or what is meant by the metaphors, we're going to explain all of this. And so you won't be left just thinking, what's the sewing and reaping? What's going on? Boys and girls, look up here at me. I'll explain it more simply to you and not use a metaphor. And some of the adults won't tell anyone else, but they're going to be really thankful that I did explain it without the metaphor. This is going to be clear to them, too. Though, Christians, boys and girls, this psalm, Psalm 126, if you have your Bible, look at it again. 126. That one. We don't know who wrote it. We don't know when they wrote it. We just know this is what God wants us to learn from it. Though Christians may have an extremely hard and sad life, Jesus will one day chase away all sadness and give

Christians never ending happiness. That's what Psalm 126 teaches us. Though Christians may have an extremely hard and sad life, Jesus will one day chase away all sadness and give them neverending happiness. Boys and girls, raise your hand if you like to be happy. I'm there. You want to be happy. Raise your hand if you just love it when you are sad.

Nobody wants to raise their hand because that's that's all of us. Like, no, it stinks when I'm sad. It stinks when I'm heartbroken. And even to the point in this psalm that's talking about crying. Your heart is broken. You're so sad that it's not just but you're weeping. You're crying because of the sadness. That's what you learned from this song. Christians life may be very hard and sad but Jesus will rid us one day of all sadness and give us never ending happiness. Unbelievers, this is the story of the world. This is the story of the world. Because of sin, because of our sin against God, things are sad. Things break. People are depressed. Things are not as they should be because of our sin. But the Lord Jesus Christ, God the Son, came into the world, became a human being, lived without sin so that his people can be counted righteous. He died on a cross for sinners so that everyone who believes in him would be forgiven of all of their sins. He then arose from the dead to life in order to break sin's power and defang Satan and kill death itself. And one day he will come back, renew every person who believes in him, renew the entire earth, throw those who reject him into eternal judgment, and make everything sad come untrue. We will live with him forever. Rule with him forever. No more sorrow, no more sadness, no more pain, no more breaking, only fullness, only happiness. That's the good news of Jesus Christ. Though Christians may plant with many tears, they will reap with shouts of joy. That's what you and I should learn. Matthew Henry, the old Puritan commentator, said, "It will be easy in singing this psalm," reminding us that the psalms were written to be sung. Psalms were written to be sung. It will be easy in singing this psalm to apply it either to any particular deliverance wrought for the church or the great work of our salvation by Christ. He's saying if you see what the psalm's saying, thank you Lord for delivering me. Also, I need more and I need help. Like Henry rightly says it is extremely easy to sing this psalm for Christians because God has set us free in Christ Jesus or even we can apply it to particular circumstances and praise the Lord through this psalm in that way. So let's look at it and let me point out to you what we should learn here. There's two questions that if we ask the questions and answer them, I think it'll help us more clearly learn and apply what we should from this song. The first question is this. How should those who have been redeemed by Christ respond to his deliverance? How should those who past tense have been redeemed by Christ? How should they respond to his deliverance? Now look, look at verse one. When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, meaning delivered his people from some terrible situation, restored the fortunes, brought back prosperity to these people who were thrown down in oppression. When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. What does that learn? What does that teach us? What should we learn? Well, have have you been redeemed by Christ? Has

Christ delivered you? Well, Christians should think this is too good to be true. That's what you should learn from verse one. That's what it means. We were like those who dream. It means like like we say, pinch me like this has got to be a dream. This is and not in the sense that this is a nightmare I want to awake from, but in the sense of this is too good to be true. When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, it was like this. We must be dreaming this is so good. The Lord has done far more abundantly than all that we could ask or think. Christians should think this is too good to be true. Think believers just think in applying this when the Lord redeems us and this is past tense. When the Lord has redeemed you, you should think. Think on the gospel. Think on what Christ has done. Think on who you were, who you are now. Your position before you were in Christ. Your position now that you're in Christ. If you would think about it, you would have to conclude this must I must be dreaming. There's no way this is true. But it is. Boys and girls, look up at me. The gospel is such good news that it seems too good to be true, but it is in fact true. Adults, you need to look at verses like this and just be reminded, maybe rebuked, and remember how amazing the good news of Christ Jesus is. Remember who you used to be and who you are now. Re think about who you would be, where you would be without Christ's redemptive work. What are you going to do about your sins? How are you going to remove your guilt before God? How are you going to cleanse yourself of your rebellion against God? What kind of argument are you going to give when you stand before his judgment seat and everything you've ever said, everything you've ever thought, everything you've ever done is brought before you and the prosecutor comes and says, "Here are all the reasons this man, this woman, this child is guilty. What are you going to do?"

That insteps Jesus. And Jesus says, "I have fully paid for all of their sins. I have lived a perfect life that they did not live, and my righteousness is given to them." Like all all the truths, the basic truths of the gospel, if we would just stop and think about them, say, "This is too good to be true." But it is. Christians, think of how good is sovereign election. forgiveness of sins and imputed righteousness through Christ. Think of how good it is to be reconciled to God. Think of the presence of Christ Jesus by his spirit through his word and even in the supper. Think of how sweet the fellowship is that you have with other Christians. the communion of saints, brothers and sisters who, you know, I can call at 3:00 a.m. They're going to be there. I can tell them I've got burdens and they're not going to go, "Oh, boy. I better calculate whether or not we can bear this burden." But they go, "Let me help. I'm there. I'll do whatever I can for you." Think of how sweet the communion of saints truly is. Think of the protection of God's providence. You and I have no idea how many times we would have shipwrecked shipwrecked our life, shipwrecked our faith, ship just hurt other people, hurt ourselves if it were not for the providence of God that we may not even realize what he's doing, how he's protected us and kept us in the way. Think of the promises of heaven.

One day you're going to be glorified, Christians. You will never There is a day

coming when you will never sin again. You'll never be tempted to sin. You will love Christ as you really desire to now. Like, I wish I loved him more. I wish I wanted to obey more perfectly. I wish I had the strength to obey. The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak. One day there will be no more weakness of flesh. One day you will rule and reign with Christ in the new earth and you will see him face to face. One day there will be no more wicked people to persecute you. One day there will be no more sickness. The only tears you will ever cry are tears of happiness. That day is coming. Oh the promises of heaven. It's too good to be true. Think, beloved. Think. And you can say, "When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream." This is too good to be true. Think of these things I'm about to say to you. I just want you to be thinking, "Is that really true?" And know the answer is yes. The one who breathed out planets first breathed out our names because of sovereign love and the covenant of redemption. Before the father speaks and creates everything exhale through his spoken word creates all things out of nothing. Before that he spoke your name and elected you to eternal salvation. so that your salvation or his glory in your salvation would never for a second be left to chance. The sovereign one emptied himself of his glory and became a human being. Even a zygote at conception, a fetus in the womb, a child in a manger, a boy submitting to his parents, a young man working his trade, a man then preaching and healing. Thereafter, suffering and dying to redeem his lost sheep who were drowning in sin and misery. The sovereign one became a human being. He emptied himself of his glory. The lawgiver became the lawkeeper to count righteous the law breakers. The one who gave the law, Christ Jesus, then became a man in order to perfectly keep the law because we haven't. And he did that in order to count righteous we who have broken that law. The very one that we have sinned against is the one who delivers us from that sin. The wrathful one against sin became a substitute sacrifice for our sin

so that we who should be rightly condemned would be mercifully pardoned. The holy one, Jesus Christ, was treated on the cross like the unholy ones. He was treated as though he was a sinner as a substitute in place of his people so that all who believe should be saved for all eternity. The author of life submitted to death so that he could rise from the grave and destroy our last enemy which is death. The seated judge of all the earth has become the ascended advocate of all who believe so that you and I would have forever perfect access to God the father in prayer. The one with all authority in heaven and on earth has condescended as stooped down to be with us by his holy spirit through the scriptures and even in the Lord's supper so that he would sanctify strengthen and sustain us to the end of the age. Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. The one who walked in the garden of Eden will shine in the city of New Jerusalem so that we who believe would see his face forever in happy holiness. Think believers how Christ has redeemed us from the penalty and power of sin. And then you can so easily say when the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. That's one of the reasons we sing Psalm 126. There are 150 psalms.

Some of them we'd have to sing five times to just sing the one psalm because the verses are so long. Some of them aren't as clear. And so we're singing like trying to remember what are we singing about? But let Psalm 126 forever be ingrained in your brain when we say when Zion's bondage God turned back as men that dreamed were we. Then filled with laughter was our mouth, our tongues with melody. Like now think think so clearly when we sing that psalm. The gospel is so good it's it seems like it's too good to be true. Think we were like those who dream. Think of how Christ has redeemed believers from enslavement to sin. Boys and girls, when Jesus saves a Christian, children, look up here at me. When Jesus saves someone, when he makes someone a Christian, he doesn't just forgive them and count them righteous. He also by the work of his Holy Spirit sets them free from being enslaved to sin. He changes their hearts. He changes our wills. He changes our minds so that we no longer are dominated and enslaved by sin, but are set free to live in righteousness. Saints, think of the sins that used to have you by the throat that now you can look back and see that grip has been loosened. It may still try to grab me by the wrist or grab me by the lapel of my coat, but it's no longer strangling me. I never thought I would see a day that I wasn't being strangled by whatever particular sin you can fill in the blank with. I don't know what they were for each of you, but I know if you are truly in Christ, you can fill in that blank with something. remembering the once enslaving power of sin and even specific sins, that grip they had over you before you were born again or before you were as sanctified as you are now. What used to have you by the throat? Was it love of money? Was it love of ease and comfort to the extent that you would neglect duties so you can just be comfortable? Was it apathy or indifference? Was it pride in your own thoughts, in your own abilities, and your own works? Was it selfishness? Was it manpleasing? The fear of man, caring more what people think about you or what people can do to you, caring more about that than faithfulness to the Lord Jesus Christ. Was it food? Was it drink? Was it drugs? Was it anger? Was it passiveness? Was it impatience? Was it desires for men or women that you're not in a covenant of marriage with? That is to say, sexual immorality? Was it self-righteousness?

Was it the idol of your reputation among your family, among your peers, or society at large? Or did it not seem like any of these things actually had you by the throat because you just didn't give a rip about righteousness? Like, I don't know if I was really enslaved anything, but deep down it's because I didn't really care to live righteous in any way or obey Christ. I know there are surely many sins you're still struggling to put to death, believers. And it must seem like every time you bury it, the corpse puts its hand back up through the grave and climbs out again. Like, I just buried that sin and now it's climbing out of the grave again. I know that's probably how all of us think. But what about those sins that God has enabled you to kill that are still buried?

If you think and look back on who you used to be and who you are now because of

God's mercy, I think you could say when the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Think for a while and ask God to be gracious in reminding you of what you used to be enslaved to and now you now enjoy freedom. You were ransomed believers from the feudal ways inherited from your forefathers. 1 Peter 1:17. Thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart. Romans 6:17. Think how Christ also has redeemed you from past sufferings, from troubles, from afflictions, from depression, from sickness, whatever that suffering is. Think of those past afflictions you've been delivered from that at one time, even in that moment when you're in the midst of the suffering, you should think, "It's going to drown me. I'm not I there's no way I'm going to be able to escape this. Like the psalmist elsewhere says, "Come quick. The waters are up to my neck." Like that's how you felt in that affliction. That's how you felt in that time of trial, that time of hardship. You who are younger, you may not have as many times that you can recall like that. Sufferings, hardships, sickness, whatever it may be that you're like, "Okay, I'm just done. There's no hope." But you who are older, you're shake. I know you're shaking your head, at least internally. You're like, "Yep." That's how it'll go for all of us in our life. This life is a veil of tears. The older we get, the more we can look back on seasons of suffering and sadness or sickness that maybe you just thought, "I don't know if I'm going to come out on the other side." Think of the times you've been sick. Think of the times you've really just been in the trenches with a downcast spirit. Psalm 42:5 calls it. People in our day call it depression. A downcast spirit. your spirit, your soul just thrown down. Think about when you lost a loved one that seems like nothing is ever going to be the same. I'm never going to get through this. Think about a broken heart that you have had over friends or family who reject Christ and refuse to come to him for salvation.

Think about when you've been betrayed, gossiped about, slandered, and the hurt that comes with it.

Thinking think about the mess or messes you've made of your life in some way by sewing sin, planting sin, planting sin, and then you start reaping misery.

Because what you reap, you sow. Think about the loneliness that you've experienced before. Isolation that you may have experienced and all these things just in the moment could think

I'm how am I ever going to be free of this? But think of how Christ has brought you out of those situations. You were sick and he healed you. You had a downcast spirit, but now though you still may battle depression and anxieties and have bouts with it and have valleys and mountain tops and all that, but you're not in the valley of the shadow of death. Or you can look back and maybe you are in the valley of the shallow shadow of death right now, but you can look back and say, "I've been here before and I've got out before."

Think of losing a loved one and how the Lord heals. Think about those that you've been heartbroken because they don't know Christ. They know the gospel even and they just outright say, "I do not want him." And then all of a sudden they get saved. And the only explanation is God saved them. Like we've been praying, we've been hoping, but it looked about as hopeless as it could get. And then God saves them. Think of all the experiences of suffering, of sadness, of sorrow that you've had that the Lord has set you free from. Even those things you thought, "We're never going to get over this. When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream, "This is too good to be true." So, have you been redeemed by Christ from sin's penalty and power? Or from sin's enslavement or from some suffering or hardship? You should then think, "This is too good to be true." But believers, it is. It is true. Praise the Lord. Look next at verse two. Not only should those who have been redeemed or delivered by Christ, not only should we think this is too good to be true, but in addition to that, Christians mouths should be filled with laughter and our tongues with joy. Christians who have been delivered by Christ, this is too good to be true. And then the response to that is not just what we think or we say, how amazing is Christ's redemption. Not only that, but then we move to our mouths being filled with laughter and our tongues with shouts of joy. Look at it. Then after the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dreamed. Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy. Boys and girls, you can mark this down. Christians have the hardest life. If you just put all people together, the Christians have the hardest lives of anyone in this world because we don't go along with the world. We actually go against the world and go the true way that God has revealed in his word. And so Christians are hated by the world, persecuted the Lord because he has a special love for his people. even afflicts us with suffering to sanctify us. Christians have the hardest life. But hear me boys and girls, Christians have the hardest life of anyone, and they have the happiest life of anyone. We have the hardest life, but yet we have the happiest life because God puts laughter in our mouths and fills our tongues or uses our tongues to have shouts of joy. It's because of what Jesus has done for us. Though our life is difficult, we know we have forgiveness of sins. Though our life is full of suffering, persecution, hardships, we know that one day Jesus will return and make all things sad go away forever. So we look back on his deliverances and respond with laughter and our tongues have joy on them with shouts of joy. Christians mouths should be filled with laughter. And this is not a laughter at the enemies. It's not like a mocking of the enemies. And this is not a laughter like the psalmist is encouraging you to be some creepy weirdo that just fake laughs, you know, to act like I'm happy. It's like I'm not actually happy, but I'm going to like act like I'm laughing to be happy. No, no, no. That's not that's all he's talking about. He's not talking about faking it or anything like that. He's talking about true joy that comes from thinking about what the Lord has done to set us free and that we're a laughing people. We're a happy people. We have so many foundational reasons to just be overflowing with joy that just in our life, we have

laughter and shouts of joy. This is too good. It's the way that you laugh when you say this is too good to be true. Laughter fills our mouths and our tongue with shouts of joy. And by the way, look at the second part of verse two. That even the heathens, even those who reject Christ, even the world can look upon who we are in Christ and testify. The second part of verse two says, "Then they said among the nations." So it's not the Lord's people who are saying it among the nations. It's the nations in this context, meaning unbelievers are saying to everyone else, the Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has set them free. The Lord I mean these people. I don't agree with them. I think they're wrong. I actually might hate them, but they're happy. They're happy people. The Lord has done great things for them. The nations even look on us as we are overflowing with joy, with happiness, with shouts of joy, as we praise the Lord, and they can't help but say, "Their God has done great things for them. I wish I was as happy as them."

Look at the next thing. The the first part of verse three and see, not only should we think this is too good to be true, not only should our mouths be filled with laughter and our tongues with joy, but Christians should praise the Lord by telling of his great works for us. We don't wait on the nations to evangelize. We don't have unbelievers evangelize. They do say in response, "The Lord has done great things for them." But we don't allow them to control it. We say, "The Lord has done great things for us." That's right. The Lord has done great things for us. Here's an example of this. They say among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." And then the people of God say, "The Lord has done great things for us." There's an example I can give you from real life that I think this will help us grab it even more. Three or four years ago, we were standing outside of Planned Parenthood to preach the gospel to plead with parents who were walking into Planned Parenthood to murder their children. We're pleading with them. And there's a security guard named Jorge who worked for Planned Parenthood. He's paid by people who murder children to escort the parents who want to murder their children in and to like keep them away from us. We're trying to offer help. We're pleading. We're preaching the gospel. This guy and this girl walk in and they don't listen to us. The girl gets dropped off. The mother gets dropped off inside. And then the husband is walking out with the security guard and he is just obviously in turmoil and distress. And even the security guard who we had talked to, who he's heard us preach the gospel, he's heard us offer help repeatedly, he sees that this guy is downcast and he just says, "You should go talk to them." like you need to go talk to those people. The people that he rejects everything we say. He won't listen to us. He won't quit his job. We offer to help him find a new job. All that kind of stuff. Totally rejected us. But when he saw that, he's like, in a sense, he's saying the Lord has done great things for them. Like, you need to go talk to them. Now, what if we He sends them over to us and we're just like, no, go back to him and let him tell you. No, no, no. the Lord has done great things for us. Let us tell you, let us offer help. It's the same way that even the heathens recognize this guy's like, "Hey, where you're at, these people have good news for you." And we

did. We said, "The Lord has done great things for us and he can for you, too." By the way, that baby is alive today. The mom came out, took our counsel, took a reversal pill. The baby's alive. We threw a baby shower for those parents. The baby is, I think, a little over three years old now because I believe my wife was pregnant about the same time. And not too long ago, that mom saw our family picture on Facebook and sent my wife a picture of all four of her kids with that three-year-old baby and just said, "I saw your family picture. I saw you had another baby when Sibyl was born, our youngest." And she said, "I just want to say thank you again. Here's a picture of my three-year-old daughter who's alive." That's not the main point of this, but praise God for that, right? The Lord has done great things for us. Christians should praise the Lord by telling of his great work for us. Never letting the nations go, "Well, the Lord has done great things for them." Like, that's right. He has. We're going to tell you about it. The Lord has done great things for us. Do you say that? Do you tell people that? Let me tell you what the Lord has done for me. Or are you so in the mud with proper doctrine and Calvinism that you're like, "No, sharing the gospel is never telling my testimony." That's what a lot of Calvinists do. And they're right. Me sharing my testimony, that's not the same as sharing the gospel. But you should share your testimony. Let me tell you what the Lord has done for me. And don't leave out what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for sinners and then tell them to go to Christ. The gospel is not this is what the Lord has done for me. But the gospel is what Christ has done and how you should go to Christ for salvation. But don't separate them. Tell people say among the nations the Lord has done great things for us. We should sing that in praise as this psalm tells us to. And we should shout that in evangelism and tell people what the Lord has done for us. There are so many people who are still enslaved. They still have guilt of sin. They still are enslaved by their sin. They need to hear the gospel and they need to just hear from you. Let me tell you what the Lord has done in my life. He offers this salvation to you too. He will receive you. He will change you. He will give you eternal life. The Lord has done great things for us. So we should praise him by telling of his great works for us. Look then at the last part of verse three and see that Christians should praise the Lord by telling not only what the Lord has done. The Lord has done great things for us but telling of the results of the great things for us that he's done. Not only this is what the Lord has done for me, but tell people of the results just like the psalmist does. What does he say? We are what? Glad. That's the results of the great things the Lord has done. We are glad. We are happy. We are joyful. William S. plumber says, "The conversion of the soul from sin to holiness is itself a greater wonder of mercy than God ever works for the unbelieving world." Indeed, the whole work of redemption is so stupendous execution and application that to eternity God's people will not cease to admire it. How can the poor sinner saved by grace, snatched as a brand from the eternal burning, ever cease to celebrate the amazing love of God and the wonders he has wrought? Amen. You should you should learn from this from this psalm. where we're at so far. You may not have any idea this psalm is actually about people that are in the midst of suffering, but it is. We are glad is what he says right here. We

are joyful. We are happy. But then he's going to go right after that into verses five and six and say, "And we're weeping. We're sorrowful. We're downcast. You have restored and we still need more. We need help.

Learn this. At the very least, joy, happiness is not necessarily dependent on the present. These people aren't in a state that's like everything's going extremely well right now, so I am so joyful. No, they're right in the middle of sewing with tears. sorrow, sadness, suffering and still they could say we are glad. Why? Because joy is anchored in past providences and joy borrows from the future. Joy is not dependent on the present. But just like this psalm shows, we are glad. Why? Because the Lord has set us free. Because he's restored the fortunes of Zion. It's too good to be true. We are glad. You mean you're not suffering? No, we're suffering terribly. Life stinks. But we're glad. We're joyful because joy is anchored in what God has done. And joy borrows from the future promises of God, what we know he will do in the future. If you remember the past providences of God's grace as well as trust the future promises bought by Christ's blood for you believer, you can have joy even in the midst of life's greatest storms. Joy is not necessarily dependent on the present. It's anchored in past providences and borrows from future promises. We need Christian meditation. All that means is to slow down, be quiet, and think. Christian meditation meaning what the Lord has done for us in Christ Jesus, his redemption for us and then even little deliverances that the Lord has provided for us in the past. Think about that. And then trust the promises revealed in scripture for the future that have not yet come true, but they're going to anchor in the past, borrow from the future. If you have Christian meditation coupled with simple faith, the river of joy will never run dry. No matter where you're at right now, yay, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil. I will fear no suffering. for you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. Surely goodness and mercy will follow me all the days of my life. And I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Because the Lord is my shepherd. I shall not want.

So learn beloved, learn to say we are glad even in the midst of suffering because you can look back at what God has done in Christ and you can look forward to the promises and what he will do in Christ. Now much more quickly, the second question we need to ask so we can study and apply this psalm is this. How should those still awaiting redemption by Christ think and act as they wait? Those who are waiting for it, who have more, it's like, yes, he's delivered us from the penalty of sin, but I need to be set free more and more from sin's power in temptation. I I'm in the midst of suffering. He's delivered me from specific afflictions in the past, and I'm back in one, and I need deliverance. I need redemption now. What should we do? Look at verse four. Christians should cry out to God in prayer.

You still need to be redeemed from something. Should cry out to God in prayer.

Restore our fortunes, O Lord. Like streams in the NGB. The NGB or the NGV sometimes called is the southern part of Judah, the southern part of this kingdom right now that's being written on the way in southern part of Judah to the Sinai pen peninsula. You can look at it even right right now today on a map. It's a desert. It's a barren wasteland. He's saying we're in the desert. Restore our fortunes, Lord. We're suffering. We're dry. Restore our fortunes. And I'm not saying it has to make sense like streams in the NGB. Like all of a sudden rivers appear in the desert. That's what we need. I'm not saying Lord, would you just and however I think it would make sense like nope. I'm dry. I need your help. I don't care if it makes sense or not to me as much as it wouldn't make sense for all of the sudden a stream to appear in the NGB. So that's what he's talking about. John Trap says, "These April showers bring on May flowers and make the heart to be like a watered garden. Besides an access of glory, for they that weep with men shall laugh with angels. Their tears shall be turned into triumphs, their sadness into gladness, their sighing into singing, their musing into music. Restore our fortunes, oh Lord, like streams in the NGB. When you pray and ask the Lord for help, for deliverances, for redemption, however big, however small, it doesn't have to make sense to you how the Lord is going to fulfill your petition. Does that make sense? It doesn't have to be, Lord, would you just? And it's like you've got it kind of figured out in your mind that the Lord like nope. You can just you're like Lord please save this person. Lord please help me to be happy. Lord please help me kill this sin. Lord please help me have wisdom in this situation. It's like just ask and it can make as much sense as streams appearing in a desert. But pray. How should we what should we do who are still awaiting? We still need to be delivered from something or redeemed from something. Christians should cry out to God in prayer for sanctification, for freedom from suffering, freedom from sadness, for renewal in an individual, me or someone else, for revival in the church, for reformation in the world. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the NGB. So cry out to God in prayer. Secondly, look, are we still awaiting redemption by Christ, you need to learn in verse five, though a Christian's eyes may be filled with tears, we must not lose heart because we have great promises. Though a Christian's eyes may be filled with tears because of sorrow, because of sadness, because of sin, because of brokenness, we must not lose heart because we have great promises. Verse five, perhaps the easiest one to memorize in this whole psalm. Those who sew in tears shall reap with shouts of joy. Boys and girls, look up here. Sowing and reaping. Sow; reap. Sowing, reaping. Sow means plant. Reap means like pick or pluck or harvest. Okay? So, boys and girls, when you hear sewing and reaping, you will you'll read that multiple times in the Bible as you grow up. We don't use that as much those words quite as much as sewing and reaping. We use more like plant and harvest or plant something and pick something. So, boys and girls, have you ever planted something at your house or someone else's and then it ends up growing and then you go out and pick whatever grew. Have you done that? Have you ever gone to a blueberry farm or whatever you would call it and they have planted vines grow up and then you go and you get to pick them and fill up a bucket. You done that?

That's sewing and reaping. A farmer sews and then reaps. And what the psalmist is saying here in Psalm 126 is even if the only thing you're sewing is your tears, the only thing you're planting is your tears because of sadness. Because life is hard, because you're suffering. If you're a Christian, you know what's going to grow? Happiness. Eventually, there will be no more tears. And the only thing that's coming up is happiness because of Christ Jesus. Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy. Believers, that simple verse should be a bedrock, a comfort to you because many times you and I will be sewing in tears. Does he say may reap with shouts of joy? Hopefully reap with shouts of joy. What does it say in your Bible? Shall will. That's the word. This is not, you know, hopefully things are going to get better. This is not how just people in the world say, don't worry, it's going to get better. You should say to them, how do you know? And if they point you to scripture or they've got a general understanding of, well, God is going to work all things together for good for those who love him and are called according to his purpose. Like, okay, I believe you. Then why do you think things are going to get better? Well, because you're united to Christ. And we have Psalm 126:5. Those who sew in tears shall reap with shouts of joy. So though a Christian's eyes may be filled with tears, we must not lose heart because we've got great, great promises.

Dear ones, you need to know there is no flood of suffering that Jesus hands will not stop and dam up. There are no harms that he will not heal. There is no sadness his face will not cause to melt away. There are no tears sown that he will not make grow into shouts of joy. Take that to the bank. Now in verse six, the psalmist transitions from the plural we to the singular he. So it moves from we. We were like those who dream. We are glad. And I think in God's kindness, this song ends in the individual way and the particular way for the believer that might be just like you. It's like, yeah, these truths are true for us, us who are in Christ, we together. And then it gets singular. What that means is this. If you trust in Christ with a simple faith, this is a direct promise not just for the church in general, which still belongs to you if you're part of Christ's church, if you're really a believer, but it gets specific and it's a promise directly to each of you individually. He who, not we anymore. So look at it when the psalm ends with a very particular thing a direct promise to you Christian. He who goes out weeping bearing the seed for sewing shall come home with shouts of joy bringing his sheaves with him. It's the general promise in verse five that those who sew in tears shall reap with shouts of joy. And then it gets expanded in verse six in a way to say because verse 5 is true, keep doing your duties even while you're crying. Keep doing your duties. Keep trusting the Lord and walking in obedience even while you're weeping. He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sewing. He who still does his duties, trusting the Lord, and not just saying, "I'm so sad that I can't obey Christ or I can't keep doing my duties." No, it's he who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sewing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him. If you're still waiting redemption by Christ in particular things from indwelling sins or suffering or sadness, you must do your duty even through tears. for you will reap if you do not

give up. And so just for this last verse in conclusion, examine yourself. Have you let your tears keep you from sewing good works? Or can you say, I'm going to bear the seed for sewing. I'm doing my duties that the Lord has assigned to me. I'm just suffering while I do it. I'm weeping while I do it. Or have you let your tears, your suffering keep you from doing good works? Have you allowed your weeping to keep you from proclaiming the truth of God's word, the truth of God's gospel, the truth of God's law? Have you let your suffering choke out your duties?

Let me just end with these exhortations. Do not let your tears keep you from sewing good works. You must not let your weeping keep you from proclaiming the truth of God's word and his law, and his gospel. You cannot let your suffering choke out your duties. He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sewing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him. When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter and our tongue with shouts of joy. Then they said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them. The Lord has done great things for us. We are glad. Restore our fortunes, O Lord, like streams in the NGB. Those who sew in tears shall reap with shouts of joy. He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sewing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him. Praise be to God for his word. Pray with me. Our father, we ask you to give us joy as we anchor our faith in what you have done for us in Christ Jesus. What you have done for us through your spirit, what you have done for us through adopting us into your family. and help us to borrow from the future as we depend on your promises and trust that you will work all things together for our good, even and especially when we have no idea what you're doing. Help us to have joy in the midst of any circumstance because we could be anchored in what you have done and borrowing from what you've promised to do. Help us to be faithful even when we are sowing or even when we are weeping because of suffering. That you help us to do our duties and trust your providence. We ask that you would save those who are not yet united to Christ through faith. Sanctify those who are in Christ's name. Amen.