

Midweek Pause Devotion Week #2

Psalm 105: 1-6 & 37-45

Give praise to the Lord, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done.
Sing to him, sing praise to him;
tell of all his wonderful acts.
Glory in his holy name;
let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice.
Look to the Lord and his strength;
seek his face always.
Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,
you his servants, the descendants of Abraham,
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.

He brought out Israel, laden with silver and gold,
and from among their tribes no one faltered.
Egypt was glad when they left,
because dread of Israel had fallen on them.
He spread out a cloud as a covering,
and a fire to give light at night.
They asked, and he brought them quail;
he fed them well with the bread of heaven.
He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed like a river in the desert.
For he remembered his holy promise
given to his servant Abraham.
He brought out his people with rejoicing,
his chosen ones with shouts of joy;
he gave them the lands of the nations,
and they fell heir to what others had toiled for—
that they might keep his precepts
and observe his laws.

Continuing in our study of the Psalms, today we focus on two sections of Psalm 105. The Psalms are like a prayer book – a helpful guide in our prayer life. The Psalm for today, speaks on something we all inevitably face throughout life on Earth: loss. Loss can manifest itself in many ways: loss of a loved one, loss of an opportunity, loss of the presence of God, etc. There are many things that differentiate us from one another in life, but something we all have in common is the universal experience of loss. Psalm 105 could have been addressed to Israel, as they were making sense of the Exile in which they very much lost everything. This experience with loss, caused a crisis – most notably, a crisis of faith. Amidst this crisis, the people of Israel struggled to identify the presence of God in their midst. They struggled to make sense of their

experience. Why would God allow something like this to happen? Where was God amidst this great loss? These are all questions many of us have asked ourselves.

Something to note here is that asking these questions, does not imply a weaker faith; rather, I think digs us deeper into our relationship with God. Experiencing loss is hard and while it inevitably is a part of the human condition, that does not make it any easier to go through. Hear these words, if you experienced loss and struggled to see God's presence amidst it, that does not make you any weaker, that does not mean God was and is not with you.

Psalms 105 addresses this crisis of faith, this questioning of God's presence, by reminding Israel about how God had remembered God's covenant promises. Verse five through six read, "Remember the wonders [God] has done, [God's] miracles, and the judgments [God] pronounced, you [God's] servants, the descendants of Abraham [God's] chosen ones, the children of Jacob." The Psalmist gives a retelling of the history of God's faithfulness to Israel – how they came into possession of the Land in the first place. Within these short verses, readers get a historical account of the five stages of covenant history from the Promise of the Land to the Possession of the Land. The Psalm is about remembering – remembering all the good and wonderful works that God has historically done.

However, in this account of remembrance, it may not make the loss any easier. It is a reminder that just as how God was present then, God is ever-present now, through the pain, the hurt, the loss. This is why we have God's Holy Word – to be a remembrance for all that God has done, is doing and continues to do today, through each and every one of us.

What we also learn from this Psalm, is that while it is a reminder of all the good that God has done, we also must continue to *seek* God. Amidst the pain of the great loss from the exile, the people of Israel were still called to continually seek out God. This calling out happens multiple times throughout the Psalm. Verses three through four read, "Glory in his holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the Lord rejoice. Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always." While we have this account of remembrance – while we are called to remember all the good that God has done – we are continually called to continue to seek out all that God is doing.

Life can be hard, loss is hard; but God is with us in the midst. We are called to remember all that God has done, all the good and blessings in our life while also called to continually seek God in the here and now. God has done great things and is continuing to work in each and every one of our lives. Loss may blur our perspective or other external things, but don't lose faith – the God who parted the sea and saved the Israelites is continuing to move mountains.

Let us pray,

Life changing God, God who moved mountains for the Israelites and continues to move mountains today, help us to remember. Help us to remember all the good that you have done in history and in our lives. When times are hard and our perspectives are cloudy, help us to grip on to those memories. Help those memories to recharge us and carry us forth. God of wonders, amidst the pain of life, amidst loss and challenge, help us to continually seek you. Help us to continue to wonder and challenge ourselves in our relationship with you. As we enter into this week ahead, be with us. Help us to grow

closer to you and do things that reflect your love, grace, and abundant sovereignty. We love you; we thank you and we continually praise you. Amen.