

Psalm 106

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[0 : 00] So as we turn to God's Word, let's pray before we begin. Once again, and this time that God would open up His Word and show us specifically, even in this text, in Psalm 106, where we might look for our hope.

We saw last time in Psalm 89 that we look back, but where do we look ahead? And how does looking back, even though it shapes our praises and our problems, our prayers, how does looking back shape even what we see before us?

Let's pray just for wisdom and guidance and understanding. Heavenly Father, this is Your book. This is Yours before it is anybody else's. And we confess that and believe that.

If it's not, Lord, we pray we're not wasting our time. We pray it is Yours.

We pray as it is Yours that You would make known to us Your Word. You have in here descriptions of the history of Your people. And yes, we step back from the focus on David.

[1 : 20] We step back to see broader what You had done in Your people. But show us the implications, God, for our lives ahead of us.

Beginning now, but going forward from here. Show us now the implications of Your Word. Show us now even coming off of the darkest part of the Psalms, and even here, we're before the climax.

We don't get the hope yet of what comes in Book 5. But at least give us the certainty that comes in Book 4 of the Psalms.

We pray, Lord, that You would take this and make this Word, Your perspective of the world, our perspective. Some of us in here, we don't believe this.

We're struggling. We don't see the relevance. We sit in these seats every week, and we don't even understand what's being talked about.

[2 : 26] I pray You would break in, break through, and bring order out of the chaos, and light out of the darkness, and fill what is empty.

Do it like You once did it. May we stand on that. I pray You would glorify Yourself through it as we proclaim Your glory, and as You proclaim Your glory through us to the nations.

I pray You would do it for Jesus' sake. Amen. So if you would, turn in your Bibles to Psalm 106. This is where we're going to be focusing our attention on what brings the fourth book of the Psalms to a close.

And I said before, these are the Psalms that answer the darkness. And maybe they don't answer it like we would hope. Maybe they don't answer it as we would like them to.

But they do answer it. They answer it by stepping back. They answer it by showing us and putting it into perspective. And so keep your ears open.

[3 : 49] It may not sound like the answer, the definitive answer that will come in history. But it is the answer we can stand on because God who did it will do it again.

That's where we're going tonight. Psalm 106. It's on page 608 and 610 in the Red Bibles. I mentioned before about this answer to the questions that we're left with from Psalm 89 and how we step back.

Here we find in this fourth book first Moses in Psalm 90 beginning the collection and then David reappears a few times, most significantly reflecting on Moses and his ministry.

And then we have a great creation psalm that steps back even further in Psalm 104. And then these last two psalms that recount the history of God's people from Abraham to the promised land.

They step back. I told you that before. This final psalm, though, is... This final psalm, what I want us to see it like is this.

[5 : 03] Have you ever watched a great detective movie? There's a few that have been produced over the years, a great detective movie.

Every great detective movie, you're drawn into it, into whatever crime has been committed or whatever plot that the detective, the hero is trying to uncover.

You're drawn into it from the beginning. You watch three quarters through the movie, an hour, an hour and a half into it. Nowadays, you could watch two and a half hours into it and have no resolution. You watch so far into the movie and you're left, though, at that point, you're wondering, what on earth?

I cannot understand what is going on. And guess what? Even the hero of the story, you're looking at him and you're saying, this guy does not understand what's going on.

Three quarters of the way through, an hour and a half into it. But every good detective movie has that moment. That moment when everything shifts.

[6 : 13] And it's usually the hero that sees it first. Then you see this flashback. And all the scenes, you've already watched.

You thought you watched them so carefully. You thought you saw everything. You took note of everything, every piece that was out of place. You thought you knew them. But then you watch, and just a slight tilt of the light brings something out that you didn't quite see.

And then another scene, and you missed something else. And then another, and you see something that you didn't see before. That aha moment.

This psalm is like that. This psalm is like that. We are well into the psalms. We have been at the height of David and his line.

Our king, the anointed one, in whom we would take refuge. We've been there, and then we lost it. And we're looking around. What on earth do we do with this?

[7 : 24] Where do we go from here? I cannot understand how this will all come together. Who will make this garden grow? If this is what it looks like, all it seems is that our gardener has abandoned us.

But in this psalm, we step back. And it goes through a flashback of the history of Israel. And every once in a while, there are few, and they're so tiny.

Every once in a while, there's a glimpse. You say, aha. I didn't see that before. There. There. I thought I knew that story.

I didn't see that. I wouldn't have seen that if we were just watching this in time, right? The hour and a half it took us to get through all these scenes.

But then in 30 seconds, I see it. And that's what this psalm does. And that's what we need to look for as we see here.

[8 : 28] You can do this. Also, it's with the other psalms too. These aha moments. You step back in the fourth book of psalms and you say, wait a minute, there's something there that explains not just what happened, but what will happen.

And so tonight, we're looking for those aha moments. We get to the climax of the story next week in the fifth book of psalms. When God resolves these issues, he breaks in and he does it.

But for now, we look back and we see, aha, there's resolution here. We can see things differently if we just take a moment. What we're going to do tonight is just walk through this psalm and just try and catch the glimpses that change perspective on what has been and show us the perspective of what we need of everything that's yet to come.

It's a change in perspective. And we're going to see it. We're going to see three, three of these glimpses and we're going to try and catch them. So like any good detective film, you know, you've watched Psalm 106 here.

This is a good chunk through. But like any good detective film, the aha moment doesn't start with us. It starts with the detective.

[9 : 54] In this case, it starts with the psalmist, the guy who's trying to figure this all out. So look in verse one at how this all starts. He says, praise the Lord, worship the Lord.

The psalmist, the psalmist has had his moment. Worship the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His love, his commitment to the relationship he has with his people.

His love, his unwillingness to falter in the relationship he's entered into. This love endures forever. Who can proclaim the mighty acts of the Lord or fully declare his praise?

The psalmist has seen it already. And now he needs to show us. He says in verse three, blessed are they, happy are they. Happy are they, he says, who, and hear this, who maintain justice, who observe justice, and who constantly do what is right.

Literally, it says, blessed are they who do righteousness at all times. We've got to read this, this call to righteousness.

[11:03] He's had his aha moment. We need to see it even here at first. What he's saying, right, he's saying in this aha moment, he's bringing us back to the beginning.

I think most of us, we could read this, right, blessed are those, happy, if you want happiness, maintain justice, do what is right, all the time, most of us, would walk out of the room. We'd just leave right now. If that's the aha moment, I would say, okay, I haven't done it. Can't do it. Sorry, I know that. I failed enough at that. I don't have faith in myself to do it.

But remember, he's reading this within the book of Psalms. So he's taking us back to Psalm 1. And he's saying, blessed are they who do righteousness.

How do you do righteousness? We know. We already know if we read this in context that righteousness is done when you delight in the word and you find refuge in the sun because you can't do it.

[12:07] Because you can't do it. There is no answer in and of ourselves. Doing righteousness is being found in the way of righteousness.

No doubt being found in that way, it will change and affect and perfect us in our lives as we travel this road. But righteousness is not, in the end, perfection in us.

It's a way aimed at being perfected. And you hear that. He's hearkening back and he's saying, I see this. Don't get lost.

106 Psalms later, blessed are those who do the righteous way, who do righteousness. Look in verse 4. He says, Remember me, O Lord.

He's having this aha moment. He steps back. He's not even telling us yet. He instead directs himself to the Lord. He knows something we don't. Remember, O Lord, when you show your favor to your people, come to my aid when you save them that I may enjoy the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may share in the joy of your nation and join your inheritance.

[13:22] The rest of us are asking, what prosperity? What joy? What inheritance? But he goes on.

We ask, how does this guy have so much confidence? How does this psalmist who penned this psalm, how does this guy have so much confidence?

106 psalms later, right after the darkness of Psalm 89. Show us. Show us. And so, the flashback begins.

He says in verse 6, We have sinned even as our fathers did. We've lost our king. We've lost our land. We've lost our world as it's falling to pieces.

It doesn't sound so different from the world we live in, so we should relate to this. We've lost everything and we know it's happened because of us.

[14:22] We've sinned. Left to ourselves, we sin. There's no hope of us fixing things. We make the garden worse if it's by ourselves.

He says, we have done wrong and acted wickedly. We have gone the way of the wicked. Again, it's echoing Psalm 1. Blessing comes to those found in the way of the righteous, but we've been found in the way of the wicked.

We're off track just like our fathers. And the way of the wicked does not lead to the life of happiness. Verse 7, when our fathers were in Egypt and were just like them, they gave no thought to your miracles.

They did not remember your many kindnesses. And they rebelled. They did not remember and they rebelled by the sea, the Red Sea. How fickle our memories are.

We end up on these roads. We end up in these predicaments where the garden just looks like a mess. Why? Because we forget God.

[15:34] we forget God and we end up wandering away from Him. I probably have, at this point, I probably have thousands, thousands of times in my life, moments, and I would stop and say, at this moment, this moment, I will remember.

This moment will change me because I will remember what God's done for me. and it will shape my tomorrow. And if you ask me right now to name one of them, I probably couldn't.

Our memories are so, so fickle. And I would imagine that most of us have those in our past. Times when we've said, God's goodness is shining on me now, I will never forget.

Name one. And if you can name one, I'm sure you can't name close to everything. Our memories are so fickle.

Our memories are so fickle. And it takes no longer than an hour, maybe less than that, to forget. We forget God and what He's done and so we wander away from Him.

[16:56] But look at verse 8. The light shifts. The light shifts and it's our first clue. While His people were wandering away, it says, yet.

Yet. Yet. A lot of times we don't think of a word like this as having much significance. It's such a small word.

Can you imagine life without the yet moments? Without the yet moments. I remember a time when I was dating Catherine.

I remember this time. I was dating her. She was grown up. She was gorgeous. And I was much less grown up, much less gorgeous. And then I took her to meet my family.

And if I thought I was not grown up before that, I was really not grown up with my family. It took a day or two and it ended up being Christmas Day that I remember Christmas Day, we left Christmas Day.

[18:03] And it wasn't like leaving across town like you do one family, you do the other. No, we left Christmas Day from my family to drive the 10 hours on Christmas Day back to her house to drop her off.

and that was going to be the end. I remember this drive. But I also remember when I dropped her off and then turned around to go back to my crazy family.

I remember that an hour into that drive back, there was a phone call. And on the other side of that was Catherine. And it wasn't the end.

It was a real yet moment. Everything was over yet, she called. Could you imagine life without the yet moments?

And not just with your girlfriends, as important as that is in life, but with God? We're looking back here, we're looking back through the history of Israel and there's a yet moment.

[19:14] And yet, it wasn't the end. In a lot of ways, it's the yet moments that define us. And they're definitely the clues that stick out in the middle of the chaos of life.

It says, yet he saved them. They were going their own way, wandering their own way down the path of the wicked, following the way of the world. Yet he saved them for his name's sake to make his mighty power known.

It's not us, it's him. We can't do it, he can. If we're left to ourselves, we wander. Yet if he intervenes for his name's sake, and I'm glad it is because if it was for my name's sake, it's not much of a reason, it's not much of a chance to save us collectively, let alone me.

But for his name's sake, if that's why he intervenes, there's hope. There's hope. And whether it's the psalmist looking back at what God did in the days of Moses, or us looking back at what he did in the days of David, our hope is in the God who's done it.

He's done it. And he's left around the garden. If we look at the story, he's left clues. We see a tree that's been pruned.

[20:35] It may look like it's being overrun at the moment, but there's evidence there that someone was here. There's shape to this garden. It might be that things have intruded, and we've brought things in.

But there's a shape and a story still here. You can still see it. And you can still point back and say, this is where he was. This is a time he intervened.

We know he's a God who does that, and we can hold on to it. The first clue. Verse 9 goes on, though. He rebuked the sea, and it dried up.

This is how he saved them. He led them through the depths as through the desert. He saved them from the hand of the foe, from the hand of the enemy. He redeemed them. The waters covered their adversaries. Not one of them survived.

Then they believed his promises and sang his praise. They worshipped him again, and they believed his promises. They put faith, belief, in his promises.

[21:45] For what? Maybe because the promises were good. Probably especially the promises were good for them. So they believed, and they worshipped, a good thing.

But unfortunately, it doesn't last. If all we're ever putting faith in is in the promises of the future, we find very quickly how little we're changed in the present.

If the only object of our faith is the promises God makes, it doesn't transform us. The hard reality comes in verse 13.

Remember, we have no ability to do this ourselves. But they soon forgot what he had done, and they did not wait for his counsel.

Their memories failed them and left to themselves. They wandered again. In the desert, it says, they gave in to their craving. In the wasteland, they put God to the test. So he gave them what they asked for, but sent a wasting disease upon them.

[22 : 47] In the camp, they grew envious of Moses and Aaron who was consecrated to the Lord. So the earth opened up. What happens when we go our own way? It buried the company of Abiram.

Fire blazed among their followers. A flame consumed. The wicked found back, wandering their own way. They're consumed by the flame.

The darkness, again, we see it as it's flashing past our eyes. Left to ourselves, we wander our own way, but given enough time, just like our fathers, we eventually take action to turn away from God altogether.

Verse 19 marks that transition from, yes, belief, but forgetting, wandering, but then taking action against God.

It says in, it says in verse 19 at Horeb, at Sinai, they made a calf and worshipped an idol cast from metal. They exchanged the glory for an image of a bull which eats grass.

[23 : 53] Why? Why would you do this? Because, verse 21 says, they forgot that the God who had saved them, who had done great things in Egypt, miracles in the land of Ham, awesome deeds by the Red Sea.

It's so easy, it's so easy to forget and exchange something so infinitely wonderful for something so much infinitely less saving or satisfying.

So what does God do? Verse 23, so, he said he would destroy them had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him to keep his wrath from destroying them.

But look at what happens, that's nothing, his mediating for them is nothing. God's hand is stayed and verse 24 says, then they despise the pleasant land.

They did not believe his promise. Why? Why? Saved by grace and they despise, spared, and they do not believe. How could that be? And I imagine it's a little like the faith many of us could have placed in our dads growing up.

[25 : 04] A good job, hard working, even, maybe even a loving dad. A dad, you could put your faith in, right? I believe in him because he provides for me.

He's always provided for me and I can't imagine him not providing for me. But what happens when he loses his job?

What happens when the oil fields dry up? Or what happens when he's asked by his boss to fudge the numbers a little bit and he walks away from his job for good reason and the family suffers and goes through a time where they can't make ends meet?

For many of us and especially as kids growing up and kids as it might be for you today, for many of us you put us in that position where we can't get the latest iPhone and our faith in our father proves faulty.

we put faith in him we put faith right? They put faith in his promises because the promises are good for us. But when daddy has to discipline us or daddy has to make a hard decision you know we can get very angry very quickly.

[26 : 26] Talk about faith saving it's not faith in the promises it's faith in the promiser it's hugely different.

It's hugely different. we turn so quickly on God.

We can turn so quickly when we don't see him one weed pops up and what do we do in the midst of darkness? We can turn so quickly on God.

In verse 25 we read that the people of God grumbled in their tents and they did not obey the Lord so he swore to them with uplifted hand that he would make them fall in the desert make their descendants fall among the nations and scatter them throughout the lands.

So they turned against him they yoked themselves to the Baal of Peor this was an idol of the time a god of the storm as it were and they ate sacrifices offered to lifeless gods they provoked the Lord to anger by their deeds and the plague a plague broke out among them but but verse 30 says there was one and the light shifts again there was one this time Phineas who stood up and intervened and the plague was checked and look at what it says of this guy this Phineas in verse 31 it says this

was credited to him his standing up intervening was credited to him as righteousness for endless generations to come this was credited to him as righteousness if you're at all familiar with the Bible these words should sound strangely familiar there's only one other person in the Bible described as one to whom his actions his belief in God was credited to him as righteousness it was a man to whom the promises were first given a man back in Genesis 15 named Abraham who God promised a land a people and a blessing that would cover the whole world and there was nothing in this guy's life that looked like a land at that time he had nothing the most he ever had in his life in terms of land was a graveyard and a people he was nearly a hundred years old when these promises were made to him and his wife couldn't have kids and there was nothing in his life that could remotely be pointed to as a blessing that would cover the whole world and yet Abraham believed God and it was credited to him as righteousness this is the shifting of the light saying everybody's going the way of the wicked everybody left to themselves not only wanders but they turn and run and yet there is a way to be found credited for all generations as one righteous and it's back to that same thing it's belief but this time it's not belief in promises it's belief in the one who gave them and Abraham even at times we read in his story at times at the promises he even laughed because he thought the promises were so ridiculous but God he believed in there's a way there's a way back there's a way and there's someone in whom we can put faith who will do it faith in the promise the promise keeper verse 32 goes on it says by the waters of Meribah people once again angered the Lord and trouble came to Moses their leader because of them for they rebelled against the spirit of God and rash words came from Moses lips even our leaders fail us right even Moses failed us he cannot do it himself the garden will not grow under his care left to himself if we're left to ourselves even our best fall

[31 : 27] we start by wandering away eventually we run away finally give it enough time we don't only run away we actually turn back against God this is what we do if we're left to ourselves if God takes away from us the grace in our lives this is what we will do wander turn to run turn to attack this is what we see in verse 34 this is what they do they did not destroy the peoples of the Lord he had commanded them to destroy but they mingled with the nations they did the complete opposite and listen to these verses in verse 36 they worshipped their idols they sacrificed their sons and daughters they shed innocent blood they defiled themselves and therefore the Lord was angry with his people and abhorred his inheritance he handed them over to the nations and their foes ruled over them their enemies oppressed them and subjected them to their power many times he delivered them but they were bent on rebellion and they wasted away in their sins left to ourselves this is us but yet yet yet look in verse 44 he took note of their distress when he heard their cry for their sake he remembered his covenant and put and out of his great love he relented and he caused them to be pitied by all who held them captive it's not exactly the ending we would like to hear he caused them to be pitied what good is that we'll turn to that in a minute but listen they worshipped others they sacrificed they shed innocent blood they defiled themselves and he took note he heard he remembered he relented and he by making the nations pity them he was not done with them they wandered away they ran away they they went as far as turning against him because they had forgotten but he remembered he remembered his covenant and his love and his faithfulness for now for now it's their sake you see the last time the light shifts in this flashback is to highlight that God is not done with the story yes he's done it we saw that he wasn't done with his people at that time when he was bringing them out of the land of slavery he wasn't done with his people when he was bringing them out of exile but also he isn't done now he did it once he saved them before he will save again he isn't done now as we wait for the return of the one mediator our new

Moses who came and did what Moses couldn't do before him and showed us the path he showed us this one showed us the path and provided us the path of righteousness he's not done even bringing back our one king three clues these are three hints three in the midst of a flashback three moments to show us that it is only the gardener who can make the garden grow and even if it looks like he's done he's not far away he's not gone completely we've seen him do it right we've seen him do it the path to growth the path the way of righteousness it may be the road less traveled but it has been traveled and it can be by those who put their faith in God not just in God's promises for God's sake they do this and the

God who saves them and he saves them for his name's sake but it's also it's also showing us that it's the God who who's not done with the story they're pitied by the nations they're they're they're

there they're saved they're they're kept even in exile does this it should ring some bells in your life do you ever feel in exile I mean this is how we're addressed right in first Peter you ever feel in exile well being in exile is the very proof that God is not done with the story if he did it before being in exile means he's not done being here the story is not finished and with God not being done with the story we can cry out with the psalmist in verse 47 save us oh

Lord our God and gather us from the nations that we may give thanks to your holy name and glory in your praise praise be to the Lord the God of Israel the God of the people of God then and now and forever from everlasting to everlasting let all the people say amen a God who did it a God who's worth putting your faith in and a God who will do it again in the past putting your faith presently in him and he will do it again in the future this is the answer that the fourth book of the psalm gives us before the climax we see that next week before the climax it refocuses us by stepping back and seeing the big picture it gives us hope in the midst of chaos it takes us from looking back and merely having it shape our past coming coming up behind you who doesn't know

Jesus as long who doesn't know the word from psalm one and two you focus them you get them you proclaim to them that their happiness is rooted in their delight in the law of the Lord in the word of God and in his anointed one in his king who's coming and coming again pick three relationships and said last week what do you do with those is you mainly what you do with those is when you get together you know coffee is good and tea is good and pudding is always good here in Scotland but what do you do with that is more than just coffee and tea and pudding you do in those relationships as you take initiative to focus your time whether you're praying or reading the bible or anything you tell the story you tell the great story that we're wrapped up in today is just a reminder on top of that very simply a reminder on top of that we can tell the story we have a knack and maybe you can echo this we have a knack of telling our story and absolutely missing the point and we can recount even the stories of the bible we could recount them and it could be like one of those stories where we're recounting them to somebody and by the end of it we're saying you know there was a punchline to this thing but

[40 : 17] I just don't remember we have a knack for leaving out the important piece Psalm 106 refocuses us and says when you tell the story not just looking back but looking forward remember that the center of it the pieces that we often miss that we need the light to tilt and highlight for us and emphasize the pieces that we don't see but the pieces that bring the biggest aha moments are the pieces of God when you tell the story you need to remember that the story is not about us primarily if you focus on us you miss the point if you focus on God you actually turn out with a better story for yourself as well you have to remember God as the one who's done it the one in whom we trust and put our faith and believe in and the one who will do it again and if you miss that you're not really telling the story so in your relationships as you become a psalmist as you draw people to the word and to the king and you tell the story you make sure the story is enveloped in God and you don't lose sight of the big picture it's just a reminder from this perspective but let's we'll finish here and we'll sing from Psalm 106 we'll sing the closing the beginning and the closing verses of this psalm we'll sing verses 1 to 5 and 43 to 48 to the tune of St.

Leonard we'll stand and sing again Psalm 106 we'll sing verses 1 to 5 and 43 to 48 it's in Sing Psalms on page 140 and 143 would you stand and sing praise the Lord praise the Lord exon his goodness for his love endures always who can tell his mighty actions Lord horn Gary to declare his praise.

Blessed are those whose ways ride, acting justly in his sight.

When you show your people favor, let, O Lord, remember me.

Help me when you come to save them, let me know prosperity.

[43 : 25] Joyful with your chosen race, joining them in giving praise.

Many times he showed his power by delivering his own.

But they set their hearts on sinning and rebel against his throne.

In their sin they chose to stay, and in his way quite a way.

But when they appealed for mercy, he tuned notes in heaven above.

[44 : 29] He recalled his covenant with them, and remnant in his love.

So he made their captors all, with his own sin held in throne.

Gather us, Lord, from the nations, save us and your name we'll praise.

Blessed be the Lord of Israel, May his glory pass always.

Let the Lord be praised again, Let the people say amen.

[45 : 32] As you leave this week, and you go back out into the world, I pray that you would go with the aha moments.

That no longer coming to Psalm 106, you'd ask the questions, how does this guy find assurance and certainty and security in the midst of what I see in my world?

But that you would be that one who others ask of you, how has that person found security, significance, and everything that goes with it?

How has that person found it? And may you answer by drawing them back to the story. That's nothing less than God's story. Amen. Amen.