

## ***Psalm 116***

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- Background possibilities: Messianic / Jesus before the cross, Hezekiah, King David, Babylonian captives, me / us.
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V: 1 *“I love the Lord, because...”* Every believer should be able to say that without any hesitation.

- Because - He saved me, because He is faithful, because He’s been merciful to me, because he forgave me, the list could go on and on.

*“I love the Lord, because...”* - Specifics, not just generalities.

- Worshipping our Lord is not supposed to be purely an emotional experience, but it should be a cognitive experience as well.
- Thinking, as it is brought out here, about why we love the Lord, not just making the statement without engaging our minds in thought and reason.

**Isaiah 1:18** *“Come now, and let us reason together,” says the LORD, “though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.”*

- As we reason it through with the Lord, we come to the realization that we are sinners lost in our sin, and that we need a Savior, and that He alone can save us, and He does!
- As we pray or worship we should be thinking, not just emoting. Are the lyrics we’re singing true?
- We don’t want to offer mindless prayers or worship to God.

Jesus warns us:

**Matthew 6:7** *“And when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will be heard for their many words.”*

- Not simply repeating a phrase - vain repetitions
- In our praise and in our prayer, we should really seek to render thoughtful intelligent communication to God.
- Worship not just on an emotional level, but in a cognitive, thinking level as well, able to articulate specific reasons for loving God.

Here the Psalmist is specific:

*“I love the Lord, because...”* The Psalmist makes this declaration because the Lord has heard his cry, his prayers, and supplications.

*“because...He has heard”*

- He is **Jehovah-Shammah**, the Lord hears.

**Psalm 34:17** “The righteous cry out, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles.”

- He listens to me. So often our best friends in life are the ones who will simply listen to us, hear us out, engage in two-way conversation, as opposed to a one-way conversation.

The Psalmist declares:

**Psalm 18:1-2** “I will love You, O Lord, my strength. The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God (master passion), my strength, in whom I will trust; my shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold.”

More reasons to love God.

**James 1:17** “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation (fickleness / change) or shadow of turning.”

- He gives us good gifts, like **life**, **breath** in our lungs, **clothes** on our backs, in-n-out **double double** cheeseburgers with grilled onions, children.
- More importantly He gives us **hope** and **purpose**, He gives us **life everlasting**.
- He doesn't change; He's always there. The same yesterday, today, and forever. We can count on Him.
- The list of things that He has done, is doing would certainly be beyond measure or numbering, but there is something that would go at the top of that list: Our salvation!

**John 3:16** “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes on Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

V: 2 Expounding on the thought he presented in the first verse; because He has heard, because He has *“inclined His ear to me.”*

- Inclined: (H-5186) “natah” to extend, or to stretch out, to pay attention.

- The difference being that of “hearing” as in hearing a noise, and “listening”, really listening and processing the thoughts and information being communicated.

“*Because He listens to me...*” Because we have that kind of personal relationship...

“*Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.*” He has learned the value of prayer.

- His is the counsel that I’ll seek, He is the One I will pray to, I will call upon Him.
- In other words, if God is listening, waiting for me to talk to Him – then I’m gonna take advantage of that!

God invites us to ask Him:

**James 1:5** “If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him.”

- The first verse makes the statement that we love the Lord because... I know why I love Him, a good question might be: Why does He love me, us?

Because:

**Deuteronomy 7:6-8** “<sup>6</sup>For you are a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth. <sup>7</sup>The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; <sup>8</sup>but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers,...

- In a certain sense He can’t help it....

**1 John 4:7** “... for God is Love”

- In the next few verses we are given more reasons to love the Lord:

V: 3-8 We see that this Psalm is written from the perspective of a man who is in some kind of deep trouble and thinks that he is going to die. He cries out to God for help, and the Lord delivered him.

- **Sheol**, hell, death, grave, the flames of hell were licking at his feet. Again he’s learned the value of calling out to God.

V: 4 **Turning point:** He cries out to God, but he does so humbly – imploring – begging.

**Micah 6:8** “He has shown you Oh man, what is good and what the Lord requires of you, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.”

**Psalm 51:17** “The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and a contrite heart - these, O God, You will not despise.”

V: 5 As he cries out to the Lord once again he comes to understand that God is gracious, righteous, and merciful. The more we interact with the Lord, we come to the same conclusion - He is gracious, righteous, and merciful.

- **Gracious**, grace: God’s un-merited favor – getting something good that we don’t deserve.
- **Merciful**: not getting what we deserve – judgment.
- **Righteous**: un-compromised rightness: This is where Jesus comes in!

**Romans 6:23** “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

- For God to still be righteous – He can’t bend the rules, someone has to pay the price for our sin, someone has to die.
- The only way that we could pay that debt is with our own lives – with our own death – for eternity.
- Jesus took the penalty for our sin upon Himself. We could die for ourselves and pay the consequences for ourselves, but Christ who created all things, who created all life, *could also pay the penalty for all life*, and did just that!

V: 6 Sometimes we make it all too complicated when God intended it to be simple. The simplicity of the Gospel, the simplicity of salvation.

- God has called us to simple lives.

**2 Corinthians 1:12** “For our rejoicing is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and Godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.”

- Things get pretty complicated and confusing when we’re cheating on our wives, when we’re not telling the truth and trying to remember what we said to who.
- The simplicity of living a transparent life, a life that can be examined by anyone, not having to make any excuses. God has called us to simplicity.

*“The Lord preserves the simple.”*

V: 7 NIV “Be at rest once more...”

- No need to worry – just relax, take a deep breath, let the Lord work.

Jesus said:

**Matthew 11:28-29** “<sup>28</sup>Come unto Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

V: 8 We can relax and be at peace because He’s done the work of salvation.

**Psalm 56:13** “For you have delivered my soul from death, Have You not kept my feet from falling, that I may walk before God in the light of the living?”

- Being saved, he’s been kept from the weeping and wailing, and gnashing of teeth that is associated with being cast into hell.

V: 9 First of the 5 “I will” statements.

V: 9 “I will walk before the Lord...”

V: 13 “I will take up the cup of salvation...”

V: 14 “I will pay my vows to the Lord...”

V: 17 “I will offer to You the sacrifice...”

V: 18 “I will pay my vows to the Lord...”

- Dead men don’t walk, I am alive, I’m will walk! I’ll be a living testimony to God’s grace, and righteousness, and mercy!

**Genesis 17:1** “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to Abram and said to him, I am Almighty God; walk before Me and be perfect.”

- Because of Jesus’ redemptive work in our lives, this is actually possible.
- There are different ways to walk in our relationship with God.
  1. Walk before God, as His herald.
  2. Walk beside God, as His friend, or His child.
  3. Walk behind God, following, as His servant.
  4. Walking in Him, as a believer.
  5. Being carried by Him.
  6. Walk away from God, in rebellion as His enemy.

V: 10 “I believed, therefore I spoke.”

- It is important to say, to speak what we believe. If you believe something, speak it out. There is a releasing of faith in the verbalization, in the articulation

Jesus said:

**Matthew 17:20** "... if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, move from here to there, and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."

- He didn't say if you **think**, or if you **pray**, He said "say to this mountain" – **speak it**.

Paul makes the connection:

**Romans 10:9-10** "9That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession his made unto salvation." (Matthew 10:32-33)

*"I believed, therefore I spoke,..."*

V: 11 Rash statements, things that we say at times, that we wish we hadn't.

- We need to be careful of what we say in haste, it's better to cool down and think about it, then speak if need be.

**James 1:19** "So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath."

V: 12 What can we possibly give to God in exchange for all that He's done for me?

It's already all His anyway:

**Psalms 24:1** "The earth is the Lord's, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein."

- We can come to God and love Him on His terms, offering ourselves because the only thing He wants is us!

*"For all His benefits toward me?"*

- We start off with salvation - a debt that we could never repay, then we start talking about all His blessings - it's too much - all we can do in exchange is offer ourselves.

V: 13 What can we do? We can believe and receive!

**John 6:29** "This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."

*"I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord."*

- We can receive the gift of salvation, entering into a personal relationship with Him, communing with Him in the Spirit in this life, and into all of eternity.

- We can't give Him anything or make any kind of acceptable offering until we have **first established a relationship** with Him, by receiving the cup of salvation offered to us through His Son, Jesus.

**Romans 8:8** "So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God."

- The cup of salvation is partaking in Him:

**1 Corinthians 11:25** "... He also took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

- Remembering Him, when he's healed us, saved us, provided for us, blessed us – remembering Him, calling upon Him.

V: 14 Sometimes we're prone to making vows to God, especially when we're in trouble.

- "God if you'll just get me out of this, I'll ..."
- I've learned not to make vows or promises to God – because I can't keep them.
- If we've made vows or promises to God, He takes us at our word and I believe there is an expectation on His part that we will follow through.

V: 15 God looks upon the death of His saints, those who believe in Him as being precious because it's like a graduation, the finishing of the race - entering into complete un-interrupted communion and fellowship with His children.

- Precious in the sight of the lord because the Lord knows where they are going

**1 Corinthians 2:9** "Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

- Too many people look at heaven as the eternal booby prize; they lost their battle, and so on.
- Remember the account of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus who had died. And that just before Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb, raising him from the dead, how Jesus wept.
- It is possible that one of the reasons that Jesus wept at Lazarus' tomb was because, he knew that Lazarus was coming back to this life.
- There are different things recorded about this incident, but we don't read about what Lazarus said – I'm pretty sure that it wasn't "right on, I'm back!"

- Physical death in the life of a believer is the ultimate healing.
- When a Christian dies it is hard on us, sad for the family, but no one has ever heard a complaint from those who have moved on into eternity.

V: 16 As His servant we've been loosed the bonds of sin, the bonds of death. "Set free!"

**John 8:36** "Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed."

V: 17-19 Expressing a commitment, responding to God's love towards us, I will continue offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and I will call upon the name of the Lord.

**Hebrews 13:15** "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."

*Hallelujah! "Praise the Lord!"*

- This is both a statement / command!
- Praise the name of Jesus.