

My message tonight is titled Gratitude for God's Grace, and it comes from Psalm 106. But Ps. 106 is a continuation of Psalm 105. Psalm 105 highlights God's saving power in bringing the Israelites into the promised land in fulfillment of the covenant He made with Abraham.

God's saving power was evident when he sent Joseph to Egypt to preserve Israel during the seven-year famine. God later raised up Moses to deliver them from their slavery to Pharaoh. It recounts the 10 plagues, God's protection of Israel in the wilderness in the pillar of cloud and fire, his feeding them manna from heaven, giving them water from the rock and dispossessing the Canaanites. All so God can be faithful to His promise to Abraham. For all these God's people are to give thanks.

Psalm 106 rehearses all these events again, but this time the Psalmist highlights Israel's sins, failures, and rebellions along the way. Psalm 106 highlights Israel's rebellion and lack of faith at the Red Sea, through the wilderness wandering, to mixing with the Canaanites, and adopting their all their idolatry and immorality which led to their eventual captivity to Babylon.

Yet, amidst these failures, Psalm 106 showcases God's infinite patience and unwavering love toward us, His

people whom he loves. Our gratitude this thanksgiving must arise from our dependence on God's grace and mercy which remains forever, especially in the face of all our sins.

Introduction: The Call to Thanksgiving (Psalm 106:1-5)

Praise the Lord!

*Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever.*

² *Who can utter the mighty acts of the Lord?
Who can declare all His praise?*

³ *Blessed are those who keep justice,
And he who does righteousness at all times!*

⁴ *Remember me, O Lord, with the favor You have toward Your people.*

Oh, visit me with Your salvation,

⁵ *That I may see the benefit of Your chosen ones,
That I may rejoice in the gladness of Your nation,
That I may glory with Your inheritance.*

Psalm 106:1-5 opens with praise for God's goodness and everlasting love, marveling at His mighty works and blessing those who live righteously. The psalmist personally pleads to be remembered by God and to share in the joy and salvation of His people. This introduction highlights

God's continual faithfulness and sets the tone for the rest of the psalm, which recounts God's enduring mercy, in the face of Israel's continued sins. Thanks be to God that He is always more ready to save, forgive, and restore sinners to Himself and the Church than we are to seek forgiveness and repudiate our sins.

Now the rest of my sermon is going to follow this basic structure: I will read a portion of the text, I will list the sin, and then I will tell of God's gracious response to that sin to Israel, and then show how God ultimately answered that sin in Christ. And then give an application to give thanks for God's grace in Jesus.

1. Failure to Remember God's Works (Psalm 106:6-12)

*⁶ We have sinned with our fathers,
We have committed iniquity,
We have done wickedly.*

*⁷ Our fathers in Egypt did not understand Your wonders;
They did not remember the multitude of Your mercies,
But rebelled by the sea—the Red Sea.*

*⁸ Nevertheless He saved them for His name's sake,
That He might make His mighty power known.*

*⁹ He rebuked the Red Sea also, and it dried up;
So He led them through the depths,*

As through the wilderness.

¹⁰ He saved them from the hand of him who hated them,
And redeemed them from the hand of the enemy.

¹¹ The waters covered their enemies;
There was not one of them left.

¹² Then they believed His words;
They sang His praise.

Sin: Forgetfulness and Lack of Trust

The first failure mentioned in Psalm 106 is Israel's forgetfulness which resulted in lack of trust. When they faced the Red Sea, with Pharaoh's army closing in behind them, they panicked. Fear caused them to forget God's miraculous deliverance from Egypt, and doubt God when the next challenge came.

God's Response:

Despite their doubt, God showed mercy. He parted the sea and lead them to safety on dry ground, and destroyed Pharoah and his army.

Likewise, Christ brings us victoriously through the waters of death in Holy Baptism. By faith we pass through those waters, and being united to Christ in His death and resurrection, we stand upon the seashore looking upon the dead body of the flesh that kept us enslaved to sin.

Application:

Let us give thanks to God for delivering us through the Baptism of Christ, and walk in light of His mercy as sons of God for whom there is now no condemnation.

2. Craving and Discontent (Psalm 106:13-15)

¹³ *They soon forgot His works;
They did not wait for His counsel,*
¹⁴ *But lusted exceedingly in the wilderness,
And tested God in the desert.*
¹⁵ *And He gave them their request,
But sent leanness into their soul.*

Sin: Selfish Desires and Lack of Contentment

Soon after the Red Sea miracle, the hunger in Israel's belly's made the memories in the minds disappear. So with no food in sight Israel began to grumble. God provided them with bread from Heaven, but they were dissatisfied with the manna God provided and longed for the foods of Egypt.

God's Response:

God granted their request for meat and sent them quail to eat, but also sent "leanness into their soul," meaning dissatisfaction. After a month, the quail became

"loathsome" to them, showing that indulging in selfish cravings leads to emptiness and disgust for our sins.

In contrast, Jesus provides true satisfaction. He said, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:51). Jesus fulfills the deepest hunger of the heart, offering a lasting satisfaction that those who live by faith will cherish forever.

Application:

Let us give thanks to Christ, who alone our souls doth feed, He is our meat and drink indeed. Faith lives upon no other. Hallelujah!

3. Jealousy and Rebellion (Psalm 106:16-18)

¹⁶ *When they envied Moses in the camp,
And Aaron the saint of the Lord,*

¹⁷ *The earth opened up and swallowed Dathan,
And covered the faction of Abiram.*

¹⁸ *A fire was kindled in their company;
The flame burned up the wicked.*

Sin: Envy of God's Appointed Leaders

Israel's envy turned to rebellion when Korah and others challenged Moses and Aaron's authority. This rebellion wasn't just against human leaders but against God Himself, who had appointed Moses and Aaron. Their pride and envy was a rejection of God's chosen leaders of His people.

God's Response:

In response, God acted decisively, opening the earth to swallow the rebels, and fire from heaven to consume the rebels, showing the seriousness of their sin. This event serves as a powerful reminder of the respect due to God's chosen servants whom He calls to lead His people.

Indeed, Moses was faithful as a servant. But Christ is faithful as a Son, and so has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses. And like Moses, who was the meekest man to ever have lived, Jesus made himself of no reputation and took upon himself the form of a slave, and humbled himself to death on a cross.

Application:

Let us therefore give thanks that Christ's glory came through His humiliation. When envy and pride enter our hearts, we are rejecting Jesus as our Master. He did nothing through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind esteemed others better than himself. Let us therefore not look only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others, as Christ did.

4. Idolatry and Forgetting God (Psalm 106:19-23)

¹⁹ They made a calf in Horeb,
And worshiped the molded image.
²⁰ Thus they changed their glory
Into the image of an ox that eats grass.
²¹ They forgot God their Savior,
Who had done great things in Egypt,
²² Wondrous works in the land of Ham,
Awesome things by the Red Sea.

²³ Therefore He said that He would destroy them,
Had not Moses His chosen one stood before Him in the breach,
To turn away His wrath, lest He destroy them.

Sin: Worship of False Gods

One of Israel's greatest failings occurred at Mount Sinai, where they crafted a golden calf and attributed their deliverance to it, robbing God of His glory and power.

God's Response:

God's wrath burned hot against Israel, and He was ready to destroy them. But Moses interceded, pleading on their behalf, and God relented.

This act of intercession points to Jesus, our ultimate intercessor. Hebrews 7:25 reminds us that Jesus continually intercedes for us before the Father, ensuring that God's

mercy triumphs over judgment. Christ's intercession is the ultimate reminder of God's love for a lost world trapped in its sin and idolatry.

Application:

Let us therefore give thanks to God for Christ's intercession, and let us abandon the idols in our lives. Thanksgiving reorients us to worship Christ alone, who brought us out of the Egypt of our sin, and who intercedes on our behalf before the Father.

5. Despising the Promised Land (Psalm 106:24-27)

²⁴ *Then they despised the pleasant land;
They did not believe His word,*

²⁵ *But complained in their tents,
And did not heed the voice of the Lord.*

²⁶ *Therefore He raised His hand in an oath against them,
To overthrow them in the wilderness,*

²⁷ *To overthrow their descendants among the nations,
And to scatter them in the lands.*

Sin: Rejection of God's Gift and Promise

When Israel reached the borders of the Promised Land, they doubted God's promise to give them the land. Like at

the Red Sea, they focused on the challenges they saw ahead of them, rather than the miracles of God's power they saw behind them, and the certainty of God's word spoken to them. They hardened their hearts and did not listen to God's voice. Their lack of faith led them to reject God's rest.

God's Response:

So God swore in His wrath that they would not enter into His rest. But there still remains a promise of entering God's rest, for Jesus is our rest, who has gone before us to the Heavenly Canaan.

Application:

Let us give thanks that Christ accomplished a greater rest than Moses or Joshua could bring the people to, and let us today hear His voice and not harden our hearts, so that we may enter into that rest by faith.

6. Joining with Pagan Worship (Psalm 106:28-31)

²⁸ *They joined themselves also to Baal of Peor,
And ate sacrifices made to the dead.*

²⁹ *Thus they provoked Him to anger with their deeds,
And the plague broke out among them.*

³⁰ *Then Phinehas stood up and intervened,
And the plague was stopped.*

³¹ *And that was accounted to him for righteousness
To all generations forevermore.*

Sin: Participation in Pagan Practices

When Israel joined with the Moabites in worshiping Baal, they abandoned the worship of the true and living God to serve a dead idol, and engaged in sexual immorality.

God's Response:

God's wrath was kindled against them, and Phineas, full of zeal put an end to the plague that God made break out among the people. Phinehas's zeal foreshadows the zeal of Christ, who, by His own perfect sacrifice, satisfied God's wrath against us.

Application:

Let us give thanks to Christ for being the propitiation for our sins and for diverting God's wrath away from us. And, let us abstain from sexual immorality, and learn how to possess our own bodies in sanctification and honor, not in passion of lust like those who do not know God.

7. Provoking God through Disobedience (Psalm 106:32-33)

³² *They angered Him also at the waters of strife,
So that it went ill with Moses on account of them;*

³³ *Because they rebelled against His Spirit,
So that he spoke rashly with his lips.*

Sin: Provoking God's Anger through Persistent Disobedience

At Meribah, Israel's complaints and disobedience eventually provoked Moses to act out of frustration, striking the rock instead of speaking to it. Moses's failure, though understandable, showed that Moses is not sufficient to save us, and that we need living water to give us true life.

God's Response:

Though God provided water from the rock for the people in the wilderness, we learn in the Gospel that Jesus is the true Rock from whom living water flows (John 4:10-14). When he was pierced by the Roman's Soldiers spear, blood and water flowed forth from his side, bringing a river of living water to renew all things.

Application:

Let us give thanks for Christ, our Rock, who is the Water of Life. And let us drink deeply from Him by faith, and live and be satisfied in God.

8. Failure to Destroy Pagan Nations (Psalm 106:34-39)

³⁴ They did not destroy the peoples,
Concerning whom the Lord had commanded them,

³⁵ But they mingled with the Gentiles
And learned their works;

³⁶ They served their idols,
Which became a snare to them.

³⁷ They even sacrificed their sons
And their daughters to demons,

³⁸ And shed innocent blood,
The blood of their sons and daughters,
Whom they sacrificed to the idols of Canaan;
And the land was polluted with blood.

³⁹ Thus they were defiled by their own works,
And played the harlot by their own deeds.

⁴⁰ Therefore the wrath of the Lord was kindled against His people,
So that He abhorred His own inheritance.

⁴¹ And He gave them into the hand of the Gentiles,
And those who hated them ruled over them.

⁴² Their enemies also oppressed them,
And they were brought into subjection under their hand.

⁴³ Many times He delivered them;
But they rebelled in their counsel,
And were brought low for their iniquity.

Sin: Disobedience and Compromise with Sinful Nations

When Israel entered the Promised Land, they failed to obey God's command to fully drive out the pagan nations. They compromised their faith and were taught to sacrifice their children to demons, which polluted the land with their blood.

God's Response:

This great evil resulted in God's judgment. He sent enemies to them to oppress them and afflict them, many times, for God will not tolerate His people to sacrifice their children to demons.

Application:

Let us give thanks that God's reckons our children as Holy, and that he saves them by the washing of regeneration and the renewal of the Holy Spirit. Let us give thanks that the kingdom of God belongs to these little ones.

And let us pray that the wicked evil act of abortion, which is a sacrifice to demon gods, would be altogether eliminated in this land, and Christ's blood would cleanse this land of its blood guilt, that we would not be destroyed by our sins and by enemies, foreign or domestic.

9. Conclusion: God's Compassion and Covenant Faithfulness (Psalm 106:44-48)

⁴⁴ Nevertheless He regarded their affliction,
When He heard their cry;

⁴⁵ And for their sake He remembered His covenant,
And relented according to the multitude of His mercies.

⁴⁶ He also made them to be pitied
By all those who carried them away captive.

⁴⁷ Save us, O Lord our God,
And gather us from among the Gentiles,

Despite Israel's failures, Psalm 106 ends with a reminder of God's compassion and covenant faithfulness: "He remembered His covenant and relented in His mercy" (v. 45). God's covenant is a binding promise of love, ultimately fulfilled in Jesus. Through Christ, God has extended mercy to the whole world, showing that God's love is greater than our sin. For His mercy triumphs over judgment.

Key Point:

Let our hearts overflow with gratitude for God's love that discipline us as children and does not punish us as we deserve; for God's mercy that hears us when we cry out to him, and for God's love that saves us from our sins, and unto eternal glory.

*Give thanks to His holy name,
Triumph in His praise.*

⁴⁸ *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel
From everlasting to everlasting!
And let all the people say, “Amen!”*

Praise the Lord!