



# A Season of Thanks

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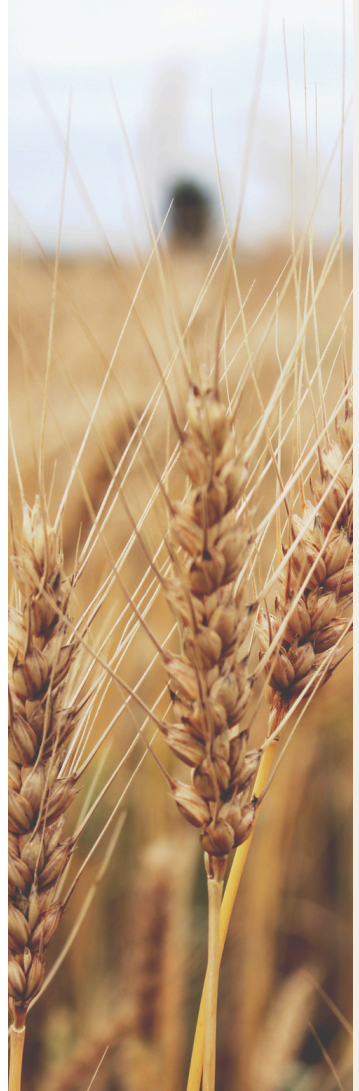
A Thanksgiving Devotional Series  
through Psalm 107

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# Introduction

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As a gift of gratitude for your generous partnership with us over this past year, WordPartners' President, David Sunday composed the following short series of Thanksgiving-themed devotionals from Psalm 107. Each devotional was written to fill your home with the aroma of Christ this Thanksgiving season. We are praying that these devotionals will help you give thanks to God even as we thank God for you.

David introduces and concludes the following devotionals on Psalm 107 looking at God's powerful acts of redemption. The middle three devotionals meditate on what David describes as "Four Vignettes to Vivify Thanksgiving."

"I Once Was Lost, but now I'm Found; My Chains Fell Off, My Heart Was Free" (vv. 4-16) looks at God's tenderness toward those who wander. "Your Spirit Gave Me Life, Opened Up Your Word to Me" (vv. 17-22) reminds us how God leads us out of our folly into thanksgiving. The final vignette, "When Fears Are Stilled and Strivings Cease" (vv. 23-32) explores God's peace amid life's storms.

Each vignette follows a similar pattern:

- Description of life lived apart from God.
- God's willingness to redeem wandering sinners.
- A call to praise the Lord's gracious salvation with joyful thanksgiving.

In this way, the psalmist show us how God's saving work gives life to our thanksgiving praise. May you rejoice in the

Lord's redemptive tenderness, forgiveness, and power through Psalm 107.

**Warmly,**



**Joe Swords**  
*Director of Communications*

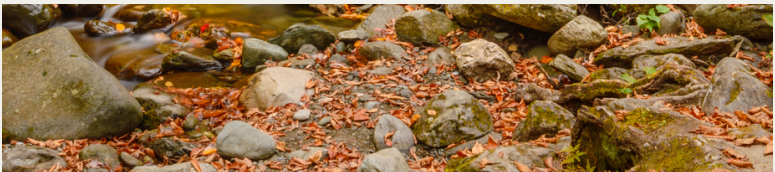




## Psalm 107:1-3

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We Gather Together



Thanksgiving is the biggest travel holiday of the year in America. We gather together from sea to shining sea to overindulge on turkey and pie, binge on football, and reconnect with family.

In Psalm 107, we are invited to a thanksgiving feast of cosmic proportions to celebrate the work of Christ as God gathers his people from the four corners of the earth.

*Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good,  
for his steadfast love endures forever!  
Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,  
whom he has redeemed from trouble  
and gathered in from the lands,  
from the east and from the west,  
from the north and from the south. (Ps. 107:1-3)*

Though this psalm reminds us of how God returned his Old Testament people from their exile in Assyria, it opens up a vista that stretches far beyond a particular time in Israel's history. The psalmist looks forward to a worldwide gathering when "a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages" will "come from east and west and north and south, to share the banquet in the kingdom of God" (Rev. 7:9; Luke 13:29).

Can you imagine the aroma that will fill the air as Jesus invites us to take our seats at his Messianic banquet table? Can you imagine the deep satisfaction we will experience as we feast on the abundance of his household and drink from the river of his delights?

No Thanksgiving feast worthy of the name serves a menu of fast food from McDonalds. Every item is lovingly prepared, tastefully seasoned, and splendidly presented to enliven the taste buds and evoke a response of satisfied delight. And that's what Psalm 107 does for us. The psalmist, like a master chef, delivers a four-course menu of exquisite variety to highlight the ways we've experienced God's redemption in our lives.

At the end of each service of the banquet, we are invited to fill the table with echoes of resounding gratitude for the Lord's lavish kindness:

*Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love,  
for his wondrous works to the children of man! (Ps. 107:8,  
15, 21, 31).*

God shows us the story of our redemption from four different angles because he wants us to share it with others: "Let the redeemed of the LORD tell their story" (Ps. 107:2 NIV). God intends to send us from our Thanksgiving tables to our neighbors and to the nations with fresh testimonies of his redeeming grace on our tongues.

Too often we forget what God has done for us—giving thanks becomes bland, insipid, thoughtless. This psalm puts a new song in our mouths. It gives us rich words, vivid pictures, riveting descriptions of our redemption that compel us to proclaim to others the mighty deeds of the LORD in our lives.

And as we feast and rehearse his wondrous works, not only will we be refreshed to tell our story to others—we also will be restored from the paths of folly in which we've wandered from the Lord.

Here is a thanksgiving gathering that will do more than leave us comatose on carbs. After satisfying our hunger at this banquet, we walk away wiser than we were when we arrived. This is the transformational intent the psalmist designs for us:

*Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things;  
let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord.*  
(Ps. 107:43)

Do you want to grow in thankful wisdom this holiday season? Psalm 107 shows you the pathway: Pay attention to how faithfully and deeply God has loved you—and give him thanks!



# Psalm 107:4-16

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I Once Was Lost, but Now I'm Found  
My Chains Fell Off, My Heart Was Free



While traveling for WordPartners this summer, I flew all the way across the Sahara Desert. Even at 575 miles per hour, it seemed like it took forever to cross over this vast wasteland. Imagine wandering for forty years in a desert with no GPS, no caravan of supplies, and no end in sight. That's a picture of what our hearts are like before the amazing grace of God breaks through:

*Some wandered in desert wastes,  
finding no way to a city to dwell in;  
hungry and thirsty,  
their soul fainted within them. (Ps. 107:4–5)*

This world is a wasteland. Left to ourselves, we wander and lose our way, restless with sinful appetites that gnaw at our souls but cannot be satisfied. We go astray in our hearts and turn to our own ways like lost sheep—wandering, emaciated, and distressed. In our distress, we need a deliverer (v. 6).

In the first and second vignettes, the psalmist shows us where our wandering heart will lead us: into a dark dungeon—an imprisonment that one writer describes as “a form of burial of the living” (David Dickson). And it's a self-inflicted bondage, with our sinful desires making the walls of our dungeon inescapable.

*Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
prisoners in affliction and in irons,  
for they had rebelled against the words of God,  
and spurned the counsel of the Most High. (Ps. 107:  
10–11)*

But there is a God who's able to search for and rescue his people from the most desolate of places. He hears us when we cry to him, as the punctuating refrain that begins in verse 6 repeats four times through this psalm:

*Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress. (Ps. 107:6, 13, 19,  
28)*

There is no compassion fatigue in our God. He never grows tired of responding to our troubled cries. In fact, he is glorified by his responsiveness to the emergencies of our sinfulness. Psalm 50:15 captures the theological significance of the LORD's repeated deliverance in the face of our desperation: "Call upon me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me."

God's Word is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path—and to despise his Word is to plunge into deepest darkness. Sin will always prove to be a harsh taskmaster whose wages is death (Ps. 107:12). But when we fall down under its crushing tyranny, and there is no one else to help us, God remains ready to deliver the needy when we call to him.

*Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress. (Ps. 107:13)*

As you prepare for this year's Thanksgiving, think of times in your life—perhaps in this past year—when you've wandered from God's purposes for you. Have you experienced restless nights and morbid mornings when you've been unable to sleep and unwilling to rise? Have you been gnawing on the

husks in the wasteland and starving from spiritual malnourishment?

There is a Shepherd who came into the wasteland of this world and had “nowhere to lay his head” (Matt. 8:20). He knows what it is like to lose his life in this world—and he can lead you out of the desert. He is the way, the truth, and the life, who can lead you into a place of safety (John 14:7).

*He led them by a straight way  
till they reached a city to dwell in. (Ps. 107:7)*

This is what redemption looks like. It’s an end to loneliness, where lost people find a home. It’s a welcome into a family of forgiven people whose spiritual hunger is being satisfied by living bread and whose thirst is being quenched through springs of water that will not fail. It’s secure citizenship in a city that cannot be shaken, where human life flourishes in the presence of God forever.

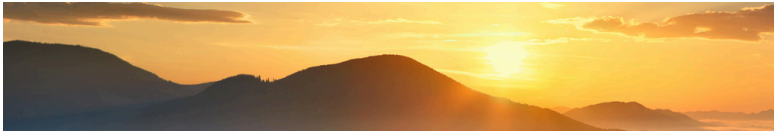
Jesus came into the world to become the finder of those who are lost and the Way back home.

*He satisfies the longing soul,  
and the hungry soul he fills with good things. (Ps. 107:9)*

If this is not your story yet, it can become yours today. God is still writing new characters into that story. There’s plenty of room in the City of God for more and more people to dwell—there’s no risk of overpopulation or lack of resources. Cry out to God in your trouble! He remains ready to deliver the needy when we call to him.

Or perhaps you can think of a time this past year when you've fallen under the burden of your sin. You cried out to God and experienced freedom from your captivity. If he's brought you out of darkness and the shadow of death, and burst your bonds apart, let me invite you to thank him today.

*Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,  
for his wondrous works to the children of man!  
For he shatters the doors of bronze  
and cuts in two the bars of iron. (Ps. 107:15–16)*



## PSALM 107:17-22

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Your Spirit Gave Me Life,  
Opened Up Your Word to Me



The first word of the third vignette is “fool.” It’s a stark reminder that through our own deliberate choices, we often wander into sinful paths, suffering affliction because of our iniquities (Ps. 107:17).

Initially, sin may seem sweet like the pies after a Thanksgiving meal, enticing us with temporary pleasures. Yet, like a narcotic that ensnares its user, sin ultimately leads us to loathe the very sustenance of life: “They loathed any kind of food, and they drew near to the gates of death” (Ps. 107:18). Here, death is depicted “as a terrible city with gates that open to let people in but never to allow them out” (Christopher Ash).

While we may ruin ourselves, we cannot rescue ourselves. Yet, the good news is that there is One who can! The psalmist reassures us, “Then they cried to the Lord in their

trouble, and he delivered them from their distress” (Ps. 107:19). In our moments of desperation, we are not left to our foolishness; God’s power is ever-present, ready to deliver us through his mighty Word:

*He sent out his word and healed them,  
and delivered them from their destruction. (Ps. 107:20)*

The Bible, the living Word of God, possesses the unique ability to heal the wounds we inflict upon ourselves through our reckless choices. It doesn’t merely correct or guide us—it restores us, mending our brokenness and lifting us from the pits we’ve fallen into. If you find yourself enslaved to an addiction, trapped in self-destructive, self-harming patterns, know that the transformative power in the Word of God can free and heal you.

This healing is rooted in the unfailing love of God, a love extended to us despite our failings. He cherishes us and will not let us go! For this, we ought to overflow with gratitude. The psalmist exhorts us:

*Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,  
for his wondrous works to the children of man!  
And let them offer sacrifices of thanksgiving,  
and tell of his deeds in songs of joy! (Ps. 107:21-22)*



## Psalm 107:23-32

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When Fears Are Stilled and Strivings Cease



In the final vignette, we witness skilled mariners who are accustomed to navigating the great waters. Yet, to their dismay, the Lord sends a storm that overwhelms their experience and skill: "For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea" (Ps. 107:25). They are tossed about, their courage fading as they reel and stagger "at their wits' end" (Ps. 107:27).

This vivid imagery mirrors our lives. There are times when we sail smoothly, feeling invincible, only to be blindsided by storms beyond our control. In those moments, our skills and wisdom prove futile; we risk sinking under the weight of our troubles.

What do we do when faced with insurmountable storms? The psalmist reminds us:

*Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble,  
and he delivered them from their distress. (Ps. 107:28)*

Consider Jesus, asleep in the boat while his disciples feared they would drown. When they cried out, he awoke, rebuked the wind and the waves, and commanded, "Peace! be still!" (Mark 4:29). Even the storms of life must obey him.

Jesus not only calms the tempest but also empowers us to walk through life's storms as we keep our eyes fixed on him, just as he enabled Peter to walk on water.

Have you learned that you're not in control of anything in your life? You know, don't you, that everything you think is stable could shift, and you could find your world turned

upside down in a moment. Have you come to the point where your only haven in a storm-tossed world is God himself? Maybe this year it feels like the bottom has fallen out, and your life is out of control.

Know that God can redeem your situation. He can guide you into a safe haven of peace. Relinquish your grasp on control, and cry out to him.

When he leads you to that haven, let your response echo the psalmist's words in verses 31-32:

*Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love,  
for his wondrous works to the children of man!  
Let them extol him in the congregation of the people,  
and praise him in the assembly of the elders.*

This Thanksgiving season, may we remember that God in Christ is our only hope and anchor amid the storms of life. Let's praise him for ways his Word has healed and restored us, and may our hearts overflow with gratitude as we share his wondrous works with others.



# Psalm 107:33-43

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There Is a Redeemer



Redemption resonates through Psalm 107, indeed throughout the pages of Scripture. Redemption is the lost being found, the hungry soul being nourished, the thirsty spirit being quenched. It is the prisoner liberated from the chains that bind him. It is the self-destructive fool healed through God's Word that speaks of God's faithful love for those who don't deserve it. It is the journey from the tumult of a violent storm into a tranquil haven of rest.

All of redemption is made possible because there is a Redeemer who paid the ultimate price for our freedom from sin. This Redeemer ventured into the wilderness, enduring the agonies of hunger and thirst for forty days and nights. He is the Redeemer who "for the joy that was set before him" (Heb. 12:2) willingly allowed his hands and feet to be nailed to a cruel cross, where he hung in darkness and desolation. He was "despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering, and familiar with pain" (Isa. 53:3 NIV). He bore the full weight of God's wrath against our sin, submerged under the violent waves of judgment. Yet, he emerged triumphantly from the grave, conquering sin and death, so that through him "forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you, and by him everyone who believes is freed from everything from which you could not be freed by the law of Moses" (Acts 13:38-39).

The path of wisdom lies in pondering the countless ways God has demonstrated his faithful love in redeeming you. Jesus embraced the weakness, pain, and condemnation of the cross so that God could lavish his unwavering love upon you. To receive this love, humility is required.

Get low. Acknowledge your state before God: left to ourselves, we are lost, wandering in a desolate wasteland. Left to ourselves, we remain in bondage, unable to set ourselves free. Left to ourselves, we foolishly destroy our lives. Left to ourselves, we cannot navigate the storms of life; we will crash against the rocks and sink beneath the waves.

So let us humble ourselves. Cry out to the Lord—again and again—for when you do the Lord responds, again and again.

Again and again, he hears you.

Again and again, he saves you from your distress.

Again and again, he provides exactly what you need:

a place in his family;

forgiveness and freedom from the dungeons of sin;

healing for your wounds;

and a safe haven from life's storms.

You can't earn or deserve this love. Yet, God lavishes his love upon all who trust in his Son, the Redeemer. Because of his unfailing love, God never ceases to make beauty out of the ugly things in our lives. Don't wait until you feel worthy or until you've cleaned up your act. Cry out to him now—in your trouble, in your distress. He hears you, he loves you, and he brings beauty out of the ugliness that sin has wrought in the world and in our hearts.

May we never cease to thank and praise him for his unwavering love and redemption!

This Thanksgiving, consider the ways Jesus our Redeemer

has transformed your life. Humbly and joyfully embrace your need for him, and let gratitude flow from your heart for the beauty he has already created in your life. Tell of his steadfast love as you gather with friends and family, for this story of redemption is one worth telling.

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*David Sunday has served as the President of WordPartners since January 2022. He also continues to serve as a Teaching Pastor at New Covenant Bible Church where he began as the founding Lead Pastor. He is married to Kate, and they take delight in their three adult children, their spouses, and their granddaughter. He enjoys running and biking along the Fox River Trail, reading literature and biographies, and eating good meals with lots of laughter among friends. David has a B.A. from Moody Bible Institute, an M.A. from Wheaton College, an M.Div. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and a D.Min. in Preaching from Westminster Theological Seminary in Philadelphia.*

On behalf of all of us at  
WordPartners,  
Happy Thanksgiving!

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Thank you for your faithful partnership as  
we seek to spread this message of redemption  
through God's Word to every nation.

