

Sunday Night Message

November 15, 2015

Psalm 106 – Remembering Israel’s Failures and God’s Faithfulness

Series – The Psalms

Text – Psalm 106

Introduction

This psalm is similar to the Psalm 105 in that it looks back on Israel’s history. However, the great difference between this psalm and the previous one is that in Psalm 105 the focus was on all of the wonderful victories that God had wrought for the nation. Psalm 105 chronicles the Biblical account of the Exodus with the miraculous defeat of Israel over Pharaoh and his army and the deliverance of the people of God from Egyptian bondage. Psalm 105 also remembers God’s provision and protection as He brought them through the Wilderness and into the Promised Land. Psalm 105 reminds us of the covenant (the promise) that God made originally to Abraham, but also passed down through his son, Isaac, and his grandson, Jacob, and finally through to Jacob’s twelve sons who became the heads of the tribes of Israel. Psalm 105 declares boldly that God keeps His promises, and we can certainly see from that psalm that God kept His promise to Israel. Psalm 105 is all about victory.

However, Psalm 106 paints a much darker picture. Psalm 106 is also a psalm that remembers Israel’s past, but here the focus is on Israel’s failures. Here in Psalm 106, we will look back at the same historical context of Psalm 105, but instead of pointing out God’s miraculous power and strength over Israel’s enemies, the focus will be on God’s mercy and faithfulness to His own people: a people that continuously demonstrated their lack of faith, which always resulted in painful failure.

The purpose of this psalm is not to dwell on the failure of the people of God, however. Rather, it is to rejoice over the fact that God remains faithful to us even when we fail. God could have rejected Israel because of their failures. Many times it seems that He wanted to; but He always came back to His covenant with Abraham. God promised Abraham that He would make a great nation out of his family, and God kept (and is still keeping) that promise.

In this New Testament dispensation of grace, God has also promised us a few things:

*"Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, **lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.**" (Matthew 28:20)*

*"Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, **I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.**" (Hebrews 13:5)*

"And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one." (John 10:28-30)

"But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus."
(Philippians 4:19)

These are just a few of the many New Testament promises that God has made to His children in the church today; and we are just as unfaithful to God, and we fail just as many times as Israel did in Psalm 106.

As we read through and examine this psalm, don't allow your mind to arrogantly condemn this nation of old, but rather focus on how gracious and good God was to them especially when they did nothing to deserve it. We might want to also reflect on our own lack of faith and the many times that we have failed God; yet, God still loves us. He hasn't kicked us out of the family. He still provides for us, and He will still take us to Heaven when we die.

The accent in this passage is not on the failure of God's people, though as we will see, they certainly failed; but, rather, the emphasis is on the faithfulness of a good and gracious and merciful God.

The context of the writing of this psalm is probably during the Babylonian Captivity.

I His Petition for Present Mercy (vs. 1 - 5)

The psalmist is claiming the promise made through the prayer of Solomon in 1 Kings 8:46 - 53. God's people can expect God to be merciful to them if they are contrite and are repentant regarding their sin, and they turn back to God.

II His Confession of Past Mistakes (vs. 6 - 46)

This portion makes up the bulk of the psalm.

Notice verse 6 - It is significant to point out that the psalmist included himself with the sinning congregation:

"We have sinned with our fathers, we have committed iniquity, we have done wickedly."
(Psalm 106:6)

Nehemiah also used the word "we" in his prayer:

And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house

have sinned. We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. (Nehemiah 1:5 – 7)

A God's People Tend to Forget God's Goodness (vs. 7 – 15)

Turn to Daniel 9:1 – 23

Verses 7 – 12 refer to Israel's deliverance from Pharaoh and Egypt through the Red Sea. See Exodus 14:10 – 31. In Exodus 15:1 – 21 we read the song that Moses sang and of the singing and dancing of Miriam.

Verses 13 – 15 refer to Israel's frequent griping for water (Exodus 15:22 – 27; Exodus 17) and food (Exodus 16; Numbers 11:4 – 15, 31 – 35).

Practical applications:

1 God's people need to stop griping.

"Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain." (Philippians 2:14-16)

2 God's people need to yield their lusts to the Holy Spirit. (Turn to 1 Corinthians 10:1 – 13)

B God's People Tend to Fight Against Authority (vs. 16 – 18)

Turn to Numbers 16 – 17

"Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation." (Hebrews 13:7)

"Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you." (Hebrews 13:17)

"Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you." (Hebrews 13:24)

C God's People Tend to Get Fidgety (vs. 19 – 23)

The context of these verses is the Golden Calf. While Moses was up on the mountain receiving the Law from God, the people got impatient and persuaded Aaron to make them a golden calf. (Turn to Exodus 32; Deuteronomy 9:8 – 29)

D God's People Tend to Be Faithless (vs. 24 – 27)

These verses refer to the fact that Israel did not believe that God could deliver the land of Canaan into their hands. (Turn to Numbers 13 – 14)

E God's People Tend to Get Fleshly (vs. 28 – 33)

1 The People (vs. 28 – 31; See Numbers 25 for the result of the Baalpeor situation. Go back to Numbers 22 to review all of the background to the story)

The king of Moab hired the prophet Balam to curse the nation of Israel, but God turned his curses into blessings (Deut. 23:5; Neh. 13:2; see 109:28). But Balam knew how to trap Israel: he suggested that the king act like a good neighbor and invite the Jewish tribal leaders to share a feast with the Moabites. This would be a religious feast, of course, which meant eating meat dedicated to demons and dead people and cohabiting with cult prostitutes. Once more, the people of God yielded to their fleshly desires and tasted the wrath of God, and 24,000 people died (Num. 25:9). The plague would have claimed more lives, but Phinehas, the son of the high priest, killed a Jewish man and his Moabite partner as they arrogantly sinned in the camp of Israel. "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23). (On v. 30, see Gen. 15:6 and Rom. 4.)¹

2 Moses (vs. 32 – 33) Numbers 20:1 – 13 tells of when Moses lost his temper because of the griping of the people over water at Kadesh Barnea.

F God's People Tend to Fail Continually (vs. 34 – 46)

The remainder of this section recalls the continual failures of God's people even after they entered into the land. They did not obey God by removing all of the inhabitants; they mixed with and picked up bad habits from the heathens that they permitted to stay. Idolatry, immorality and violence invaded the land that God had given them, and in a very short time the wickedness in the land was worse than before they entered it. Ultimately, God had to judge them and remove them from the land.

III His Adoration for Future Magnanimity (vs. 47 – 48)

The psalm ends with a prayer to God for an expected future deliverance, and a praise to Him for being righteous and merciful to them all along.

¹ Wiersbe, W. W. (2004). *Be exultant* (1st ed., pp. 63–64). Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries.