

PSALM 116:

THIS IS OUR STORY. THIS IS OUR SONG.

LA CRESCENT EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

JULY 13, 2025

THE READING OF THE WORD

Psalm 116

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!”

PRAYER

WARM UP

Good morning, for those who don't know me my name is Eric Mattie. I serve as one of your elders. I'm a member here at LEFC I occasional preach and teach and serve with my wife on the prayer team. Pastor Ryan is on sabbatical and I'm stepping in this week to bring the word for us this morning.

Introduction

We continue in the book of Psalms.

Jonathan Edwards says, “the duty of singing praises to God, seems to be appointed wholly to excite and express religious affections.”

Affection like love , thanksgiving, joy and at times lament.

Psalm 116 is Song of Thanksgiving and is very Personal

The author of Psalm 116 is unknown but he writes personal about his experience , saying “I love the Lord ...I will call on him...I suffered distress, I called on Him...I pray deliver my soul...I was brought low...I will walk before the Lord... and so on

19 times the psalmist says “I”

11 times mentions “my”

You have to wonder what the context is of what we are reading.

What enhances our interest in this Psalm of Thanks is that where we are in the book of Psalms – here in 116 there are 3 contexts- to consider. I'll share the immediate one first. The other 2 I will touch on at the end..

But here is the immediate context

:10 Second Context-

After facing a deadly situation, here is a man who enters the temple to tell those who are there publically of the Lord's saving grace and to thank God who answered his prayer.

- As we read this Psalm, we can relate a bit to what this man went through

It's so Personal I have titled my message today: **This is Our Story. This is Our Song.** Because we will see ourselves at times in this Psalm

Church Father Augustine said of this Psalm:

“Let this be the song of a soul on pilgrimage and away from the Lord ;
Let the sheep that had strayed sing it;
let the son who had died and come back to life sing it,
he who was lost and found again, let our own soul sing this song

PREACH

Before Christ we are all in a deadly situation. How many here were lost and Jesus found you? How many of you were dead and are now alive in Christ. How many here strayed from the Lord only to find yourself brought back into the flock? How many prodigals are in the building.

This is your Story This is your Song

The psalm is divided into four sections where this Psalmist.

1. Rekindles His Affection v. 1,2

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.!”

The Psalmist Expresses Affection to His Savior

- I love the Lord- The word “Love” carries the idea of affection, and adoring someone personally. As love grows, it demonstrates a caring for, and attention given to someone personally.

As early as Moses and through the ages... affirmed through Jesus himself, the Supreme Command- **Matthew 22:37 “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”**

Before we came to Christ our hearts- like the Jews in the Old Testament- are stubborn, unbelieving and wicked. In Ezekiel, God reveal his redeeming plan to not just heal the broken hearted, but to replace our hearts of stone with a heart of flesh.(36:25)

Ezekiel 36:27 The Lord says I

“... will put my Spirit in within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”

Those who have put their faith in Jesus alone, are saved by God’s grace alone.

PREACH

In that grace filled conversion in Christ, our inner affections, allegiance, passions, will, desires and thoughts are made alive, new, born again of the Spirit of God. We are new creations in Christ it says in 2 Cor. 5:17

- What is worked out for the rest of our lives is a Godward expression and submission in a Christ like attitude and Spirit filled perception that fuels our “inner man” and renews his love and joy to the Lord,

In the process of becoming more like Christ

He Renews our allegiance to the Lord,

Renews our passions to the Lord

with thoughts about the Lord in reverent fear to live first and foremost.

PAUSE

For some here, the idea of expressing affectionate love toward God is foreign, awkward and feels at time downright strange to do.

- The psalm could have simply stated I’m grateful to the Lord. I trust in the Lord. Those 2 feeling match up with the reasons why the psalmist is even singing- he heard my cry and saved me. He bent down in attention to me and answered my prayer.
- The Lord heard, and helped and healed the psalmist. These feeling of gratitude and confidence aren’t as mushy of the word Love.

- But Loving God is the greatest call for all believers, who sincerely, believe he is real and Jesus is alive and our lives and purpose are found in Him alone.

Psalm 116 is a song of thanksgiving. It models for us how to thank God by **expressing affection to our Savior.**

A Call to Action:

For those who don't have the affectionate words of love toward Jesus I encourage you- use this path. The words are right there before you to sing or pray. Don't just rotely recite it- let yourself feel it in small phrases first. Prayerful express "I love you" Thank you. Father you have been good to me

The Psalmist Loves Because He was Listened To.

This man loved because God listened- he heard his voice and his pleas for mercy.

Because God listened this man will call on him, "the rest of his life." It wasn't that he simply listened, we learn that God Answered- for that is how he knows God listened.

- The Lord's listening is not like he overheard someone yelling "Help" as He was walking by in the street.
- The way God listens is described as inclining His ear. The Lord is bending towards, extended down, listening to his hearts cry as it pleads in anguish and in distress. He draws near to listen.

PREACH

When you have someone who listens to your deepest fears, your greatest doubts, your vulnerable insecurities... When you have someone that listens to your most heartfelt complaint of pain and anguish.

You have someone that loves and cares for you.

Brothers and sisters, just as this man in this psalm had the Lord be that for him. Our loving Father will be that for us.

He listens. He answers

The second section...

2. Remembers His Anguish v.3, 4

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**

The Psalmist Cries Out in the Chords of Death

This psalmist testifies in verse 3 that he was encompassed in the chords - ropes or snares of death. He was experiencing the shooting pains of darkness and gloom. And of the grave

Picture:

It reminds me of the scene in the Lord of the Rings, when the Band of Travelers come up to the cliff and the gate is on the other side and below is this black dark unreflective lake. In it is this creature that had rope like tentacles that were attempting to pull them into its darkness.

Practical:

Chords of death pull at us all the time. The brokenness of this world, death of relationships, marriages, health that is on the decline is a chord of death. Unsaved loved ones experience spiritual death until they come to Christ.

When ropes of death are pulling you to the ground and shooting pains of darkness and gloom are what you experience. .. Your strength is spent.

You need someone to save you because you cannot save yourself. We see this man cry out in a manner that Charles Spurgeon says “real trouble produces real prayer”. He cries out v.4 “O Lord I pray deliver my soul.”

Be real in your prayer- to the Lord.

So we have this man who remembers his anguish, he is real and raw in his experience and his prayer.

In the third section of Psalm 116 we see the Psalmist

3. Recalls God's Attributes v. 5-11

Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; our God is merciful.

The Lord preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me.

Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you. For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling.

I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.

I believed, even when I spoke: “I am greatly afflicted”; I said in my alarm, “All mankind are liars.”

The Psalmist recalls God's mercy to bring rest to his soul.

So the man here in the temple is moving to and fro between speaking to his soul and speaking to the Lord. Speaking to our souls is a practice we see in Scripture time and time again. Mostly in Psalms but we also see it described King David's life

- 1 Samuel 30:6:

And David was greatly distressed, for the people spoke of stoning him, because all the people were bitter in soul, each for his sons and daughters. But David **strengthened** himself in the Lord his God.

Some translation use the phrase: encouraged himself in the Lord. Others say he both encouraged and strengthened himself in the Lord.

In his book Spiritual Depression Martyn Lloyd-Jones famously talks about this when he writes:

“Have you realized that most of your unhappiness in life is due to the fact that you are listening to yourself instead of talking to yourself? ...

Speaking to yourself instead of listening to yourself is an important practice to embrace. The Psalmist here actual gives his soul direction.

Return, O my soul, to your rest;

Psalm 116:7

After experiencing these chords of death walking through this traumatic scenario undoubtedly, his soul was shaken. Wouldn't yours?

But he is not allowing his souls stress to speak to him. Rather He is speaking to himself and saying return to your rest. Calm your anxiety and angst. **The rest he is speaking of is an unthreatened peace.**

Imagine a rest like that.

- A rest that gratefully remembers the peace between you and God is no longer threatened by sin or death for there is no condemnation for those in Christ
- A rest that humbly remembers that nothing can threaten to separate you from the love of Christ.
- A rest that dependently remembers “The Lord is on my side; I will not fear. What can man do to me? (Psalm 118:6)

This rest that the Psalmist is directing and speaking his soul about is not some softer reality to immerse yourself in. The return to rest like this is founded on the mercy the psalmist received.

He gives us the why in the second half of the verse

“Return, O my soul, to your rest; **for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you**” Psalm 116:7b

The Psalmist is Retelling His Soul of God’s Good Mercy

Standing in the midst of this corporate worship at the temple, this man is publicly echoing the earliest of testimony of God’s character

“Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; our God is merciful.” Psalm 116:5

Over the course of time and scenario, we see God’s people in the Old Testament, being reminded over and over of the character God.. The earliest of which is the Exodus account of the Lord passing by Moses

The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. 6 The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, “The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.
Exodus 34:5,6

- The psalmist expresses confidence in the Lord as he remains the same even when the circumstances of His people are everchanging.
- The man speaks of his deep seeded confidence in God during this deadly affliction. He said:

I believed, even when I spoke: “I am greatly afflicted”
116:10

Psalm

- Even when the psalmist hastily declares he is in great affliction and alarm”- and every human being has disappointed him and are liars (v 11)..
- He remembers and says “God I believe.”
 - He believes in the gracious strength when he was weak.
 - He believes the merciful saving when he could do nothing.
 - He believes in the reliable faithfulness of God to do what is right.
 - He believes in the loving acceptance of the God who said “I will be your God and you shall be my people.

Preach:

God's never changing character serves as the foundation of our resting in Christ. Grace, righteousness and mercy, are not simply 3 acts of kindness that God displays to us.

Get this;

Grace Mercy and Righteousness are Perfect Attributes -Attributes of Perfections - of the Lord. They are not limited in their scope. They are not stained by age, impatience, irritation or sin.

"Our ignorance of God is too great, because our estimations of God are too little." ~ Stephen Charnock

The Psalmist is speaking to his soul and retelling it that it is

The Lord who is perfect in being gracious,

the Lord who is perfect in righteousness

the Lord who is perfect in mercy

has dealt bountifully with you!!

He treats the Psalmist better than he deserves. Brothers and sister, He does the same for us!! May we sing a song of thanksgiving like this. This is our story - this is our song.

God's bounty toward us is good- full and adequate.

- He is gracious in forgiving and in sustaining his children.
- He is righteous in keeping the covenant and all its promises.
- He is merciful or some translation have "full of compassion: The Lord is tender and understanding of his children's limitations.

The psalmist says of himself

"The Lord preserves the simple; when I was brought low, he saved me."

Psalm 116:6

- **preserves** - the Lord protects, He guards, the Lord keeps...
- **the simple** – the man is identifying himself as a gullible person who walks into trouble or **a young , simplehearted, inexperienced, vulnerable human being.**

The psalmist confesses that when he was brought low this defenseless weak man needed saving.

His cries needed Answering

***God's Good Mercy is Highlighted in not only his Attributes, but
in his Answers to the Psalmist's Cries***

***For you have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from
stumbling. I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living.***

Psalm 116:8,9

- Only God can transform and redeem death tears and stumbling to walking before the Lord in the Land of the living

Preach

Perhaps, you have experienced a return from death either physically, spiritually, relationally, emotionally returned from a habitual sin that was a chord of death... a resurrection to life. A second chance through grace

Tell your story... Sing your song!

God's mercy in your life is hard for people to rebuttal. Some will do it, But I'm calling us do it anyway.

- Believers in Christ are delivered from Death both physically in our upcoming resurrection and spiritual by being delivered from the wages of sin experiencing eternal life.
- In the age to come age tears will be wiped away.
- True believers in Christ will be kept by God's hand and persevere in faith.

Pause and Slow Down

Maybe today, you don't find yourself rejoicing singing or thankful. You're not there. You may feel hopeless.

Then I encourage you with this:

Recall God's mercy in your life to kindle the hope you are looking for today.

If you're a believer today you believe but you are stuck. Turn to Jesus. Pray to him. Direct your soul of the hope that is only found in Jesus. Start by praying this Psalm 116 and the famous Psalm 23 into your heart.

Don't let the chords of death and the grave have the last say in the matters of your broken heart, in your fight for your wellbeing, in the fight against your pet sin. - Christ came to heal the broken hearted. Verse 16 says the Lord loosens the bonds that enslave us. Turn to Him today. For today is the day of salvation.

The fourth and Final section of his psalm we see this man the Psalmist

4. Responds with Admiration and Thanks v.12-19

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.

15 Precious 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!

The Psalmist Awe is captured in this spontaneous section of praise.

This last passage is not to be understood as repaying a debt. The question has no anticipation of an answer. The vows are not a transaction

It is in this passage we see the most spontaneous of responses. He uses Old Covenant language as would be expected.

- What should I render
- I will lift up the cup
- I will pay my vow
- Precious in your sight
- I am your servant
- I will offer
- Praise the Lord

He is drawing from other psalms to express devotion and thanks that he doesn't have enough words for.

Example:

I remember seeing a young man who was so overwhelmed in hearing the gospel message, he was blubbering through his prayer. Blubbering through thanks to prayer. He was emotionally overwhelmed.

This man in the temple exemplifies for us a grateful and emotional spontaneous praise song of thanks. It's no wonder it's recorded and included in this book.

The Sacrifice of Thanksgiving is actually a meal he gets to participate in.

- At the peak of this meal a cup of wine is raised, received, drank and enjoyed.
- This cup of salvation is so called because this meal celebrates delivering answer to prayer from God. It spot lights His goodness and those in attendance enjoy his presence and freedom.

But note after he lifts the cup of salvation, he says he will call on the name of the Lord.-

"I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving and call on the name of the LORD"
Psalm 116:17

To go on receiving God's mercy and grace through continually calling out and then continuing to thank him in his faithfulness- THAT magnifies God's inexhaustible goodness.

The vow is vow of gratitude. It's made not to bargain with God but is evidence of a serious intent to learn and emerge from this experience a better and more dedicated person. Experiencing God's Grace and mercy fuels that!!

To do all of this in the presence of godly people in the public temple was not for show. This thank offering was to encourage the godly in their relationship with God.

May this be our story May this be our song! We cannot render anything but in the Spirit of Christ Thanksgiving praise and honor, Thanks giving praise and honor Thanks giving Praise and Honor. Over and over again. Raising our cups of thanksgiving. To the one deserving of our praise. If you have testimony, talk to us we'd love for you to share it here so that God is glorified and this family is edified

Transition stop and slow

We are not the only ones that benefit from reading this man's song. Remember at the beginning I said we have an enhanced interest in this Psalm because Its context has more than one?

Well,

1. **The Psalms, were collected and arranged in 5 books over 1,000 years.** Jewish tradition says the number five was to match the five books of Moses.

2. **Book 5 was setup arranged to edify the returning Israelites from their exile.**

Remember From a national dimension Israel had experienced death in being exiled out of their promised land and Jerusalem and the temple destroyed. Well now they are

raised to new life in their return to Jerusalem and rebuilding the Temple. Psalm 116 is part of this collected book 5

This is the second context: After returning from exile and rebuilding the temple, Book 5 was collected and used with the other books that made up the Psalter. Imagine the returning Israelites worshipping in the restored temple remembering now God's saving power in hearing the cries of the nation's heart in exile -their chords of death and to return to Jerusalem and to restore their covenant with the Lord. Then reading this Psalm in the new temple.

That must rekindled allegiance faith, hope and love for God.

Now here's the third context:

3. **Psalm 116 is in the sub-collection of songs called the Egyptian Hallel** or simply the Halleluiah Psalms. These songs formed part of the Passover celebration because they are songs celebrating and praising God's saving power in freeing them from their bondage of slavery, their deliverance out of Egypt. testifying to the great saving power of God..

4. By the time Jesus came on the scene, the Hebrew Book of Praises was complete. Every Passover that Jesus celebrated as a boy and then as a man he sung this song of thanks. **Jesus and the disciples sung Psalm 116 the night he was arrested**

“[Psalm116] is Christ's resurrection song, sung by his own lips in the upper room at the Passover, in anticipation of the darkness of Gethsemane and Calvary passing away in glory.”
Andrew Bonar

For Jesus to have sung, “You have delivered my soul from death” in verse 8 wasn't simply a postponement of death for he truly died. It meant for Jesus- resurrection from the dead. That is our assurance and hope.

If you are a believer this morning united with Christ... Romans 6 say

“We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his.”
Romans 6:4,5

***If this is our story and this is our song, it is only
because it was Jesus Christ's song first.***

Psalm 116 is ours in Christ.

I close with a quote from Christopher Ash:

“As he (Jesus) sings of his death and his life, his trust and his love, we too may join his song and sing of our death with Christ, our resurrection with Christ, and our trust and our love given us through Christ.” Christopher Ash

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Let us tell our story let us sing our song

Pray

Father please apply this message to kindle our affections, remember our anguish you saved us from, recall your mercy and return to our rest in Jesus. May we respond in admiration and thanksgiving and devotions that we have to Jesus Christ in him Name amen

PSALM 116:

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1. Rekindles His Affection v. 1,2

2. Remembers His Anguish v.3, 4

3. Recalls God's Attributes v. 5-11

*4. Responds with Admiration and Thanks
v.12-19*

(over)

Summary

What God Spoke to Me

My Take Home Action