

GOD WILL BRING US OUT WITH JOY

Psalm 105: 1-45 – Pastor Richard P. Carlson

As I studied Psalm 105 this week, for me, it is a psalm of God bringing His people out, out of bondage, out of sorrow into joy and singing. This psalm is a benediction of blessing on the lives of those who turn to the Lord in the midst of carrying heavy burdens. The apostle Paul spoke of being in a hard place himself—sort of between a rock and a hard place—he called it a **strait**. He said, “For I am in a **strait** betwixt two, having a desire to depart and to be with Christ; which is far better; nevertheless, to abide in the flesh is more needful for you.” (Philippians 1: 23-24) Webster’s Dictionary says, “A strait is a drawn tight, constricted, narrow passage of water connecting two larger bodies of water, a place of confinement and restriction, and a position of difficulty, distress, need, as in a desperate strait.” A physical example of a strait in our home would be a hallway or stairway which is a restricted narrow room between larger rooms, which can be difficult and deadly.

Some of life’s desperate straits include, to begin with, our very birth, and the struggle for us in arriving alive into this world, and our mother’s struggle in labor and delivery of us. Between our birth and the long valley of the shadow of death, the final narrow hallway down here, are other hallways. Ask young people if going to school is not one of those narrow hallways. Seeking a spouse can be a difficult hallway. Hunting for a job, waiting to retire, living in a difficult marriage, being sick, waiting and praying for healing, all these are narrow hallways. Raising children and teenagers and college students can be a narrow hallway. Facing disrespect, hatred, scorn, attacks and false accusations in the home, in the extended family, at church, or on the job—these are more narrow hallways where we are tested, tempted and tried. Just living down here on earth, and looking as a believer for a City, whose Builder and Maker is God, is often a narrow hallway. Life is often one hallway after another, and in the end, our physical life as believers here on earth, is the narrow hallway to eternity in Heaven, or if we fail to repent, believe and receive Jesus, that is the broad hallway and highway to Hell.

In the hallways of our lives, we are waiting for our dreams to come true, waiting for our prayers to be answered, waiting for restoration with our spouse, with our children, with our parents, with our extended families, and ultimately, since life is often lived in our narrow hallways, we must learn not to put life off until we get out of our present hallway. Those who are serving with durable health or financial power of attorney for their parents, you know that these days of caring for aging parents can be narrow, difficult, and at times, desperate hallways of time. So I call us today to study this psalm apparently written after the Jewish exiles returned from Babylonian captivity. The psalm is definitely a word of encouragement for us

all in our difficult and desperate hallways of life, but it is also a warning to any of us who refuse to learn lessons from our past struggles. Psalm 105 falls into eight stanzas of unequal length covering the history of Israel from God's covenant with Abraham to the settlement of Israel in Canaan—a period of many years. Let's look through each of these remarkable periods and find the lessons God wants us to learn in our hallways in life. What are these eight lessons before we share the Lord's Supper?

WHATEVER OUR HALLWAY IS, GOD EXHORTS US TO PRAISE THE

LORD. (I.) Notice Psalm 105: 1-6. "Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known His deeds among the peoples! Sing to Him, sing praises to Him; tell of all His wondrous works! Glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice! Seek the LORD and His strength; seek His presence continually! Remember the wondrous works that He has done, His miracles, and the judgments He uttered, O offspring of Abraham, His servant, children of Jacob, His chosen/anointed ones!" What a way to start off a psalm that has many narrow hallways and desperate straits in it! God isn't exhorting you or me to check the weather, to see if our team won, to check the way the wind is blowing or to see if we feel like praising Him. The psalmist just says—do it! Do it! Do it. As Judy Odogwu says it, "Magnify the Lord, don't magnify the problem."

Have you ever found it difficult to praise the Lord when you are weeping, when you are reeling from pain, from attacks, from hurts, from wounds, and from sickness, affliction, tribulation and persecution? God isn't calling on us to let others have it—to pay back evil for evil, to expose those who have hurt us, to leave those whom we have vowed to stay with for life. No, that's the world's way and exhortation. Listen to the world—The world, the flesh and the devil call with the siren song, "Don't put up with that for a minute more." "Let them have a piece of your mind." "Once burned, twice smart." "Give them what they have coming, what they deserve." "Don't be a doormat." "I wouldn't put up with that husband or wife for a second more." "Don't acknowledge your relationship with those who hurt you. Call her the girl's mother or call him the boy's father. Call your Dad "the old man, or call your wife, "the old lady." On and on go the world's exhortations.

What does God exhort? Add to this psalm God's exhortation in Luke 6: 22, 23 – "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets." **Leap for joy?** Listen to God's word to obedient servants who take the five or two talents God gives us and gain five or two more. (Matthew 25: 21) The Master said to the faithful servant, "Well done, good and faithful servant.

You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your Master.” That’s here on earth in life’s narrow hallways—“**Enter into the joy of your Master?**” Then, in I Thessalonians 5: 18, we read, “Give thanks in all circumstances: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.” **Really?** In Ephesians 5: 19, 20, we read further, “Address one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart, giving thanks always and for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.” **Giving thanks for everything always?** Hebrews 13: 15 adds, “Through Him, that’s Jesus, then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips, that acknowledge His name.” **Continually, a sacrifice of praise?** Praising the Lord in the hallways of our lives may not flow glibly from our lips like some folk encourage, but when God knows we mean to praise Him and we do so from obedient hearts, watch out—our hallways will be full of His presence. Romans 8: 28 even includes our narrow desperate hallways. Secondly,

WHATEVER OUR HALLWAY IS, HANG ON TO GOD’S PATRIARCHAL COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB; IT’S OURS TOO.

(II.) Notice Psalm 105: 7-11. “He is the LORD our God; His judgments are in all the earth. He remembers His covenant forever, 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, saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan as your portion for an inheritance.” Was that a narrow hallway? It was. God called Abram from Ur of the Chaldees to a land the Lord would show him. God called him at age 75 and Sarai his wife at age 65 to prepare to have a son together in old age. When Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90, it happened. Was that a narrow hallway getting ahead of God with Hagar and Ishmael? Remember the narrow hallway up Mt. Moriah with Isaac to sacrifice him on the altar? To get from desert Beersheba, a 3 day’s journey to Moriah’s Mt. to slay his son, and then to learn God is Jehovah-Jireh—with a ram caught in a thicket to take Isaac’s place—how narrow was that hallway? To take Jacob through wrestling with the angel of the Lord on the other side of the Jabbok Brook, before facing his twin brother Esau whom he deceived, to be renamed Israel and to believe God that his son Joseph was still alive, this patriarch with a limp took his family to Egypt—was that a narrow hallway? But what was the covenant with A, I, and J? No 4th name is added—not even the Church. These three are the patriarchal covenant fathers. This covenant is here called “His Word, His oath, and His law, and it is said to be everlasting, to a thousand generations. If 100 yrs—100,000 yrs. If 70—then 70,000 yrs. If 40... The covenant was that God gave Israel His land as her inheritance. Though Israel lost it so it become the land of the nations, God’s Word stands—and it stands in 2015. Whatever our hallway, God’s Word is still true. It cannot be broken. Thirdly,

WHATEVER OUR HALLWAY IS, REMEMBER GOD’S PROTECTION OF ISRAEL’S PILGRIM FATHERS IS STILL OURS TODAY. (III.)

Notice Psalm 105: 12-15. “When they were few in number, of little account, and sojourners in it, wandering from nation to nation, from one kingdom to another people, He allowed no one to oppress them; He rebuked kings on their account, saying, “Touch not My anointed ones, do My prophets no harm!” These words cover Genesis 11: 27 all the way as God took these nomadic shepherd fathers safely from Ur of the Chaldees in the day of Abram’s call all the way down into Egypt with Joseph, the prime minister there. How impotent and exposed these pilgrim fathers were! Few in number, very few, strangers, moving from one place to another among the heathen nations, God protected them. God even reproved Pharaoh and Abimelech on their account. Our God is not the God of the largest armies or battalions, but the God of His children of faith, no matter how few and how feeble, God still calls His Bride and His people of faith, “My chosen ones, My anointed ones—v. 6. Psalm 91 is not just for Israel, but for the Israel of God. 4thly,

WHATEVER OUR HALLWAY IS, REMEMBER GOD WHO ALLOWS OUR TRIALS IS THE GOD WHO MAKES US TRIUMPH IN HIM. (IV.)

Notice Psalm 105: 16-22. “When He summoned a famine on the land and broke all supply of bread, He had sent a man ahead of them, Joseph, who was sold as a slave. His feet were hurt with fetters; his neck was put in a collar of iron; until what He (God) had said, came to pass, the word of the LORD tested him. The king sent and released him; the ruler of the peoples set him free; he made him lord of his house and ruler of all his possessions, to bind his princes at his pleasure and to teach his elders wisdom.” The hallway of affliction is often the birthing place, the precursor to triumph in Christ. The bending over to receive correction and discipline is often the path to holiness and to God’s supply for others. Time in prison is secondary to God’s purpose, His primary cause—to fulfill His own dreams given to Joseph, and though Joseph’s affliction was meant for evil, God meant it for good to save lives on the earth, to save His people Israel. Being in an iron fetter around our neck doesn’t sound like the path to dreams coming true, Notice how long the hallway lasted, v. 19—“Until what God had said came to pass, the word of the Lord tested Joseph,” as it will happen to us. 5thly,

WHATEVER OUR HALLWAY IS, GOD WILL MAKE US FRUITFUL IN SPITE OF OUR OPPRESSION BY THE ENEMY. (V.)

Notice Psalm 105: 23-25. “Then Israel came to Egypt; Jacob sojourned in the land of Ham. And the LORD made his people very fruitful and made them stronger than their foes. He turned their hearts to hate His people, to deal craftily with His servants.” This affliction and oppression wasn’t over in a moment—Genesis 15: 13, 14 tells us “Then the Lord said Abram, “Know for certain that your offspring will be

sojourners in a land that is not theirs, and will be servants there, and they will be afflicted for four hundred years. But I will bring judgment on the nation that they serve, and afterward they shall come out with great possessions.” Fruitful, but oppressed—is that your hallway today or mine? Do you see no end to the battle or no end to the oppression? God will make you fruitful in spite of it. Sixthly,

WHATEVER OUR HALLWAY IS, GOD WILL JUDGE OUR

OPPRESSORS. (VI.) Notice Psalm 105: 26-38. “He sent Moses, His servant, and Aaron, whom He had chosen. They performed His signs among them and miracles in the land of Ham. He sent darkness, and made the land dark; they did not rebel against His words. He turned their waters into blood and caused their fish to die. Their land swarmed with frogs, even in the chambers of their kings. He spoke, and there came swarms of flies, and gnats throughout their country. He gave them hail for rain, and fiery lightning bolts through their land. He struck down their vines and fig trees, and shattered the trees of their country. He spoke, and the locusts came, young locusts without number, which devoured all the vegetation in their land and ate up the fruit of their ground. He struck down all the firstborn in their land, the first-fruits of all their strength. Then he brought out Israel with silver and gold, and there was none among His tribes who stumbled. Egypt was glad when they departed, for dread of them had fallen upon it.” Take it to the bank. God still judges our oppressors. It may not be the 10 plagues, but it will be the fierceness of God’s judgment, for God tells us in Isaiah 54: 15, 17 declares, “If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from Me. whoever stirs up strife with you, shall fall because of you. . . No weapon that is fashioned against you shall succeed, and you shall confute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their vindication from Me, declares the Lord.” 7th,

WHATEVER OUR HALLWAY IS, GOD WILL GUIDE AND PROVIDE
FOR US EVEN IN OUR WILDERNESS. (VII.) Notice Psalm 105: 39-41. “He

spread a cloud for a covering, and fire to give light by night. They asked, and He brought quail, and gave them bread from heaven in abundance. He opened the rock, and water gushed out; it flowed through the desert like a river.” Amazingly, the psalmist mentions none of the sins of the people that darkened the 40 years in the desert and wilderness of Sinai, but only the protection and provision of God. What signs and wonders God’s people were given—a cloud spread for a covering from the blistering sun, a fire in the sky for a night light of direction to find their way, and along with manna, meat and water to preserve their lives. These three miracles, for the psalmist trumped the crossing of the Red Sea. God will take care of us. He will, whatever our hallway is. Eighthly, and lastly,

WHATEVER OUR HALLWAY IS, GOD WILL REMEMBER HIS PROMISE AND BRING US OUT OF BONDAGE WITH JOY, SINGING.

(VIII.) Notice Psalm 105: 42-45. “For He remembered His holy promise, and Abraham, His servant. So He brought His people out with joy, His chosen ones with singing. And He gave them the lands of the nations, and they took possession of the fruit of the peoples' toil, that they might keep His statutes and observe His laws. Praise the LORD!” Tests and trials overlap. We cannot escape them. Where one begins and the other ends, only God knows. Tests are the parts of our trials that we are prone to fail without the enabling power of God’s Holy Spirit. God may summon a famine to get us in line with His plans. The current financial crisis in America may be the result of the prayers of the saints for our nation to repent. But if God summons a famine—v. 16, 17, He will send His man or His provision for the famine. He aims to bring us out of bondage. God calls for the problem before he reveals the solution. The enemy will try to capitalize on the hallways we have to walk through. He’ll tempt us in things we have to endure. Yet the enemy cannot ultimately derail God’s servants. When God sends a dream or vision, ask Joseph, if God will ultimately honor His plan. What appears not to be working out, in the middle of pain and suffering, weeping and almost giving up, is the road to triumph.

The pain can run deep, and be too difficult to describe in words. Iron can surround our necks and enter our very souls, seeking to capture our emotions and ruin our lives and seek to take away our future. But God... in our hallways has a plan in our suffering and hardship. He can even bring us through gates of depression to gates of splendor. The enemy will seek to take away our testimony and put his evil spin on our struggles. The devil’s spin will try to make us obey the bitter advice of Job’s wife to curse God and die. The enemy will come with his mocking spirit to say, “Has God said?” He will try us as Adam and Eve were assaulted in the Garden of Eden with his lies. Like the children of Israel in the wilderness, we may be attacked with murmuring and not praising God, grumbling, and complaining. It’s our test! Will we pass in the strength of the Lord? God knows about our fetters, our bleeding hands and feet and our broken hearts. In our hallways, like Joseph, we will be tempted to defilement and sexual sins, trying to render us unholy for more divine service. Like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, we will be tempted to become bitter and embittered against the Lord’s anointed. The enemy will use bitterness to steal the joy of the Lord—no leaping for joy for us. The devil will devise plans for us to seek revenge. What we do in our hallways of life is the key to our future triumph in Christ. Our way through is contentment to take up our cross and follow Jesus. The devil will try confinement in prisons to end it all for us. But the Potter will be shaping us in our imprisonments of our spirit, soul and body. God has promised to bring us out—out for His glory. Praise the wonderful Name of Jesus!