



PSALM EMOJIS (Week 4) - Remembrance

Welcome Prayer:

To all who are weary and need rest. To all who mourn and long for comfort. To all who feel worthless and wonder if God cares. To all who fail and desire strength. To all who sin and need a Savior. This church opens wide her doors with a welcome from Jesus Christ, the Ally of His enemies, the Defender of the guilty, the Justifier of the inexcusable, the Friend of sinners. Welcome.

I think we most often need to be reminded about what God has done when He doesn't seem to be active in the present. Or when we seem to be experiencing setbacks. How

about this? When God appears to have let us down. Have you ever been in an emotionally downward spiral? Maybe you're in one now. It seems we need a Psalm of remembrance when we're in the midst of a prayer of lament, when we're falling into a hole of depression that we can't pull ourselves out of.

Psalm 105

Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name;
make known his deeds among the peoples!

That's what this song is about — remembering all that God has done in the past so that we might trust Him in the present.

When is it most difficult to trust God in the present? When you feel like you've failed or when you feel like He is silent.

Personally, I hate the imperfections of humanity, as many people do. This is why so many biographies often leave out the warts of their subjects. This has changed, but even in Christian history there is a tendency to leave out the troublesome aspects of our past. How many churches recount their history accurately and honestly? Probably not many. This Psalm reminds us not to look

to ourselves and our weaknesses, but to God and His strength.

We want to remember what God has done in the past so that we can trust Him in the present.

2 Sing to him, sing praises to him;
tell of all his wondrous works!

These are praises about His past exploits.

This is why Christians have a history of singing about the cross. You can't tell of a more wondrous work than the cross of Jesus Christ. People sing about a lot of things, but there is no other gathering of people who come together to sing about the same Person, other than Christians. Concerts are primarily about the performer, not the subject of the songs. Good Christian songs are centered in Christ and what He has done.

3 Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice!

4 Seek the Lord and his strength;
seek his presence continually!

When we don't feel like God is intervening presently, when we don't feel like His hand is reaching down and shifting things around in

our lives, when His presence seems distant, that's when we need to be reminded of how He has acted in the past. Otherwise, we find ourselves discouraged. And discouragement can lead to giving up.

We need a song of remembrance.

5 Remember the wondrous works that he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he uttered,

God's word and God's works are side by side.

His word confirms His ways.

6 O offspring of Abraham, his servant,
children of Jacob, his chosen ones!

This is a reminder that all our blessings were planned in the past.

7 He is the Lord our God;
his judgments are in all the earth.

- ***The Onion Satire* - God Angrily Clarifies 'Don't Kill' Rule** - "Somehow, people keep coming up with the idea that I want them to kill their neighbor. Well, I don't. And to be honest, I'm really getting sick and tired of it. Get it straight. Not only do I not

want anybody to kill anyone, but I specifically commanded you not to, in really simple terms that anybody ought to be able to understand."

8 He remembers his covenant forever,
the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations,
9 the covenant that he made with Abraham,
his sworn promise to Isaac,
10 which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute,
to Israel as an everlasting covenant,
11 saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
as your portion for an inheritance."

It's reminding us of the story of redemption here. It's reminding us of a story that begins before the foundation of the world and goes for thousands of generations. That there was a promise of land for God's people, that He took care of their physical needs, but there was also a promise of an everlasting covenant. This is the good news of the gospel, which takes care of us in every way, physically and spiritually.

- **You need to remember this as you grow old.**

The physical promise

Genesis 15

18 On that day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, “To your offspring I give this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates,

The everlasting promise

Genesis 22

17 I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, 18 and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice.”

Psalm 105

12 When they were few in number,
of little account, and sojourners in it,
13 wandering from nation to nation,
from one kingdom to another people,
14 he allowed no one to oppress them;
he rebuked kings on their account,
15 saying, “Touch not my anointed ones,
do my prophets no harm!”

In this song we find a summary of God's dealings with His people, that God took someone of no account, a man named Abraham, and from this man created a great nation through which every nation on the face of the earth would be blessed by a

single descendant of Abraham. That single descendant is Jesus Christ, who by all accounts is doing exactly what this story promises, blessing people from every nation on the face of the earth.

Then the Psalmist reminds us of how God dealt with Joseph.

16 When he summoned a famine on the land
and broke all supply of bread,
17 he had sent a man ahead of them,
Joseph, who was sold as a slave.

So, lemme get this straight? This bad situation was ordained by God? There is no way around it. Being sold as a slave is not a blessing. It's a bad thing. It's a horrible situation, one that would cause many of us to cry out that a great injustice has occurred in the universe. Where are you in this, O God? Why did you not hear my pleas? But God ordained this bad situation, because it says God summoned and God sent.

18 His feet were hurt with fetters;
his neck was put in a collar of iron;

We can only imagine Joseph's emotional state, because when things go badly for us we usually interpret it as God being upset

with us, assuming He's disciplining us in some way. Sometimes that is not the case. God simply has plans for our bad situation.

19 until what he had said came to pass,
the word of the Lord tested him.

Hard circumstances test us. Can you still believe God is good in bad circumstances? Can you still believe God will show grace when you fail? Can you still believe God loves you when He seems distant? Does God's love cover the multitude of your sins? Is grace all pervasive or not?

In this story, we often focus on Joseph. He's the one sold into bondage. He's the one in bad circumstances. But this week my focus turned to two of the other brothers in this account — Rueben and Judah.

Genesis 37:18-30

18 They saw him from afar, and before he came near to them they conspired against him to kill him. 19 They said to one another, "Here comes this dreamer. 20 Come now, let us kill him and throw him into one of the pits. Then we will say that a fierce animal has devoured him, and we will see what will become of his dreams." 21 But when Reuben heard it, he rescued him out of their hands, saying, "Let us not take his life."

So, here is Joseph's brother Reuben who is doing his best in spite of the circumstances to rescue him. The circumstances being that the rest of his brothers want to do Joseph in. Have you ever tried to stand against a majority? It's not an easy thing, is it?

22 And Reuben said to them, "Shed no blood; throw him into this pit here in the wilderness, but do not lay a hand on him"—that he might rescue him out of their hand to restore him to his father.

It's stated again in the text here that Reuben is trying to rescue Joseph.

23 So when Joseph came to his brothers, they stripped him of his robe, the robe of many colors that he wore. 24 And they took him and threw him into a pit. The pit was empty; there was no water in it.

25 Then they sat down to eat. And looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels bearing gum, balm, and myrrh, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and let not our hand be upon him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers listened to him. 28 Then Midianite traders passed by. And they drew Joseph up and lifted him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty shekels of silver. They took Joseph to Egypt.

29 When Reuben returned to the pit

It is implied in the text that after Reuben put his rescue plan into place, he left his brothers for a period of time. Maybe he was attending to some work related matter. We don't know, but when he comes back...

and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes 30 and returned to his brothers and said, "The boy is gone, and I, where shall I go?"

Reuben feels the weight of personal responsibility for Joseph and when he sees that his plan has failed, he feels a deep sense of failure. Even though he didn't do this, he still feels a sense of failure because he felt personally responsible.

So, Joseph is sold into slavery despite his brother Reuben's best attempt to rescue him. Let's pick the story back up in Psalm 105.

Psalm 105

20 The king sent and released him;
the ruler of the peoples set him free;
21 he made him lord of his house
and ruler of all his possessions,
22 to bind his princes at his pleasure
and to teach his elders wisdom.

Now what becomes interesting about the account of Joseph is that in the end we would expect the hero of the story to be Reuben who tried to save Joseph and return him to his father. But the brother who steps up and offers himself in place of his younger brother is Judah, the very brother who brainstormed selling Joseph into slavery.

There can be redemption in your greatest failure, because our God is a God of redemption.

There can be redemption in your bad circumstances because God plans your bad circumstances. God has plans for your worst life now.

23 Then Israel came to Egypt;

Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham.

24 And the Lord made his people very fruitful
and made them stronger than their foes.

Greater blessing came out of this bad situation. In God's economy, good things come from bad things. Light shines in darkness. Receiving comes from giving. Gaining comes from losing. Living comes from dying.

25 He turned their hearts to hate his people,
to deal craftily with his servants.

26 He sent Moses, his servant,
and Aaron, whom he had chosen.

27 They performed his signs among them
and miracles in the land of Ham.

28 He sent darkness, and made the land dark;
they did not rebel against his words.

29 He turned their waters into blood
and caused their fish to die.

30 Their land swarmed with frogs,
even in the chambers of their kings.

31 He spoke, and there came swarms of flies,
and gnats throughout their country.

32 He gave them hail for rain,
and fiery lightning bolts through their land.

33 He struck down their vines and fig trees,
and shattered the trees of their country.

34 He spoke, and the locusts came,
young locusts without number,

35 which devoured all the vegetation in their land
and ate up the fruit of their ground.

36 He struck down all the firstborn in their land,
the firstfruits of all their strength.

37 Then he brought out Israel with silver and gold,
and there was none among his tribes who stumbled.

38 Egypt was glad when they departed,
for dread of them had fallen upon it.

Greater blessing came out of this bad situation.

39 He spread a cloud for a covering,
and fire to give light by night.

40 They asked, and he brought quail,
and gave them bread from heaven in abundance.

41 He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed through the desert like a river.

42 For he remembered his holy promise,
and Abraham, his servant.

**All the blessings, all the miracles, everything
that God does in our lives flows from this one
blessing — the Lord Jesus Christ.**

43 So he brought his people out with joy,
his chosen ones with singing.

44 And he gave them the lands of the nations,
and they took possession of the fruit of the peoples' toil,

45 that they might keep his statutes
and observe his laws.

Praise the Lord!