

PONDERING HIS WORKS

Psalm 107 ends with this simple phrase: “Let the wise ones consider the steadfast love of the LORD.” This line is a reflection on all that’s been said from 102 until 107, a little unit specifically is united by the theme of Yahweh’s “works.” This sermon series will go through each of these Psalms bringing us through a season of intentionally reflecting upon God’s work of creation and salvation despite continual human failure. God still does mighty things to bring people out of the darkness and into his light. Praising Yahweh is the proper response.

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PSALM 102

Lament and affliction is the context by which we consider the steadfast love of the Lord. Experience of evil is often the starting point.

Hear my prayer, O LORD; let my cry come to you! Do not hide your face from me in the day of my distress! Incline your ear to me; answer me speedily in the day when I call! For my days pass away like smoke, and my bones burn like a furnace. My heart is struck down like grass and has withered; I forget to eat my bread. Because of my loud groaning my bones cling to my flesh. I am like a desert owl of the wilderness, like an owl of the waste places; I lie awake; I am like a lonely sparrow on the housetop. All the day my enemies taunt me; those who deride me use my name for a curse. For I eat ashes like bread and mingle tears with my drink, because of your indignation and anger; for you have taken me up and thrown me down. My days are like an evening shadow; I wither away like grass. But you, O LORD, are enthroned forever; you are remembered throughout all generations. You will arise and have pity on Zion; it is the time to favor her; the appointed time has come. For your servants hold her stones dear and have pity on her dust. Nations will fear the name of the LORD, and all the kings of the earth will fear your glory. For the LORD builds up Zion; he appears in his glory; he regards the prayer of the destitute and does not despise their prayer. Let this be recorded for a generation to come, so that a people yet to be created may praise the LORD: that he looked down from his holy height; from heaven the LORD looked at the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners, to set free those who were doomed to die, that they may declare in Zion the name of the LORD, and in Jerusalem his praise, when peoples gather together, and kingdoms, to worship the LORD. He has broken my strength in midcourse; he has shortened my days. "O my God," I say, "take me not away in the midst of my days—you whose years endure throughout all generations!" Of old you laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They will perish, but you will remain; they will all wear out like a garment. You will change them like a robe, and they will pass away, but you are the same, and your years have no end. The children of your servants shall dwell secure; their offspring shall be established before you. — Psalm 102

1. The heading on this Psalm says that it can be used to pour out a complaint before the Lord. In your conversations with the Lord, what's the difference between lament and sinful complaining (Do all things without grumbling or disputing, that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world — Philippians 2:14-15)?

2. Share with your family, friend or small group a time in your life where you felt as lonely as “an owl in the waste places (ancient ruins).”

3. What does this Psalm teach us about the character of God?

4. In this Psalm, the circumstances of the lament never seem to be changed. How is the Psalmist able to get to the hope of verse 25-28? How do we move from lament to hope in our lives?

PSALM 103

The Lord works justice and righteousness. He is faithful and always deserving of praise.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name! Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the LORD shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust. As for man, his days are like grass; he flourishes like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him, and his righteousness to children's children, to those who keep his covenant and remember to do his commandments. The LORD has established his throne in the heavens, and his kingdom rules over all. Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of his word! Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers, who do his will! Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul! — Psalm 103

1. What do you think it means to “bless the LORD?” When is a good time to command our souls to bless Him?
2. Which of the benefits listed in verses 2-5 do you struggle to remember?
3. What is the measure of God’s steadfast love towards his followers? How have you experienced his steadfast love?

5. Why does the psalmist command the angels and the “hosts” to bless the Lord? Does this mean we have a higher rank than the angels and can give them direction?

PSALM 104

The wonder of natural creation and its revelation of God's love/care. God even rules over the evil that has since taken root.

Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with splendor and majesty, covering yourself with light as with a garment, stretching out the heavens like a tent. He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters; he makes the clouds his chariot; he rides on the wings of the wind; he makes his messengers winds, his ministers a flaming fire. He set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be moved. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place that you appointed for them. You set a boundary that they may not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth. You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills; they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild donkeys quench their thirst. Beside them the birds of the heavens dwell; they sing among the branches. From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. You cause the grass to grow for the livestock and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine and bread to strengthen man's heart. The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon that he planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the rock badgers. He made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting. You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep about. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. When the sun rises, they steal away and lie down in their dens. Man goes out to his work and to his labor until the evening. O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Here is the sea, great and wide, which teems with creatures innumerable, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan, which you formed to play in it. These all look to you, to give them their food in due season. When you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are created, and you renew the face of the ground. May the glory of the LORD endure forever; may the LORD rejoice in his works, who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke! I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD. Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD! —Psalm 104

1. What about this Psalm sticks out to you?

2. As we live our lives, there are moments and places where we stand in awe of God's work of creation. What's been one of those moments or places for you?

3. Verse 19-23 direct us to think about God's creation of time and how he made the rhythms of days, nights, months and years. God's creation is ordered and structured. How does this passage relate to our struggles with anxiety?

4. What does verse 27-30 teach us about God? Why is this important to know?

5. At the end of the Psalm, the author identifies two groups people can be a part of: those for the glory of the Lord and those who are sinners. How does this Psalm direct our hearts in this choice?