



WBC Verse for the Year 2020

‘The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness’
(Lamentations 3 verses 22-23)

Psalm 116

A summary, with some things to reflect on.

A video of this is on Youtube <https://youtu.be/1GhsmtcXK1E> or our website - wychwoodbaptist.org.uk/resources/midweek-reflections/

We continue looking at this short selection of psalms (113-118) which were used at yearly passover celebrations. This week we are in Psalm 116, in which the psalmist speaks of his ongoing love and devotion to the LORD, because God has heard his cry of anguish, and delivered him.

READ: PSALM 116 verses 1-4

A cry in anguish - ‘O LORD, save me!’

Our psalm opens with a summary declaration of love for God, because he has heard and responded to the Psalmist’s cry for mercy. Notice the love is present, grounded in a past act. More than that, this past act of deliverance, where God *‘turned his ear’* to the Psalmist, results in a declaration of lifelong commitment.

From here the psalmist recounts the situation God delivered him from. With language we similarly come across in Psalm 18 (vv 4-6), the psalmist speaks of a situation where he is in the depths of anguish. So much so that he feels the *‘cords of death’* entangling

him. Whatever the situation, the reason for this anguish, it is completely overwhelming.

In response, the Psalmist calls out to the LORD - *‘O Lord, save me!’* (v 4).

READ: PSALM 116 verses 5-11

As God saves, ‘rest’ is restored

His cry is heard! The tone of the psalm moves from overwhelming sorrow and anguish to one of rejoicing in God’s deliverance, and the rest it provides.

Grace, righteousness and compassion are emphasised (verse 5), suggesting these are revealed through God’s saving him from something he couldn’t save himself from.

This latter fact is evident in his declaration (v 6) that *‘The LORD protects the simple-hearted’* - or *‘the simple’* (ESV). Those who are humble, lowly, dependant. It could also mean those of simple faith. Clearly, he is dependent, as *‘in great need’* he calls out to God, who hears and saves him.

As a result, he moves from anguish to his soul being once again *‘at rest.’* Restored to his former state, prior to his turmoil.

He has been delivered from death, from mourning. He no longer fears his feet will stumble. Instead, as a result of God’s deliverance, he can walk in God’s presence.

God hears, God delivers, because (v 10) the Psalmist kept his faith in the midst of turmoil. *‘I believed, therefore I said ...’* reflecting his trust that God would deliver him. Trust which led him to call out to God that he is *‘greatly afflicted.’* The psalmist recognises that his trust cannot be in man. He claims *‘all men are liars’* in recognition that any hope of deliverance from man is false hope. Only God can and has provided his deliverance.

READ: PSALM 116 verses 12-19

A lifelong commitment

The psalmist concludes with a lifelong commitment to the LORD, because of his goodness.

He will repay the LORD by lifting up the *'cup of salvation.'* Some suggest this is the cup of the Passover meal, as an act of remembrance for God's deliverance. Alternatively, and I think more likely in the context here, it is emphasising that he will take up what he has received from God. In his commentary, Derek Kidner likens this to the cup of Psalm 23 verse 5. A cup which is God's gracious, overflowing gift.

With taking up this cup, comes action. A commitment to the LORD (v 14). His death is *'precious'* (v 15) because his life, the life of one trusting in God is precious to Him. It has cost God dearly. Recognising, in response, and because of the freedom he has now received - the psalmist commits himself to serving God (v 16).

This psalm helps us to remind us of the one who hears and responds to us as we cry out to him. It reminds us ultimately of how he has done that for us through Jesus.

The psalmist speaks of an anguish where he feels overwhelmed, where the 'cords of death' were entangling him. A situation which results in him calling out to God for Salvation.

We, by nature are those who face the reality of death, as we are overwhelmed and unable to deal with our sin. Yet when we cry out to God, we receive his Salvation. Salvation which reveals his Grace, righteousness and compassion (v 5). It is grace, because it is undeserved. Righteous, because at the cross, God receives justice, as sin is paid for so that we can be declared 'right' before Him. Which, in light of how undeserving we are of it, reveals God's compassion towards his creation.

Having called on God, with a *'simple hearted'* faith (v 6) we are now *'at rest'* (v 7). Our sin has been dealt with, our turmoil and anguish relieved. So in response, we talk up that *'cup of salvation'* (v 13), committing our lives to lifelong service and worship of Him.

Romans 3 verse 23 reminds us that:

'the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

So let's be those living in the light of that salvation. Loving, faithfully serving, worshipping, and calling on the name of the Lord - because he has heard our voice, saved us from death, and given us new life through Jesus.

REFLECTION

Spend some time re-reading the passage, and thinking about the following

GOD HAS HEARD, AND DOES HEAR OUR CRIES

Reflect and Rejoice that God hears us as we cry out for Salvation.
How he has saved us through Jesus.

CALL ON THE NAME OF THE LORD

The Psalmist writes: *'Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live'* (v 2).

As a result of our Salvation, and having already done so (v 4), we can and should continue to *'call on the name of the LORD'* (vv 13, 17). We continue to trust him for and in all things, including those times of trouble and anxiety.

WALK BEFORE THE LORD (v9)

How is your walk with God?
How is your walk a testimony to others?
How does your walk reflect a lifelong commitment in service and worship of God?

***These are just some thoughts, some things to reflect on.
What else strikes you about this passage?***