



LOVING THE GOD OF THE GOOD NEWS

- Psalm 116:1 I love the Lord, because he has heard
my voice and my pleas for mercy.
2 Because He inclined his ear to me,
therefore I will call on Him as long as I live.
3 The snares of death encompassed me;
the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish.
4 Then I called on the name of the Lord: "O Lord, I pray, deliver my soul!"
5 Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; our God is merciful.
6 The Lord preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me.
7 Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you.
8 For you have delivered
my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling;
9 I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.
12 What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?
13 **I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord,**
14 **I will pay my vows to the Lord** in the presence of all His people.ⁱ

May I ask you something? *Do you **love** the Lord?*

If so, how does it **show**? What I mean is: Because you love the Lord, if you do, what do others see in you and hear from you, that makes your love for the Lord unmistakably clear *to them*?

I ask this question because I'm convinced this Psalm does, Psalm 116. Whoever wrote this (under the inspiration of God's Spirit) was obviously completely overwhelmed by how the Lord responded when he cried out for help.

116:3 The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me; I suffered distress and anguish. 4 Then I called on the name of the Lord:

The result?

8 [For] You have delivered
my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling;
9 I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

"There is," notes Erwin Lutzer, **"more grace in God's heart than there is sin in your past."**

Faith is a gaze of a soul upon a saving God.

A. W. Tozer, *The Pursuit of God*

But someone who loves the Lord for His saving work in their lives *does more than gaze*. The

Psalmist asks (116:12) *What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits to me?* Answering his own question, this worshipper pledges 3 things (vss.13-14).

- ***I will lift up the cup of salvation*** – very likely, the Psalmist has in mind the cups of wine that were lifted up and taken in during the Passover meal, cups signifying the steps of salvation based God promised to a captive Israel in Exodus

Exodus. 6:6-7 “Say, therefore, to the sons of Israel, ‘I am the LORD, and **I will bring you out** from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and **I will deliver you** from their bondage. **I will also redeem you** with an outstretched arm and with great judgments. ‘Then **I will take you for My people**, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.

- *Cup 1 “I will bring you out”* *The Cup of Sanctification (set apart to God)*
- *Cup 2 “I will deliver you”* *The Cup of Deliverance (from plagues, judgment)*
- *Cup 3 “I will redeem you”* *The Cup of Redemption (blessing)*
- *Cup 4 “I will take you for My People”* *The Cup of Praise/Hope/Full Salvationⁱⁱ*

What this singer means is that he will **both eagerly thank God** for his salvation and **openly declare what the Lord has done** to rescue Israel as a nation and him personally as a worshipper

That’s what someone does who loves the Lord!

- ***I will call upon the name of the Lord*** – this is a statement of daily dependence on the Lord for one’s life (cf. vs. 2). I will openly declare the Lord’s salvation, and I will live in daily dependence on Him.
- ***I will pay my vows to the Lord*** – To put that plainly, I am committed. What I’ve promised Him, I will do. What He calls me to do, I will do. Where He calls me to go, I will go. Sometimes, in days of difficulty, those in the Old Testament made “vows” to the Lord.ⁱⁱⁱ From the belly of the great fish, Jonah said, “With the voice of thanksgiving I will sacrifice to you, what I have vowed I will pay. Salvation belongs to the Lord” (2:9)

Let me bottom-line this for us? What does this ancient Psalm teach? Simply this...

When we love God (and because we love God)

(for all that He has done for us in salvation)

we love to share what God loves to do

(He loves to rescue people)

Which leads us back to the first two questions: If we are rescued people (i.e., Christians!)...more personally, if God has delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, **do I genuinely love God?** Do I? And if I say I do, **how does it show?** Because we love God, do we love to share what God loves to do?

Welcome to **WINSOME!** For 10 weeks at the beginning of this new year, we are out to explore what “loving to share the good news” means. We want to be honest with God and with ourselves with

our 4th Life Question: *I put out a welcome mat toward Jesus. How much wear is it getting? (i.e., How worn is my welcome mat?)*

Answer: it gets much more “wear” when we genuinely love God, demonstrating that love in sharing with others what God loves to do. So, with your permission, let’s do some more inquiring.

#1 WHY do we love God? No one makes it clearer than the Apostle John:

¹ John 4:8b God is love. ⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰ In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹ Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

¹ John 4:16 So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love, and whoever abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him...¹⁹ We love (Him) because He first loved us.

One of the greatest truths found in the Scriptures is simply this. **God loved us before we ever started loving Him.**

- the crafting of a magnificent creation for the joy and benefit of mankind all began with the initiating love of God. God created because God is love, and **a true lover always wants to give**; he is never motivated by wanting to take.
- the search for Adam and Eve hiding in shame in the garden was a search by a loving God who would not allow the couple he created to stay imprisoned in their sin and guilt
- God said to Israel,
Deut 7:6-8 “For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, ⁸ but it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt
- Deut 10:14-16 Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.*
- Paul wrote it to the Romans:
Romans 5:6-9 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die— ⁸ but God shows (“demonstrates,” NASV) his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. ⁹ Since, therefore, we have now been justified by his blood, much more shall we be saved by him from the wrath of God.

To bring this home, let me offer you a portion of the story of Paul Chang-Ha Lim, now the professor of the History of Christianity at Vanderbilt University...but he didn’t start out that way. He grew up an

atheist – stubbornly so – and matriculated at Yale as an atheist. At school, he drank with his buddies, played cards, and went to class. But he had no use for God, nor for any of his relatives who believed in God. They were all losers. He deeply loved his mother, who prayed for him...and begged him to go to a Christian Retreat where his future brother-in-law (another “loser”) who had dropped out of med school to go to seminary, would be speaking. He went to please his mother, and he hated the whole weekend until...well, listen to what happened.

VIDEO – the testimony of Dr. Paul Lim <https://vimeo.com/382224904/9850fcf12a>

“As God was addressing me.” Why do we love God? Because...He loved us first.

#2 **WHAT does God love to do?**

He loves to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10)

(1) **because SALVATION is the relentless theme of the Bible**

In his excellent article found at biblestudytools.com, William T. Arnold says it: ***Broadly speaking, one might say that SALVATION is the overriding theme of the entire Bible.***

The Biblical writers speak of salvation as a reality with at once spiritual and physical, individual and communal, objective and subjective, eternal and historical dimensions. Despite the importance of human agency, salvation is attributed above all to God. None but God can save (Isaiah 43:14, Hosea 1:7).

From God’s cry in Genesis garden to Adam and Eve, “Where are you?”
To God’s promise in the wake of sin, “The woman’s seed will crush the serpent’s head”
To God’s call to Abraham, “I will bless all the earth’s families through you”
To God’s rescue of the slaves in Egypt
SALVATION IS GOD’S PASSION

From the Promises in Psalms that a righteous King will arrive on earth
To the angel’s word to Joseph that Mary’s son “save His people from their sins”
To the shouts of Peter and the Apostles to repent for the forgiveness of sins
To the multitudes shouting around Revelation seven’s throne
**SALVATION BELONGS TO OUR GOD WHO SITS
ON THE THRONE AND TO THE LAMB...**

He loves to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10)

(2) **because JESUS always FISHED** (i.e., the teaching and living) for people

Jesus challenged his disciples: “*Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*” (Mark 1:17).

(Mark 1:35-38) ³⁵And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. ³⁶And Simon and those who were with him

searched for him, ³⁷ and they found him and said to him, “Everyone is looking for you.” ³⁸ And he said to them, “Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out.”

Mark 2:16-18 And the scribes of the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?” And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

Celebrating Zaccheus’ conversion, he said, “*The Son of man has come to seek and to save that which is lost*” (Luke 19:10)

He loves to seek and to save the lost (Luke 19:10)

(3) because of the rescue of our own lives

Here’s the truth – one of the most compelling things you and I can share with others is simply what Paul said about himself. He said it, and we can say it. “You know what? If God was willing to save me, He can save and rescue anybody!” Paul put it like this –

1 Timothy 1:15-17 It is a trustworthy statement, deserving full acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, among whom I am foremost of all. *Yet for this reason I found mercy*, so that in me as the foremost, Jesus Christ might demonstrate His perfect patience as an example for those who would believe in Him for eternal life. Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen.

To the Corinthians that he unpacked his motivation – not surprisingly, it was LOVE:

2 Corinthians 5:14-21 For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

¹⁸ Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, ²⁰ Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Because SALVATION is the relentless theme of God’s Word
Because JESUS always FISHED for people
Because of OUR RESCUE by the Lord...



GETTING THE MOST FROM THE WEEKS TO COME

Getting the most out of...



- (1) **PRAY** – ask the Holy Spirit for something new in you
- (2) **DO** THE CGS with your group...sharpen each other
- (3) **ACCESS** 
- (4) **USE** the devotional coming next week 
- (5) **ASK** the Lord to open a door w/ someone lost

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¹ Not quoted in the delivery of this teaching were the following verses from Psalm 116

¹⁰ I believed, even when I spoke: "I am greatly afflicted";

¹¹ I said in my alarm, "All mankind are liars."

¹⁵ Precious ("costly") in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.

¹⁶ O Lord, I am your servant; I am your servant,
the son of your maidservant. You have loosed my bonds.

¹⁷ I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving
and call on the name of the Lord.

¹⁸ I will pay my vows to the Lord in the presence of all his people,

¹⁹ in the courts of the house of the Lord, in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the Lord!

ⁱⁱ referenced from <https://graceintorah.net/2016/02/11/the-four-cups-of-passover/>

ⁱⁱⁱ in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary*, Volume 5 (Psalms-Song of Songs), Frank E. Gaebelin, Gen.Ed., (Zondervan, 1991), Willem A. VanGemeren, "Psalms" pp.723-729.