

**Praying in Exile**  
**Psalms 105-106**  
**June 10, 2020**

“Two Sides of the Covenant” or “The Surprising Way to Praise”

Good evening. Thank you for joining me. We’re going to look at Psalms 105 and 106 tonight. I’m not going to read them, but I do encourage you to spend time with them and allow them to help shape your prayers. So, let’s start with Psalm 105.

Psalm 105

What is Psalm 105 about? The proof of God’s covenant faithfulness. In other words, Psalm 105 is about the God who doesn’t back out of His promises.

Listen to verses 8-9, “He [the LORD] is mindful of his covenant forever, of the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations, the covenant that he made with Abraham, his sworn promise to Isaac, which he confirmed to Jacob as a statute, to Israel as an everlasting covenant.”

And what the rest of the psalm does is recount the history of this covenant from the time of Joseph to Israel’s exodus from Egypt. And all that happened, from Joseph’s appointment in Egypt to the plagues done through Moses and Aaron, rests on this fact, expressed in verse 42, “For he [the LORD] remembered his holy promise, and Abraham, his servant.”

You see, Psalm 105 makes it clear that God isn’t the kind of covenant partner that lets His promises fall by the wayside. And it’s not the case that God, after many, many years, wakes up and remembers to do what He promised long ago. That’s often how we end up keeping our promises.

For example, as a kid, I would promise my parents I would do certain things around the house, but I would quickly put those things out-of-my-mind. But then the reality of what would happen if I didn’t do what I promised would hit home, and I’d quickly “keep” my promise. Or, I would bank on my parents forgetting, or I’d try to find some way to lay the blame on my brother. I was pretty lousy at remembering my promises.

Psalm 105 assures that God isn’t the type of covenant partner who delays or forgets or loses sight of His promises. Because God is infinite in His power and knowledge, there is never a moment that God fails to remember, nor is there a time when God is incapable to fulfill what He has ordained and promised to do. God is the perfect covenant partner.

Psalm 106

And what Psalm 106 gives us is the other side of this covenant relationship. It is the darker counterpart to Psalm 105. And so, we hear things like this in verses 10-13:

So he [LORD] saved them from the hand of the enemy. The waters covered their adversaries; not one of them was left. Then they believed his words; they sang his praise. But they soon forgot his works; they did not wait for his counsel.

You see, Psalm 106 contrasts the people's sinful stubbornness with God's unrelenting faithfulness and mercy. Listen to verses 43-45:

Many times he delivered them, but they were rebellious in their purposes, and were brought low through their iniquity. Nevertheless he regarded their distress when he heard their cry. For their sake he remembered his covenant, and showed compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love.

You know, when I was a swimmer my specialty (if you could call that) was the butterfly. But here's the truth: I hated swimming the butterfly in practice because it was so exhausting and hard to swim at long distances. But thankfully, my coach wouldn't let me take short cuts and made me swim yards and yards and yards of butterfly during practice. And it paid off. I wasn't going to improve if I didn't do what was initially unpleasant and uncomfortable.

Here's my point: Psalm 106 is like swimming long distances of butterfly in your prayer life. It's difficult to remember and name our lack of faithfulness to God. It's not comfortable to examine our hearts before the holiness of God, but if we are going to cherish the sweetness of God's mercy and faithfulness, we need to apply Psalm 106 to our lives.

And notice how Psalm 106 ends. It ends with a doxology. "Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. And let all people say, 'Amen.' Praise the LORD." I know it's true for me that when I find it difficult to praise God more often than not the reason is that I haven't worked my way through Psalm 106, naming my own idols and lack of faithfulness.

And it may sound surprising but in times of hardship and suffering, repentance and confession can exactly what we need to bring us to the point of being able to praise and worship God. You see, a genuine repentance does not go unanswered. Instead, when we repent, we are answered by the good news of what God has faithfully done to save us by giving us His Son—the faithful covenant partner we've failed to be. Christ is the eternal hope of repentant sinners, because in Christ we see the glory of what it cost God to remain eternally faithful to His promises.

So, this evening, repent of your sins and let the glorious light of God's faithfulness flood your heart and give you your own words of praise and thanksgiving. Amen.

Reflection Questions:

1. Psalm 105 is about the history of God's covenant faithfulness to Israel. How has your personal history revealed God's faithfulness?
2. Psalm 106 is about Israel's rebellion against the Lord, their faithful covenant partner. How was your personal history revealed rebellion against God?
3. How can you use Psalm 106 to prove that people cannot save themselves?
4. Why is Christ our only hope for salvation? In other words, how does Christ provide for our true spiritual needs? Think about how Christ fulfills the offices of Prophet, Priest, and King.
5. Why can we be assured of God's covenant faithfulness when we look at Christ?