

“To a Thousand Generations—*Faithful!*”

Psalm 105

November 24, 2024

When our kids were young, we would sometimes read a Dr. Seuss book called *Horton Hatches the Egg*. It’s the story of an elephant who was asked by a lazy bird to sit on her egg so that she could forsake her responsibilities to go have a good time. Horton the elephant sat on that nest through storms, summer heat, freezing cold, and even ridicule. But he was faithful to his promise with his famous words: “*I meant what I said, and I said what I meant. An elephant’s faithful, one hundred per cent!*”

To what lengths will you go to keep a promise?

- “I’ll give you a call next week.”
- “For better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness or in health, till death do us part.” (Dad & Mom – 60 years ago I made a promise that we would never be apart, and I won’t forsake it now. We’ll stay together.)

Psalms 105 & 106 are a pair. And together they recall and celebrate the *lengths to which God went to keep a single promise* to Abraham. Psalm 105 records the positive activity of God’s providence over generations from Abraham to Egypt to the promised land. Psalm 106 magnifies God’s faithfulness even further by highlighting the unfaithfulness of His people that He patiently endured. In other words, it’s one thing to go to a lot of trouble to help someone (Ps 105). It’s quite another when they just grumble the whole time (Ps 106). God’s faithfulness is astounding!

What we are going to see in Ps 105 is God’s faithfulness to work by His mighty hand, across the earth and throughout the generations, to keep a single promise to His people. The tremendous encouragement of Ps 105 is this: **Because God is faithful to a single promise through every generation, it is guaranteed that our faithfulness to God’s word will not be in vain, but rather be met by God’s supreme faithfulness to His word.**

As we trace the faithfulness of God through the generations of Ps 105, we’ll discover multiple reasons to give thanks to the Lord.

1. **Give thanks to the Lord by celebrating His wondrous works and His faithfulness to His word** (vs. 1-11).

[vs. 1-4] The Psalmist begins with a call to action. This call to action is a call to exuberant praise and thanksgiving; a call to promote Yahweh’s fame among all people. Notice the multifaceted aspects of this celebration: give thanks, call on His name, sing praises, tell of His works, glory in His name, rejoice, seek the Lord, seek His strength, seek His presence continually!

Why? Because we know from God’s miraculous works that His strength is unlimited, and His presence is our assurance of victory. But what good would God’s power and presence be if He were not faithful to uphold His word in every generation with authority in any situation? So the Psalmist declares that God’s word bears authority over the whole earth. **[vs. 7]**

By the way, do you remember the key message of the Exodus? *Yahweh is the Lord and there is no other. His glory is unrivaled in all the earth!* This is the very conclusion that the Psalmist has come to in vs. 7. Then to demonstrate God’s faithfulness, he highlights a single promise, a key promise to Abraham in vs. 8-11, that he will spend the rest of the Psalm tracing through multiple generations to prove God’s faithfulness. **[8-11]**

All of God’s wondrous deeds that we are about to see are demonstrations of Yahweh’s faithfulness to a single promise. And church, this is not just for Israel. Yahweh is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. All that God has done is our heritage. This is the heart of thanksgiving in every age: acknowledging who God is, what He has done, and His faithfulness to His promises.

2. **Give thanks to the Lord for His protection, His provision, and His mercies of affliction** (vs. 12-22).

[vs. 12-22] The Psalmist gives us 3 examples of God’s faithfulness. The first is God’s *protection* in vs. 12-15. When God’s people were vulnerable because they were just a small group of nomads, wandering from nation to nation, God protected them from kings who could have oppressed them. You may

recall that twice Abraham asked Sarah to tell a half-truth (a lie) that she was his sister because she was beautiful, and he feared that Pharaoh (king of Egypt) and Abimelech (king of Gerar) might take his life to have his wife.¹ Isaac did the same thing a 3rd time with Rebecca because He feared Abimelech for the same reason.² These kings could have easily swallowed up the Hebrew people, were it not for God's hand of protection on them.

The second scenario has to do with God's *provision*, raising up Joseph to spare God's people in a time of famine (16-22).

Notice a certain rhythm in these verses.

- "When they were few in number...He allowed no one to oppress them..." (12, 14).
- "When He summoned a famine, He sent [Joseph] ahead of them..." (16, 17).

Life Principle - God not only protects, provides, and extends mercy, He also governs that very circumstances in which we need protection, provision, and mercy.

We dare not miss the providence of God in the Psalmist's account, regarding the hardships they endured:

- God summoned the famine (vs. 16)
- Yet before the famine, God had already sent Joseph ahead to not only rescue his people, but to be tested by many afflictions (19). Certainly, it was Joseph's brothers that sold him into slavery by their own wicked desires, yet not apart from the hand of God working out His plan of mercy. This is why I used the phrase *mercies of affliction*. God used Joseph's affliction as a means of mercy to elevate him to the right place at the right time to be God's deliverer for His famished people.

In the words of an old Puritan, "**We greatly mistake if we do not rank afflictions among our mercies**" (Scott).³ *Never underestimate how God may be working through your afflictions to manifest His love and mercy to you.*

¹ Gen 12; 21

² Genesis 26

Illus: Rachel's car (one affliction was God's mercy to 3 families)

3. **Give thanks to the Lord for lavishing blessing on His people and exacting justice on the wicked (vs. 23-36).**

The blessing is in [vs. 23-24] (note: the land of Ham is Egypt). The Psalmist is referring to God's people multiplying in number from a family of 70 to a million men plus women and children while they were in Egypt. God caused them to flourish and become stronger than their enemies, even though they were slaves.

As we move to vs. 25, once again Yahweh is governing the circumstances of their affliction: "He [Yahweh] turned [the Egyptians'] hearts to hate His people, to deal craftily with His servants."

Life Principle: *The desires of men are subject to the decrees of God.* This does *not* mean that every desire we have is from God. But what it *does* mean is that is that God can turn the hearts of even our enemies to favor us or disfavor us according to His sovereign plan. Here God turns their hearts against His people so that He can display His unrivaled glory through the judgments He brought on Egypt and the deliverance He gave to Israel. Later He would turn the hearts of the Egyptians to favor His people so that they could plunder their silver and gold (vs. 37; cf. Ex 11:2-3).

Now in vs. 26, God provided Moses just as He had earlier provided Joseph. Moses and Aaron performed signs/miracles, but the Psalmist emphasizes that it was *God* who was doing the supernatural.

- God sent Moses and Aaron (26)
- God sent the darkness (28)
- God turned their waters to blood (29)
- God spoke and brought flies and gnats (31)
- God gave them hail for rain (32)
- God struck down their vines and trees (33)
- God spoke and the locusts came (34)
- God struck down the firstborn of Egypt (36)

³ W.S. Plumer, *Psalms* (Geneva Series), pg. 939.

- God brought Israel out with silver and gold

All of these judgments God brought on Egypt for their wickedness, but also to show His mercy to Israel by delivering them from slavery. I'm not going to take time to comment on each of the plagues, since we just covered them in Exodus in the last few weeks, but take note that *God is driving agent behind everything in this Psalm*, whether blessing, mercy, or judgment. Psalm 105 has almost 60 references to God in just 45 verses. The Psalmist intends to promote a God-centered perspective of history and all of life.

By the way, it is probably for poetic reasons that the list of plagues here is not exhaustive and not in order. Also, let me just comment on vs. 28 where it says "they did not rebel against His words" when God plagued them with darkness for three days. Though this is the first plague mentioned here, it is actually the ninth. By this time only Pharaoh was holding to his stubborn policy of retaining the Israelites. His advisors had no desire to continue resisting Yahweh's commands (Ex 10:7). The point of vs. 28 may be that God is ruling over the hearts of the Egyptians. He is in charge, ensuring that His plans will be accomplished. *The desires of men are subject to the decrees of God.*

4. **Give thanks to the Lord who redeems and sustains His people by His unlimited sufficiency** (vs. 37-41).

[vs. 37] In other words, no one was left behind. God delivered every last one of His children from Egypt. And they did not come out empty-handed. God gave them favor so that the Egyptians gave them gold and silver for their journey. Notice how God is reversing the fortunes of His people from being taken advantage of as slaves, to plundering their slave masters. The point is that *God has absolute freedom to reign over the affairs of man as He chooses.*

[vs. 38] God turned the hearts of the Egyptians from disfavor to fear. He caused the fear of the Lord to fall with dread on His enemies. Then in vs. 39, God provided the pillar of cloud by day and the pillar of fire by night to guide and protect His people—a constant reminder of His presence with them. In vs. 40 He provided quail and manna to feed them. In vs. 41 He supplied

water from a rock to sustain them. *There is absolutely nothing that can limit the Creator's ability to provide for His people.*

5. **Give thanks to the Lord for generations of faithfulness to a single promise, so that we also might be faithful to obey His word** (vs. 42-45).

Vs. 42 gives the reason for all that God has done since the time of Abraham—all that God has done to keep a single promise. **[vs. 42-44]** The Promise was stated in vs. 9-11, a promise to Abraham and His descendants that He would give them the land of Canaan as an inheritance. Vs. 44 now testifies to the fulfillment of that promise. And everything between vs. 11 and vs. 42, demonstrate the lengths to which God would go to keep this one promise!

- He would protect them as wandering, vulnerable nomads.
- He would send a famine to lead them to Egypt.
- He would raise up Joseph and turn his many afflictions to mercy and favor to preserve His people.
- He would bless His people to multiply and provoke the fear and hostility of the Egyptians.
- He would send the 10 plagues on Egypt to display His mighty power, reigning down judgment on Egypt and her gods while creating a highway of deliverance for His people.
- He would give His people favor with their enemies to provide silver and gold.
- He would part the Red sea and deliver his people—every last one—from slavery to freedom.
- He would provide his presence and guidance through the pillar of cloud and fire.
- He would provide meat, bread, and water in ways no human being could have imagined or accomplished.

And He did all of this to not only keep a single promise to Abraham, but to also make it possible for His people to replicate His faithfulness to His statutes and laws. **[Vs. 45]** God's faithfulness to His word for a thousand generations (vs. 8), is the grounds for our faithfulness to God's word. In other words, it is reasonable to trust in God and be faithful to Him because of His faithfulness. ***Our faith and our faithfulness to God's word is based on***

God's faithfulness to His promises. If God has been faithful to His promise through every generation, then your faithfulness to God's word is guaranteed to be met with His faithfulness and favor.

As I was reflecting on Psalm 105 this week and all the extravagant ways that God has worked to deliver, establish, and bless His people, I couldn't help but think of a portion of the Passover celebration (Haggadah) called the Dayenu (day-a-new) which expresses the extravagance of all that God has done in kindness to His people—far beyond what we deserve. In the *Messianic* celebration of the Passover it goes something like this:

God has done many things for us.

If God had brought us out of Egypt, and had not punished the Egyptians, *it would have been enough.*

If God had punished the Egyptians but not destroyed their gods, *it would have been enough.*

If God had destroyed their gods but not opened the Red Sea for us, *it would have been enough.*

If God had opened the Red Sea for us but not kept us alive for 40 years in the wilderness, *it would have been enough.*

If he had kept us alive in the wilderness but not supplied us with manna, *it would have been enough.*

If God had fed us with manna and not given us his law, *it would have been enough.*

If God had given us his law but not given us his Son, *it would have been enough.*

But praise the Lord! God has given us freedom from the slavery of sin through Jesus our Lord!

After this portion of the Passover, they might sing a song like this:

Come let us sing, let us rejoice!
Come let us sing, let us rejoice!
Messiah's come, and He's brought life!
And He's put laughter in my soul!

**Come let us sing, let us rejoice!
Come let us sing, let us rejoice!
Messiah's come, and He's brought life!
And He's put laughter in my soul!**

**It would have been enough
If He'd brought peace,
It would have been enough
If He'd brought joy,
It would have been enough
If He'd brought love,
But He's put laughter in my soul!**

**Come let us sing, let us rejoice!
Come let us sing, let us rejoice!
Messiah's come, and He's brought life!
And He's put laughter in my soul!
And He's put laugh-ter in my soul!
HEY!**

Oh beloved, the Exodus of the OT is but a precursor that points us to the ultimate Exodus in which Jesus would deliver us from the slavery of sin, the bondage of Satan, and the wrath of God. Why? To display His matchless glory by lavishing us with mercy, grace, forgiveness, favor and joy!

Just consider the lengths to which God went to keep yet another promise that He would send a Messiah, greater than Moses, to ultimately deliver His people from hearts of stone and give them tender hearts in which the Spirit would live write the law of God on their hearts. Consider the lengths to which God would be faithful so that we too could be faithful to Him.

He would perform a miracle so mind-blowing that it would make the 10 plagues of Egypt look juvenile in comparison. God, the eternal, infinite One, would take on the frailty of human flesh—the divine nature and human nature becoming one! He would be born of a virgin, make his bed in a stable-manger, grow up in a poor family, face and fully endure every temptation of childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. He would be persecuted by the world yet never sin.

And Yahweh would govern the afflictions of His life and the hearts of His enemies such that He would be nailed to a Roman cross to bear the sinful hatred of men and the holy wrath of God. He would give His life as the ultimate Passover Lamb of God, taking our place and shedding His blood for the forgiveness of sin. Then 3 days later, God would raise Him to life again as the only Savior of the world worth believing in. And those who trust in Him receive the Holy Spirit, God Himself, to live in them and empower them to love and obey God faithfully from a new heart.

[vs. 1-4] Yahweh is the Lord our God, and Yeshua is His Son. His glory and grace is unrivaled in all of creation and all of time.