

## Psalm 107

### Consider God's Grace

Ignatius, having been condemned by the Romans to execution, wrote to his friends in Rome asking them not to seek his release, by appeal or by rescue. He has been cheering his heart with contemplations of Christ, and is desirous to honor Christ in his martyrdom and to finally be free from his corruption in the presence of Christ. He wrote: "From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, both by land and sea, both by night and day, being bound to ten leopards, I mean a band of soldiers, who, even when they receive benefits, show themselves all the worse. But I am the more instructed by their injuries to act as a disciple of Christ; yet am I not thereby justified. May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray they may be found eager to rush upon me, which also I will entice to devour me speedily, and not deal with me as with some, whom, out of fear, they have not touched. But if they be unwilling to assail me, I will compel them to do so. Pardon me in this: I know what is for my benefit. ***Now I begin to be a disciple. And let no one, of things visible or invisible, envy me that I should attain to Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross; let the crowds of wild beasts; let tearings, breakings, and dislocations of bones; let cutting off of members; let shatterings of the whole body; and let all the dreadful torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ. . . . Him I seek, who died for us: Him I desire, who rose again for our sake. This is the gain which is laid up for me. Pardon me, brethren: do not hinder me from living, do not wish to keep me in a state of death; and while I desire to belong to God, do not ye give me over to the world. Suffer me to obtain pure light: when I have gone thither, I shall indeed be a man of God. . . If anyone has Him within himself, let him consider what I desire, and let him have sympathy with me, as knowing how I am resolved.***" (Epistle of Ignatius to the Romans)

No wonder then that he gave his friend Polycarp this counsel in a final letter to him: "Weigh carefully the times. Look for Him who is above all time, eternal and invisible, yet who became visible for our sakes; impalpable and impassible, yet who became passible on our account; and who in every kind of way suffered for our sakes." (Epistle of Ignatius to Polycarp)

When you are in bitter circumstances, you can consider God's grace to stir your soul to give thanks to the Lord.

1. The Lord graciously uses various troubles to cast you on His mercy (107:4-7, 10-14, 17-20, 23-30).
  - a. *Merlin* series: Merlin secretly uses magic to rescue Arthur in perilous situations, but Arthur, being unaware of Merlin's assistance, glories in self-congratulation as well as in the praises of others for his prowess. Only to the knowing TV viewer is his pride revealed as vain pomp.
  - b. Because of our dullness, we easily forget God. We imagine that we are getting along pretty well by our own wits. Ironically, trouble that is obviously bigger than you, can be a great friend to lead you to greater reliance on Christ.
  - c. The allusions of this Psalm to Isaiah's Servant Songs propel our application forward to the person and work of Jesus Christ.
  - d. Psalm 107:7 to Isaiah 45:11; 49:11 to John 14:6
  - e. Psalm 107:14 to Isaiah 49:9 to Matthew 4:16
  - f. Psalm 107:20 to Isaiah 55:11 to John 1:1-18
  - g. Psalm 107:29-30 to Isaiah 42:10 to Mark 4:35-41
  - h. Through the Incarnate Word God works your ultimate redemption, as He triumphs over your enemies (107:33-41). SC Q. 26 How doth Christ execute the office of a king? Christ executeth the office of a king, in subduing us to Himself, in ruling and defending us, and in restraining and conquering all His and our enemies.
  - i. You can gain insight into your troubles by considering God's grace to you in Christ (107:43).
  - j. Meditation:

- i. Philippians 4:8 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.*
  - ii. **Plan time for meditation.** “It should be the wisdom of Christians to guide their affairs with such judgment that duties may not become a burden and a weariness.” (Thomas Manton, *Sermons Upon Genesis 24.63*, Works vol. XVII, 267)
  - iii. **Motivate yourself with need for hope.** “Our hopes arise according to the largeness of our thoughts. . . Men of barren thoughts are usually of low hopes, and for want of getting to the top of Pisgah to view the land, our hearts sink within us. (271)
  - iv. **Motivate yourself with loveliness of God.** “Thoughts are at the service of love; we pause and stay upon such objects as we delight in.” (271) “Delightful objects will engross the thoughts.” (272)
  - v. **Constrained by the Word.** “The Word feeds meditation. . . We have a heretic in our own hearts . . . for men would be vain in their imaginations were not their thoughts corrected by an external light and instruction.” (272) “Do not pry further than God has revealed.” (278)
    1. Study should precede meditation
    2. Explore facets of the truth, like holding a diamond up to the light and observing brilliance from multiple angles.
  - vi. **Be careful and reverent.** “When you meditate of God you must do it with great care and reverence; His perfections are matter rather of admiration than inquiry.” (278)
  - vii. **Watch out for “slightness.”** “A glance doth not discover the worth of anything; he that doth but cast his eye upon a piece of embroidery doth not discover the art of it.” (280)
  - viii. **Draw down to application.** Useful to me, my wife, my children, my church, friends, etc.
  - ix. **Don’t stop until you profit with raised affections or strong resolutions towards God.** “A serious consideration of the excellency of Christ is that which ravishes the heart.” (276)
  - x. **Followed by prayer and thanksgiving.** “What we take in by the Word we digest by meditation and let out by prayer.” (273)
  - xi. Psalm 63:5-7 *My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food, and my mouth will praise You with joyful lips, when I remember You upon my bed, and meditate on you in the watches of the night; for You have been my help, and in the shadow of Your wings I will sing for joy.*
2. The Lord graciously delivers you to stir your thanksgiving (107:1-3, 8-9, 15-16, 21-22, 31-32).
- a. The need to be stirred up to thanksgiving implies that your current situation threatens to produce bitterness, rather than thanks.
  - b. A key indication of human depravity is a thankless attitude toward the gracious Lord (Romans 1:21).
  - c. Colossians 3:17 *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*
  - d. 2 Corinthians 9:15 *Thanks be to God for His inexpressible gift.*
  - e. He delivered us from the desert by thirsting in our place. He delivered us from darkness and the shadow of death by suffering death and rising again with the keys of death and hades. He delivered us from sin-inflicted sickness as the Word from the Father who took on flesh, and in his body bore our sins. By His stripes we are healed. He delivered us from the sea, so that His congregation not only crosses through the sea on dry ground, but stands on the sea, victorious over the enemy (Rev. 15:2).