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“Oh give thanks to the LORD for he is good”:

Affective Hermeneutics, Psalm 107, and Pentecostal Spirituality

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Abstract

Biblical studies have focused upon the rational content of the biblical text; even when utilizing rhetorical methods, they have virtually ignored the affective dimension of the biblical argument. Rhetoricians have shown that effective rhetoric includes affective argumentation, and recent studies have demonstrated the role of the affect in human decision making. It is argued here that no matter what methods are being used in biblical study, the affective dimension of the text should be taken into account. This article models the affective approach by means of a study of Psalm 107, which is shown to generate the affection of gratitude. The article then demonstrates how the affection of gratitude might be incorporated into Pentecostal spirituality and practice.

Keywords

affections – hermeneutics – gratitude – spirituality – spiritual formation

Introduction

... somewhere I read of the freedom of assembly. Somewhere I read of the freedom of speech. Somewhere I read of the freedom of press. Somewhere

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I read that the greatness of America is the right to protest for rights. So just as I say we aren't going to let any dogs or water hoses turn us around, we aren't going to let any injunction turn us around.

Well I don't know what will happen now. We've got some difficult days ahead. But it really doesn't matter to me now because I've been to the mountaintop. And I don't mind. Like anybody, I would like to live a long life, longevity has its place. But I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. And he's allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I've looked over, and I've seen the promised land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know tonight that we as a people will get to the promised land. So I'm happy tonight; I'm not worried about anything; I'm not fearing any man. "Mine eyes have seen the glory of the coming of the LORD."¹

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The last public speech of Martin Luther King, Jr. demonstrates his consummate skill as a communicator. King's masterful rhetoric captivated multitudes and changed the course of history. Although Dr. King is not the subject of this article, his speeches and writings illustrate the fact that the shaping of a community's worldview, ethics, opinions, and theology is influenced by both logical reasoning and affective desire. King illustrates this point because a significant component of his speeches and writings is the affective dimension of his argument—his appeal to the hearts and passions of the hearers. The genius of King's approach lies in his unequalled ability to address both the mind and the heart as he alternates between impeccable logic and affectional appeal. The biblical writers followed a similar approach by combining both logical and affective argumentation.

King was not the first, and he was not the last, to combine appeals to both reason and affection in order to create a holistic argument. I might have used an excerpt from a political campaign speech, a beer commercial, or a clip from

1 The SPS presentation began with this excerpt from Martin Luther King's speech, which can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YB4bV34G17g&feature=youtu.be>. A better example of King's approach (but not available on video) is his "Letter from Birmingham Jail," which is perhaps his finest literary achievement and most profound defense of his nonviolent program. Its full text is included in Martin Luther King, *Why We Can't Wait* (New York: Harper & Row, 1964), 64–84. See my literary study of the "Letter": Lee Roy Martin, "Letter from Birmingham Jail," in *Masterplots II: Christian Literature*, ed. Laurence W. Mazzeno, 4th ed. (12 vols., Pasadena, CA: Salem Press, 2010), 6.3200–3202, available at http://www.leeroymartin.com/CPT/LRM_Writings.html.

cable news. All of these means of communication take advantage of the human tendency to choose and act according to desire rather than reason. The basic affections of humanity, love, gratitude, hope, hate, fear, belonging, intimacy, and purpose are instruments used in the media to produce a change of attitude, will, or behavior in their audience. Advertisements, for example, create desire. Apple CEO Steve Jobs remarked that “people don’t know what they want until you show it to them.”²

I could have chosen examples from such ancient writers as Demosthenes, Cicero, Gorgias,³ or Aristotle⁴ who made use of affective language in their speeches. I could have cited modern leaders who used affective appeal as a key component of their arguments—people like Theodore Roosevelt, Winston Churchill, Indira Gandhi, John F. Kennedy, Nelson Mandela, Shirley Chisholm, and, on the negative front, Adolf Hitler. The biblical writers, like other authors before them and after them, combined both logical and affective argumentation.

When I speak of the affections, I mean more than “emotions.” Emotions are temporary responses to surrounding stimuli, but affections are lasting dispositions, our deepest desires. Pentecostal theologian Dale Coulter writes, “As innate dispositions, the affections are movements that arise from human nature and also form it in particular ways as persons habituate themselves to this or that set of objects.”⁵ Emotions and affections are vitally connected, however: the affections often generate emotions; emotions can be indicators of the affections; and the affections can be stirred by emotional appeals.⁶

2 Steve Jobs and George W. Beahm, *I, Steve: Steve Jobs, in His Own Words* (Chicago, IL: Agate, 2011), 1997.

3 The Greek rhetorician Gorgias (ca. 485–380 BCE) argued that “the function of an orator is not logical demonstration so much as emotional presentation that will stir the audience’s will to believe” (George Alexander Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric & Its Christian & Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999], 36).

4 Cf. Eugene Garver, *Aristotle’s Rhetoric: An Art of Character* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 104–138.

5 Dale M. Coulter, “The Whole Gospel for the Whole Person: Ontology, Affectivity, and Sacramentality,” *Pneuma* 35, no. 2 (2013): 157.

6 Theologians, scientists, and psychologists have not agreed upon the definitions of “emotion” and “affections,” and they have not determined the exact connection between the two. My approach is stated above; however, my argument does not require a precise formulation of this connection. See Thomas Dixon, *From Passions to Emotions: The Creation of a Secular Psychological Category* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Monica Greco and Paul Stenner, *Emotions: A Social Science Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2008); Gregory

Steven Jack Land, in his ground-breaking work *Pentecostal Spirituality*, argued that the affections of “gratitude as praise-thanks-giving, compassion as love-longing, and courage as confidence-hope”⁷ form the “integrating center” of Pentecostal spirituality.⁸ John Christopher Thomas names five affections that correspond broadly to the elements of the Fivefold Gospel: Salvation/Gratitude, Sanctification/Compassion, Spirit Baptism/Courage, Healing/Joy, Return of Jesus/Hope. He writes, “While it is possible to construe the relationship between the elements of the five-fold and the transformation of the affections differently, these should serve to illustrate the point that the Pentecostal interpreter’s formation within the worshipping Pentecostal community, not only opens one up to interpretive possibilities based on his or her experience, but also has a deeply transforming impact upon the interpreter’s affections, which itself orients the interpretive process for the Pentecostal interpreter.”⁹ Consequently, according to Wolfgang Vondey, “Pentecostal scholarship arises from the affections rather than intellectual ability. The emphasis on love, passion, desire, feeling, or emotion rejects the sole rule of the intellect while attempting to integrate the right affections” with the right thinking and the right practices.¹⁰

Recognizing the complex argumentation found in the biblical text, James Muilenburg challenged biblical scholars to move beyond the methodology of

S. Clapper, “Affections,” in *Dictionary of Scripture and Ethics*, ed. Joel B. Green (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2011): 44–45.

7 Steven Jack Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality: A Passion for the Kingdom* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2010), 47.

8 *Ibid.*, 50, 52, 63. See also Steven J. Land, “A Passion for the Kingdom: Revisioning Pentecostal Spirituality,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 1 (1992): 34–35.

9 John Christopher Thomas, “‘What the Spirit Is Saying to the Church’: The Testimony of a Pentecostal in New Testament Studies,” in *Spirit and Scripture: Exploring a Pneumatic Hermeneutic*, ed. Kevin L. Spawn and Archie T. Wright (New York: T & T Clark, 2012), 117. For more on a theological approach to the affections, see Gregory S. Clapper, *John Wesley on Religious Affections: His Views on Experience and Emotion and Their Role in the Christian Life and Theology* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1989), and Daniel Castelo, “Tarrying on the LORD: Affections, Virtues and Theological Ethics in Pentecostal Perspective,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13, no. 1 (2004): 31–56.

10 Wolfgang Vondey, *Pentecostalism: A Guide for the Perplexed* (New York: T & T Clark, 2013), 139. He adds, “... arising from the pursuit of affective knowledge, Pentecostal scholarship dominated by the imagination rather than reason. ... The imagination stands in contrast to the dominance of reason and order; it is more improvisational, more playful than the productivity, performance, and instrumentality demanded by the established institutions, disciplines, languages, and methodologies of the modern academy” (139).

form criticism and to pursue rhetorical criticism.¹¹ Rhetoric, according to Aristotle, “may be defined as a faculty of discovering all the possible means of persuasion on any subject,” and those means include both *logos* (the rational) and *pathos* (the affective).¹² Similarly, rhetorical criticism as practiced by biblical scholars examines “the literary artistry of a biblical book or biblical passage and ... the techniques that they used to manipulate their readers, to argue their case, and to persuade their audience of the validity of their argument.”¹³

Rhetorical criticism (sometimes called literary criticism) grew quickly in its appeal and is now recognized widely in the academy as a valuable approach to biblical studies.¹⁴ Despite the contemporary plethora of rhetorical studies, however, the affective argument of the text, what Aristotle called *pathos*, continues to be undervalued and generally avoided. I argue that the biblical writers adopted a rhetorical approach that took advantage of what they knew to be true about human dependence upon the affect as a constituent of the decision-making process. Therefore, the affective dimension of biblical rhetoric, which has been viewed by critical biblical scholars as peripheral at best, should be taken seriously as a necessary ingredient of a complete exegetical and hermeneutical approach to the biblical text.

At this point I would offer two points of clarification. First, when biblical scholars encounter the word *affective*, they equate it with spiritualizing, preaching, subjectivism, confessional readings, allegory, and any variety of nonacademic ways of approaching the Bible. My proposal, however, is not an affirmation of noncritical approaches, nor is it a move to create a new interpretational method, but it is limited to the argument that no matter what methods are used, an examination of the affective component of the text must be included as a part of the holistic interpretational process.

Second, although it is helpful (for the sake of argument) to distinguish between rational proofs and affective proofs, that distinction must not become absolute. Reason always includes an element of emotion and the affect is in part rational. Coulter explains:

Affections are also movements of the rational soul and therefore have a cognitive dimension. Desire, joy, anger, fear, and other affective movements all relate to some object ... to view affections in this way is to get

11 James Muilenburg, “Form Criticism and Beyond,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 1–18.

12 Aristotle and J.E.C. Weldon, *The Rhetoric of Aristotle* (London: Macmillan, 1886), 10.

13 Eryl W. Davies, *Biblical Criticism* (London: T & T Clark, 2013), 108.

14 Cf. *ibid.*, 107–112.

back behind the view of emotions as involuntary, irrational feelings that emerged and then became dominant in the late 18th and 19th centuries ...¹⁵

The Affective Nature of Humanity

Biblical scholarship has operated under the false assumption that humans are primarily rational creatures, but recent studies have demonstrated the contrary. Jonathan Haidt, after many years of clinical psychological research, argues that the affections, not reason, rule the human decision-making process. He insists, “The worship of reason, which is sometimes found in philosophical and scientific circles, is a delusion.”¹⁶ James K.A. Smith offers a similar assessment from a philosophical and theological perspective. Smith argues that humans are fundamentally affective rather than rational creatures, and that human behavior is ruled by the affections rather than by the mind.¹⁷ He argues convincingly that the way humans “inhabit the world is not primarily as thinkers, or even believers, but as more affective, embodied creatures.”¹⁸

The conclusions of Haidt and Smith suggest that the biblical writers would be expected to present their arguments in a holistic fashion that includes both logical and affective proofs. Observation demonstrates that every biblical text includes an affective dimension, which may involve hope or despair, love or hate, trust or fear, admiration or scorn, pride or shame, to mention but a few examples, although the affective aspect varies in prominence from one text to another. The study of biblical literature, therefore, can benefit from an exegetical approach that appreciates the affective dimensions of the text. Takamitsu

15 Coulter, “The Whole Gospel,” 158. Closely related to the discussion of affectivity and deserving of an entire study is the interpretation of biblical literature as art. Wayne C. Booth, *Modern Dogma and the Rhetoric of Assent* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1974), argues that art “is of fundamental importance in making and changing our minds” (168). He writes, “We are what we have consumed; we take in whatever takes us in, and we are forever altered” (167).

16 Jonathan Haidt, *The Righteous Mind: Why Good People Are Divided by Politics and Religion* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2012), 107, cf. 34, 103. My thanks to Walter Brueggemann for pointing me to Haidt’s book.

17 James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009).

18 *Ibid.*, 47.

Muraoka insists that “one ought not to dissociate form from meaning, for literary and rhetorical devices constitute part of the meaning and message.”¹⁹

Until now, scholars have attended to the rational approach, but newer approaches such as sociolinguistics, speech-act theory, *Wirkungsgeschichte*, narrative criticism, and reader-oriented approaches all beg for something more than a hermeneutic focused on rational, logical ideas. My point is that no matter what critical method is used, whether it be historical-grammatical exegesis, sociological interpretation, ideological approaches, feminist approaches, contextual approaches, or ideological approaches, every aspect of the text should be considered, and the affective dimension is one aspect of the text.

An Opportunity for Pentecostal Scholars

Although the study of affective language is not a uniquely Pentecostal approach, Pentecostal scholars are in a good position to utilize their insights in this area, as has been demonstrated by Rickie D. Moore,²⁰ Larry McQueen,²¹ and others.²² The affective spirituality of Pentecostalism means that we come to the text with an openness and sensitivity to elements of text that other scholars may not perceive. Nevertheless, I recognize the dangers in advocating for an affective approach. Pentecostals are already caricatured as “emotional,” “experience centered,” and lacking in critical skills. It is likely that any appeal to

19 T. Muraoka, “Foreword,” in L.J. de Regt et al., *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible* (Assen, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1996), x.

20 In his review of Rickie Moore’s *The Spirit of the Old Testament*, Richard Israel observes, “Perhaps the most significant aspect of the book is the consistent sensitivity to the affective dimension of the texts.” Richard D. Israel, “Rickie D. Moore, *The Spirit of the Old Testament*,” *JPTSup* 35 (Blandford Forum, UK: Deo Publishing, 2011), *Pneuma* 35, no. 3 (2013): 449.

21 Larry R. McQueen, *Joel and the Spirit: The Cry of a Prophetic Hermeneutic* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2009).

22 Robert O. Baker, “Pentecostal Bible Reading: Toward a Model of Reading for the Formation of the Affections,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 7 (1995): 34–38. John Christopher Thomas, *The Apocalypse: A Literary and Theological Commentary* (Cleveland, TN: CPT Press, 2012), pays close attention to the affective language of the Apocalypse. For my own contribution in this area, see Lee Roy Martin, “God at Risk: Divine Vulnerability in Judges 10:6–16,” *Old Testament Essays* 18, no. 3 (2005): 722–740; idem, “‘Where Are the Wonders?: The Exodus Motif in the Book of Judges,’” *Journal of Biblical and Pneumatological Research* 2 (2010): 87–109; idem, “Delight in the Torah: The Affective Dimension of Psalm 1,” *Old Testament Essays* 23, no. 3 (2010): 708–727; idem, “Longing for God: Psalm 63 and Pentecostal Spirituality,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 22, no. 1 (2013): 54–76.

affectivity will only add fuel to the fire. I respond to this objection with three assertions.

First, we should acknowledge God's gifts to us, and our scholarship should take full advantage of those gifts. It might be argued that we should avoid writing on Pentecostal topics because that is what others expect of us, and it feeds stereotypes. While I agree that Pentecostal topics and methods must not be our only contribution to the academy, we must share our riches with those outside our tradition. As Peter said, "Silver and gold have I none, but such as I have I give to thee ..." (Acts 3:2). Every tradition brings its own gifts to the theological discussion and those gifts must not be abandoned. I am not asking that we be sectarian, and I am not asking that we give our attention *only* to Pentecostal topics. Nevertheless, I am insisting that we must not withhold what God has given to us. God has given us eyes to see in Scripture what other scholars do not see. God has given us ears to hear what other scholars do not hear, and if we fail to testify to what we have seen and heard then we will fall short of our calling as scholars.²³

Second, we will always face opposition, but so did our Pentecostal founders. We would not be here today if the disciples on the day of Pentecost had withdrawn into the shadows when faced with the criticism, "these people are drunk" (Acts 2:13). Because the early disciples did not shrink back from sharing their newly found life in the Spirit, the Christian Church was born. We would not be here today if William Seymour had capitulated to the scorn and ridicule that was heaped upon him from nearly every direction. Because Seymour and his contemporaries did not retreat from their Pentecostal passion, they were able to revolutionize the twentieth-century church. The question of Acts 2:12, "What meaneth this?" is the question of biblical scholars, and just like in Acts 2, the answer can come only when the interpreters are filled with the Holy Spirit, a filling that generates newness, creativity, revelation, and wisdom.²⁴ Perhaps Pentecostal scholars will be able to transform the academy in the twenty-first century.

There will always be critics. Biblical scholars live to criticize, and no matter what we do, we will be criticized. Therefore, I suggest that if we are to be criticized, let us be criticized for being constructive, engaging, vigorous, and creative rather than for being stale, accommodating, unimaginative, and docile. If

23 Cf. the oft-repeated comment of my good friend John Christopher Thomas: "If we don't do it, who will?"

24 See my "Introduction to Pentecostal Biblical Hermeneutics," in *Pentecostal Hermeneutics: A Reader*, ed. Lee Roy Martin (Leiden: Brill, 2013): 1–10.

Roger Stronstad had feared criticism, he would never have published his *Charismatic Theology of St. Luke*,²⁵ and we and the larger academy would have been much poorer.

Third, we must not underestimate the contemporary openness of some biblical scholars to new perspectives and creative approaches. The SPS biblical studies interest group has seen this openness from notable biblical scholars who have engaged in dialogue with us, including Walter Brueggemann, Frederick Gaiser, Craig Koester, Richard Bauckham, Terence Fretheim, Mark Boda, and Luke Timothy Johnson. I might add that I presented an earlier version of this article as a paper at the Annual Meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature (2013), and it was well received. Several of the listeners affirmed my thesis and offered examples of where the affective aspect of the text could have an important impact on interpretation.

It has also been suggested to me that affectivity belongs not in biblical studies but in homiletics. I respond first to that assertion with a side note: I would to God that contemporary homiletics would include the affective, but I fear that rationalism has taken over most preaching as well. Educated preachers seem to be afraid (!) of affectivity. Most Western sermons focus upon the teaching of right doctrine and right practices to the exclusion of forming right affections, and other sermons are little more than self-help advice.²⁶ Second, I respond that the concern of biblical studies is the biblical text; and if the biblical text contains affective material, then affectivity must be a necessary part of biblical exegesis.

A Critical Approach to Affective Language

In an earlier article on Psalm 63, I described the affective approach in four steps, which I repeat here:

First, the hearer of [Scripture] must identify and acknowledge the affective dimensions of the text, an acknowledgement that is by no means automatic or common for scholars, who tend to concentrate their attention upon historical critical concerns. Every [biblical text] includes an affective dimension ... the hearer [must] give attention to its emotive content.

25 Roger Stronstad, *The Charismatic Theology of St. Luke* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1984).

26 I realize that I have engaged in a bit of hyperbole for rhetorical effect. Recently, a number of homileticians have given significant attention to the affective dimension of preaching.

Second, the hearer of the [biblical text] must acknowledge his or her own passions that are brought to the interpretive process. It is important that the hearer of the text recognize when his or her affections correspond to the affections of [the text] and when they do not correspond, because the passions of the hearer can dramatically impact the resulting interpretation.

Third, the hearer of [Scripture] must be open to the emotive impact of the text. Before the hearer can experience the affective dimension of the text, he or she may be required to enter the world of the [text] and to enter the emotive flow of the textual stream. ...

Fourth, the hearer must allow himself or herself to be transformed by the affective experiencing of the [text]. As the hearer engages the biblical text, his or her affections are shaped by that engagement ... desires of the heart are transformed and redirected toward God so that the affections of gratitude, trust, and love (affections that foster worship) are generated and nourished.

Although I would insist that the third and fourth moves are essential to an affective engagement with the text, I would admit that they are difficult (if not impossible) to accomplish within a written document. They are experiences that may be validated by testimony and description (as in my own testimony that began this article), but the transformative experience itself is outside the bounds of written discourse.²⁷

This article is an expansion of only the first point, along with its implications for interpretation. Every text includes an affective dimension, but the level of affective content varies from one text to another, depending upon the genre of the text in question. The highest concentration of affective language will be found, of course, in the poetic literature such as that found in the Psalms, the prophets, and the apocalyptic literature. The lowest concentration of affective language will be found in the narrative texts, but even the simplest narrative creates a certain tone to which the reader responds unconsciously.

The process of identifying the affective content of a text begins with locating any words or phrases whose content is explicitly affective. Such words as “love,” “hate,” “anger,” “desire,” “fear,” “hope,” and “gratitude” are affective by definition and are easily located. In addition to naming the explicitly affective terminology, the passage should be examined for more subtle indicators of affective tone.

²⁷ Martin, “Longing for God,” 59–60.

Once the affective content of the text has been identified, it should be interpreted with same care that is afforded to propositional or rational content. The goal is to determine how the tone may contribute to shaping the reader's perceptions of the text—that is, to determine how the implied reader (and/or readers from any specific reading community or context) might be influenced by the affective dimensions of the text. The reader's context will produce a bias (either conscious or unconscious) that should also be acknowledged critically in the interpretive process.

An Affective Study of Psalm 107

We will turn now to Psalm 107 and attempt to discern its affective dimension. In order to appreciate its impact, we should read the entire psalm at once.

Psalm 107

Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good;
For his lovingkindness is everlasting.

- 2 Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,
Whom he has redeemed from the hand of the adversary,
- 3 And gathered from the lands, From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.
- 4 They wandered in the wilderness in a desert region;
They did not find a way to an inhabited city.
- 5 Hungry and thirsty;
Their soul fainted within them.
- 6 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;
He delivered them out of their distresses.
- 7 He led them also by a straight way,
To go to an inhabited city.
- 8 Oh that they would give thanks to the LORD for his lovingkindness,
And for his wonders to the children of humanity!
- 9 For he has satisfied the thirsty soul,
And the hungry soul he has filled with what is good.
- 10 Those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Prisoners in misery and chains,

- 11 Because they had rebelled against the words of God,
 And spurned the counsel of the Most High,
12 He humbled their heart with labor;
 They stumbled and there was none to help.
13 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;
 He saved them out of their distresses.
14 He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death,
 And broke their bands apart.
15 Oh that they would give thanks to the LORD for his lovingkindness,
 And for his wonders to the children of humanity!
16 For he has shattered gates of bronze,
 And cut bars of iron asunder.
- 17 Fools, because of their rebellious way
 And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.
18 Their soul abhorred all kinds of food;
 And they drew near to the gates of death.
19 Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;
 He saved them out of their distresses.
20 He sent his word and healed them,
 And brought escape from their destructions.
21 Oh that they would give thanks to the LORD for his lovingkindness,
 And for his wonders to the children of humanity!
22 Let them also offer sacrifices of thanksgiving,
 And tell of his works with joyful singing.
- 23 Those going down to the sea in ships,
 Doing business on great waters;
24 They have seen the works of the LORD,
 And his wonders in the deep.
25 He spoke and raised up a stormy wind,
 Which lifted up the waves of the sea.
26 They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths;
 Their soul melted away in *their* misery.
27 They reeled and staggered like a drunken man,
 And were at their wits' end.
28 Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,
 And he brought them out of their distresses.
29 He caused the storm to be still,
 So that the waves of the sea were hushed.

- 30 Then they were glad because they were quiet;
 So he guided them to their desired haven.
- 31 Oh that they would give thanks to the LORD for his lovingkindness,
 And for his wonders to the children of humanity!
- 32 Let them exalt him also in the congregation of the people,
 And praise him at the seat of the elders.
- 33 He changed rivers into a wilderness,
 And springs of water into a thirsty ground;
- 34 A fruitful land into a salt waste,
 Because of the wickedness of those who dwell in it.
- 35 He changed a wilderness into a pool of water,
 And a dry land into springs of water;
- 36 And there he settled the hungry,
 So that they may establish an inhabited city,
- 37 And sow fields, and plant vineyards,
 And gather a fruitful harvest.
- 38 Also he blessed them and they multiplied greatly;
 And he did not diminish their cattle.
- 39 When they were diminished and bowed down
 Through oppression, misery, and sorrow,
- 40 He poured contempt upon princes,
 And made them wander in a pathless waste.
- 41 But he set on high the needy securely away from affliction,
 And made *his* families like a flock.
- 42 The upright will see it, and are glad;
 But all unrighteousness shuts its mouth.
- 43 Who is wise? Let him give heed to these things;
 And consider the lovingkindnesses of the LORD.

Psalm 107 is the first psalm in Book Five of the Psalter, and its dual nature as a call to worship and a word of instruction makes it a fitting introduction to the final division of the Psalter.²⁸ As a teaching psalm, it corresponds to Psalm 1,

²⁸ For Psalm 107 as a psalm of “instruction based on thanksgiving,” see John W. Roffey,

forming something of an *inclusio* in that Books One and Five both begin with words of instruction.²⁹ As a call to praise, it serves as a fitting introduction to Book Five, which is weighted heavily toward communal praise. Psalm 107 contains several verbal connections to Psalms 105 and 106, and Ps 107:2–3 (“the redeemed ... whom he has gathered from the lands”) seems to display the answer to the final prayer of Psalm 106: “Save us, O LORD our God, / And gather us from among the nations” (v. 47).³⁰ Thus, Psalm 107 moves implicitly from exilic life to postexilic life.

The psalm begins like a hymn of praise, with a call to worship expressed in the imperative plural (יִרְהוּ), “Give thanks to the LORD because he is good and his lovingkindness (רַחֲמֵי) is forever.”

With verse two, the exhortation changes to the third person “let them say” (יֹאמְרוּ), and the third-person verb forms continue through the second section of the psalm (vv. 2–32), which is made up of a fourfold recital of salvation: 1. the lost are guided by the LORD (vv. 2–9);³¹ 2. the bound are freed by the LORD (vv. 10–16); 3. the sick are healed by the LORD (vv. 17–22), and 4. the storm-tossed are protected by the LORD (vv. 23–32).

The third section of the psalm, a reflection upon the LORD’s lovingkindness,³² is dominated by nine statements in which God is the subject of the verb: “he changed,” “he changed,” “he settled,” “he blessed,” “he did not diminish,” “he poured,” “he made to wander,” “he set on high,” “he made.” God’s actions to bless and to curse reflect the Deuteronomic and/or wisdom traditions.³³

The fourth and final section, a concluding word of instruction about the LORD’s lovingkindness (*hesed*), exhorts the “upright” and the “wise” to “discern the lovingkindness of the LORD.” The ending of the psalm suggests that thanksgiving leads to greater understanding (discernment) of the LORD and the LORD’s ways.³⁴

“Beyond Reality: Poetic Discourse and Psalm 107,” in *Biblical Itinerary*, ed. E.E. Carpenter (Sheffield, UK: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 62.

29 The five books begin at Psalms 1, 42, 73, 90, and 107. If it were not for Psalm 42, every book would begin with a psalm of instruction.

30 Cf. Nancy L. DeClaissé-Walford, *Introduction to the Psalms: A Song from Ancient Israel* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2004), 115.

31 The phrase “the redeemed of the LORD” is found only here and in Isaiah 61:12.

32 Cf. Frank-Lothar Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2011), 101.

33 Roffey, “Beyond Reality: Poetic Discourse and Psalm 107,” 70–71.

34 *Ibid.*, 75.

Structure of Psalm 107

- I. Call to Worship v. 1³⁵
- II. Fourfold Recital of Salvation (vv. 2–32)
 - A. The lost are guided by the LORD (vv. 2–9)
 - B. The bound are freed by the LORD (vv. 10–16)
 - C. The sick are healed by the LORD (vv. 17–22)
 - D. The storm-tossed are protected by the LORD (vv. 23–32)
- III. Reflection on Yahweh's *Hesed* (vv. 33–41)
- IV. Concluding Praise of *Hesed* (vv. 42–43)

The psalm is dominated by the four salvation stories in the second section, each of which includes the following elements: 1. The sufferers are named, whether it be the redeemed who wander, the imprisoned, the fools, or the seafarers. The sufferers are identified grammatically by means of substantives (nouns or participles, masculine plural) 2. Their distress is described (as past tense, including iterative *yiqtol*s). 3. Their cry and deliverance is narrated with very little variation, “They cried unto Yahweh in their trouble, and he saved them from their distresses.” Verses 6 and 28 use the Hebrew צעק to signify “cry,” while vv. 13 and 19 use the synonym זעק. Yahweh’s intervention is described using the word ישע (“save”) in vv. 13 and 19, v. 6 uses נצל (“deliver”), and v. 28 uses יצא (“bring out”). This cry and subsequent deliverance is based upon the paradigm of the exodus, in which the Israelites cried out to God from their bondage and the LORD “heard their cry” and came down to deliver them (Exod 3:7–8).³⁶ The statement of cry and deliverance is followed by an additional description of God’s saving act. 4. Those who have been saved are exhorted to praise Yahweh (“O, that they would give thanks to the LORD for his lovingkindness (חסד) and for his wonderful works to humanity”). It should be pointed out here that “wonderful works” (נפלאות) also evokes memories of the exodus (see Exod 3:20;

35 Commentators normally group vv. 1–3 as the introductory unit, but the change from second-person plural imperative to third-person plural jussive suggests that vv. 2–3 belong with vv. 4–9. Furthermore, v. 3 supplies the subject (“the redeemed”) for the verb in v. 4 (“let them give thanks”). Thus, v. 3 stands as a nominative absolute: “The redeemed of the LORD ... let them give thanks”. Similarly, in the three other narratives, the subject is stated as the first word of the narrative: “those sitting ...” (v. 10), “fools” (v. 17), “those going down ...” (v. 23).

36 Regarding the exodus paradigm of salvation, see Lee Roy Martin, “Yahweh Conflicted: Unresolved Theological Tension in the Cycle of Judges,” *Old Testament Essays* 22, no. 2 (2009): 356–372.

15:11; 34:10; and Judg 6:13). 5. Finally, a further description of the outworking of Yahweh's *hesed* is offered.

The fourfold narrative of salvation is presented in a chiasmic structure, suggesting that it functions as one unified paradigmatic story³⁷ narrated from four different contexts:

- a – dangers of travel (desert) / undeserved suffering / chaos³⁸ / צעק
- b – threatening condition (prison) / deserved suffering / sin / זעק
- b' – threatening condition (illness) / deserved suffering / sin / זעק
- a' – dangers of travel (the sea) / undeserved suffering / chaos / צעק

The psalms of thanksgiving are stylized testimonies of real-life events in which God rescued the psalmist from calamity. They normally include only one narrative, usually narrated by the individual sufferer, and the narrative includes a report of the distress, the prayer of the sufferer, and a description of God's saving intervention. The four narratives of Psalm 107 are modeled after the psalm of thanksgiving, but they differ from the model by presenting the narrative in the third-person plural and by including multiple stories within one psalm. The repetition of the jussive verb, "Let them give thanks ..." (one word in Hebrew: יודו), suggests that this psalm is not a testimony but is, rather, an encouragement to testimony,³⁹ an exhortation to the giving of thanks for Yahweh's *hesed*.

The four narratives, based upon the four directions of the compass (v. 3), are comprehensive and universal in application. Most scholars want to connect the psalm directly to the exodus or to the exile;⁴⁰ and while allusions to these events are obvious, there is no specific mention of Egypt, pharaoh, the Red Sea, Babylon, or any other historical data. The psalm, therefore, alludes both to the exodus and to the exile, powerful images in Israel's memory; but it goes beyond the historical events to fill the theological canvas with present and future confidence in "a sovereign God capable of reversing even the most

37 Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, 100.

38 Both the desert and the sea represent untamed chaos, which threatens human life. Cf. Jorge Mejia, "Some Observations on Psalm 107," *Biblical Theology Bulletin* 5, no. 1 (1975): 57, and Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, 100.

39 John Goldingay, *Psalms* (3 vols., Baker Commentary on the Old Testament Wisdom and Psalms; Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2006), 3.246.

40 E.g., Mitchell J. Dahood, *Psalms* (16–17A; 3 vols.; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 3.81, DeClaisé-Walford, *Introduction to the Psalms: A Song from Ancient Israel*, 113.

desperate situation.”⁴¹ J.W. Roffey observes, “The poet has drawn on four images of distress that we can all understand even if never having experienced them in reality. It is in this sense that they are archetypal and hence, in Jungian typology, collective or universal ... All four images combine to express the whole spectrum of human needs.”⁴² James Mays agrees and adds the following:

The four cases are really open paradigms of deliverance into which any and all who have benefited from God’s saving work can enter. Hunger and thirst, darkness and gloom, sin and affliction, storm and sea all belong to the general symbolic vocabulary with which the redeemed portray the trouble from which they have been saved. The Psalm as a whole is the great summary song of Thanksgiving for salvation by all the redeemed.⁴³

This brief overview of Psalm 107 reveals an artfully expressed theological paradigm that is common to the Hebrew Bible. The paradigm begins with a theological emphasis on Yahweh’s *hesed*, which is found six times overall (vv. 1, 8, 15, 21, 31, 43)⁴⁴ and which forms an *inclusio* by its presence in the first and last verses of the psalm. Difficult to translate into English because of its complex range of meaning, *hesed* expresses primarily the concept of covenantal loyalty or “commitment,”⁴⁵ but it is often translated “mercy” (KJV), “goodness” (KJV), “love” (NIV), “steadfast love” (NRSV), “lovingkindness” (NASB), “faithful love” (NJB), ἔλεος (LXX), *misericordia* (VUL and RV), or *Güte* (Luther). The Hebrew word *hesed* signifies “the goodness of the LORD as Redeemer. It is at once an everlasting attribute of the character of God and occasional in its manifestation in saving actions.”⁴⁶ It is Yahweh’s “affective and effective engagement with those linked with him by the covenant.”⁴⁷

The paradigm continues with the practical outworking of Yahweh’s *hesed* in the bringing of salvation and deliverance. Yahweh’s caring intervention that results from *hesed* is named variously as “redemption” (לְאֵל, v. 2), “deliverance”

41 Stephen J. Lennox, *Psalms: A Bible Commentary in the Wesleyan Tradition* (Indianapolis, IN: Wesleyan Publishing House, 1999), 329.

42 Roffey, “Beyond Reality: Poetic Discourse and Psalm 107,” 68–69.

43 James Luther Mays, *Psalms* (Interpretation; Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1994), 346.

44 Its appearance 130 times makes *hesed* a significant theme in the Psalter.

45 Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3.243–260.

46 Ibid. The foundational text for Yahweh’s *hesed* is Exodus 34:6–7, a text that is central to OT theology and is reaffirmed by the prophets (e.g., Isa 16:5; 54:8–10; 55:3; 63:7; Jer 9:24; 32:18; 33:11; Joel 2:13; Jonah 4:2; and Mic 7:18).

47 Mejia, “Some Observations on Psalm 107,” 58.

(נצל, v. 6), “salvation” (ישע, vv. 13, 19), “bringing out” (צא, v. 28), and “wonderful works” (נפלאות, five times). It is important to note that while Yahweh’s *hesed* is constant, his intervention is initiated by the cries of those who suffer; therefore, *hesed* is responsive to human need. Yahweh’s *hesed* is the only hope when the forces of death threaten to leave God’s people in despair (or even beyond despair, in utterly hopeless numbness).

The third element in the paradigm is the human response that is required in light of Yahweh’s saving mercy. Five times the redeemed are enjoined to “give thanks” (ידה, vv. 1, 8, 15, 21, 31). They are also encouraged to “praise” (הלל, v. 32) the LORD, to “exalt” the LORD (רום, v. 32), and to “offer thanksgiving sacrifices, and recount his deeds with shouts of joy” (v. 22). The Hebrew injunction to “give thanks” is theologically equivalent to what we might call “testimony,” and the testimony was expected to include a thanksgiving sacrifice (v. 22).⁴⁸ Consequently, the human response of thanksgiving may be understood as the confessing of Yahweh’s salvific work within the context of community. Those who have experienced Yahweh’s redemption must tell it (v. 2) so that those who are presently facing similar life-threatening powers may have hope.⁴⁹

When we are told that the world operates by cause and effect and our lives are ruled by random chance, Psalm 107 tells us that God is sovereign. When we are told that we must resign ourselves to suffer and endure those things that are outside of our control, that systemic evil, oppression, and the “death dealers” have the upper hand, Psalm 107 tells us that we should cry out to the LORD and he will deliver us from our distress.⁵⁰ When we are told that we must be autonomous and make our own future,⁵¹ Psalm 107 tells us that the LORD holds the future. When we are told that we must resign ourselves to “live lives of quiet desperation,”⁵² Psalm 107 tells us to “give thanks to the LORD for he is good.”

48 Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:254, states that “the sacrifice makes the alleged gratefulness more than mere words.”

49 Roffey, “Beyond Reality: Poetic Discourse and Psalm 107,” describes the four-part structure of Psalm 107 as invitation, memory, response, and instruction (66–67).

50 Cf. Ignacio Carbajosa Pérez, “Salmo 107: Unidad, Organización y Teología,” *Estudios Bíblicos* 59, no. 4 (2001): 462–479.

51 Colin E. Gunton, *Enlightenment and Alienation: An Essay Towards a Trinitarian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1985), argues that the Enlightenment worldview demands that humans affirm their autonomy (68–69).

52 Henry David Thoreau and Francis H. Allen, *Walden, or, Life in the Woods* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910), 8.

This brief overview of Psalm 107 demonstrates that it is a psalm of instruction that exhorts the hearer to discern the *hesed* of the LORD and to give thanks for it. The prominence of thanksgiving within the psalm indicates that the primary affective tone is that of gratitude.⁵³ Erich Zenger agrees: “The great leading motif of Psalm 107 is the exhortation to gratitude.”⁵⁴ God’s gracious and salvific intervention evokes gratitude, and that gratitude generates the desire and will to praise Yahweh and testify to his wondrous works.

Psalm 107 and Pentecostal Spirituality

In his seminal work on Pentecostal spirituality, Steven Jack Land devotes significant attention to the affection of gratitude. He writes, “Gratitude is the initial and continually relevant Christian affection which, through remembrance and thanksgiving, preserves the believer from the mutually conditioning sins of forgetfulness and presumption.”⁵⁵ In what could be a reflection on Psalm 107, Land continues, “Gratitude is grounded in and shaped by the gracious righteousness and merciful faithfulness of a holy, compassionate God.”⁵⁶

Gratitude, however, is central not only to Pentecostalism but also to other Christian traditions. For example, John Chrysostom declares that “thanksgiving adds nothing to [God], but it brings us closer to Him.”⁵⁷ Luther’s Small Catechism, reflecting on Article 1 of the Creed, states, “[God] ... protects me against all danger, and guards and keeps me from all evil; and all this purely out of fatherly, divine mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me; for all which I am in duty bound to thank (*danken*) and praise (*loben*), to serve and obey Him.”⁵⁸ Question 2 of the *Heidelberg Catechism* asks, “How many things are necessary for you to know, that you, enjoying this comfort [of the gospel], may live and die happily?” The answer is “Three: First, how great is my sin and misery. The second, how I am redeemed from all my sins and misery. And the third, how I am to be grateful (*dankbar*) to God for such redemption.”⁵⁹ John Wesley

53 Also clearly present are the affections of courage and hope.

54 Hossfeld et al., *Psalms 3: A Commentary on Psalms 101–150*, 112.

55 Land, *Pentecostal Spirituality*, 135.

56 *Ibid.*, 139.

57 St. John Chrysostom, “Homily on Ephesians, 2,” *Patrologia Graeca*, 62.129–130.

58 Martin Luther, *Luther’s Small Catechism Developed and Explained* (Philadelphia: United Lutheran Publication House, 1893), 8.

59 *The Heidelberg Catechism, in German, Latin and English: With an Historical Introduction* (New York: Scribner, 1863), 132 (translation mine).

writes, "True religion ... is, in two words, gratitude and benevolence."⁶⁰ Alexander Schmemmann illustrates the Greek Orthodox appreciation for gratitude in his last words spoken in the church. He prayed,

Thank You, O LORD!

Everyone capable of thanksgiving is capable of salvation and eternal joy. Thank You, O LORD, for having accepted this Eucharist, which we offered to the Holy Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and which filled our hearts with the joy, peace and righteousness of the Holy Spirit.

Thank You, O LORD, for having revealed Yourself unto us and given us the foretaste of Your Kingdom.

Thank You, O LORD, for having united us to one another in serving You and Your Holy Church.

Thank You, O LORD, for having helped us to overcome all difficulties, tensions, passions, temptations and restored peace, mutual love and joy in sharing the communion of the Holy Spirit.

Thank You, O LORD, for the sufferings You bestowed upon us, for they are purifying us from selfishness and reminding us of the "one thing needed"; Your eternal Kingdom ...

Great are You, O LORD, and marvelous are Your deeds, and no word is sufficient to celebrate Your miracles.

LORD, it is good to be here! Amen.⁶¹

Karl Barth argued forcefully for gratitude as the essential character of Christian faith. He wrote, "To be sanctified, good, Christian, means to be thankful."⁶² He saw an indivisible link between grace and gratitude, explaining that "Χάρις calls for εὐχαριστία"⁶³ and that "[g]race and gratitude belong together like heaven and earth. Grace evokes gratitude like the voice of an echo. Gratitude follows

60 John Wesley, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley* (10 vols.; Philadelphia: D. & S. Neall and W.S. Stockton, 1826), 7.253.

61 Alexander Schmemmann, "Thank You, O LORD!" *The Orthodox Church* 20, no. 2 (February 1984), 1:1.

62 Karl Barth, *The Knowledge of God and the Service of God According to the Teaching of the Reformation* (trans. J.L.M. Haire and Ian Henderson; London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1949), 123.

63 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics* (trans. T.F. Torrance and Geoffrey William Bromiley; 5 vols.; Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1936), 5.1.670.

grace like thunder lightning.”⁶⁴ Furthermore, according to Barth, thanksgiving is not a transaction; it is “an act of subordination, not of commerce.”⁶⁵

Public testimony, as called for in Psalm 107, was once a prominent practice in Pentecostal churches. Scott Ellington has suggested that perhaps the reason for the demise of testimony as a practice is that many Pentecostals have no liturgical opportunity for testimony.⁶⁶ Could it also be true, however, that the practice is less common because gratitude has diminished? Gratitude was once a ruling affection for Pentecostals (and it still is in many parts of the world), but here in the West, gratitude has been replaced by greed and autonomy.⁶⁷ We are affluent, educated, powerful, and self-righteous. We have become like the Pharisee who prayed, “O God, I thank you that I am not like the rest of humanity ... or even like this tax collector” (Luke 18:11–12). We now have no gratitude because we have forgotten that we were slaves in Egypt. Instead of gratitude, we display self-righteousness. We have no gratitude because we have forgotten that God gave us the promised land with its cities intact, its houses built, its trees planted, its vines producing, and its wells already dug. Instead of gratitude, we display self-sufficiency. We have no gratitude because we have begun to think that God saved us on account of our inherent value. Instead of gratitude, we display superiority.

Psalm 107 disrupts our arrogant certitude that we can control the future and find our own way. It subverts our hubristic confidence that we are free and autonomous. It contradicts the belief that the sickness of sin can be ameliorated by will power and/or proper legislation. Psalm 107 rejects the human confidence in technological control and dominance. It teaches us that without gratitude, we will not be saved. The apostle Paul knew this, and his forecast for what he called “perilous times” includes the following: “People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud ... ungrateful” (2 Tim 3:2 NIV).

Psalm 107 “invites the church to face the disparity between the NT’s vision of it and the reality of the church as we know it”;⁶⁸ therefore, it is texts like Psalm 107 that will restore our gratitude. The biblical text and the church’s spirituality

64 Ibid., 4.1.41.

65 Ibid., 2.1.217.

66 See Scott A. Ellington, “The Costly Loss of Testimony,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 16 (2000): 48–59; idem, “‘Can I Get a Witness’: The Myth of Pentecostal Orality and the Process of Traditioning in the Psalms,” *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 20, no. 1 (2011): 54–67.

67 J. Clinton McCann Jr., “Greed, Grace, and Gratitude,” in *Performing the Psalms*, ed. Dave Bland and David Fleer (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press), 51–66.

68 Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3.261.

have a reciprocal relationship. It is our spirituality that equips us to hear the affective dimension of the text, and it is the text that will shape and form our affect (if we will submit to the spirit of the text). The canonical role of the Bible in the church, therefore, is formational in regard to orthopathy (as well as the usually assumed orthodoxy and orthopraxy). If orthopathy (including gratitude) is to be formed in believers, then our liturgy, our preaching, and our teaching should be planned and executed with that formation in mind.

Biblical texts like Psalm 107 help to shape the affection of gratitude in ways that are not triumphalistic, for “[w]e are the hungry and thirsty who had been fed. We are the bound who have been liberated. We are the sinners deserving death who have been given life. We are the fearful before the terrors of existence who have been given hope.”⁶⁹ Psalm 107, therefore, undergirds Barth’s insistence that grace calls for gratitude. The wanderers are led to safety. Those in bondage are liberated. The sick are healed. Those helplessly tossed by the storm are brought home. In all of these blessings, God’s grace calls for gratitude.

If I might borrow a phrase from Dr. King, I will move to the New Testament⁷⁰ and show examples of grace calling for gratitude:

Somewhere I read

that “God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son. ...”

Somewhere I read,

69 Mays, *Psalms*, 347. It might be argued that not everyone who calls upon God is delivered, but Psalm 107 does not entertain that view. Nevertheless, I include here a testimony of how Psalm 107 speaks even in death. My wife Karen and I had been married for only one year when her mother, Ruby Luke, was diagnosed with cancer. The prognosis was grim, but we prayed and felt confident that God would not allow this saintly woman to die at such a young age (forty-eight). A steady stream of well-meaning Christian friends came to the hospital proclaiming that she would certainly be healed. Ruby’s brother-in-law, Rev. S.A. Luke, taking her illness seriously, prayed earnestly with fasting. Uncle Archie, as we call him, had himself been healed of spinal meningitis and his daughter had been healed of leukemia. After three days, the LORD gave him a Scripture verse, which he read to Ruby. It was Ps 107:28–30, “Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble, and He brought them out of their distresses. He caused the storm to be still, so that the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad because they were quiet; so He guided them to their desired haven.” Soon afterwards, she left this troubled sea and arrived at her desired haven.

70 See Franz Schnider, “Rettung aus Seenot: Ps 107,23–32 und Mk 4,35–41,” in *Freude an der Weisung des Herrn*, ed. Ernst Haag and Frank-Lothar Hossfeld (Stuttgart: Verlag Katholisches Bibelwerk, 1986): 375–393, who connects Psalm 107 to Mark 4:35–41.

“You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

Somewhere I read,

“While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Somewhere I read,

“Not by silver and gold were we redeemed ... but by the precious blood of Christ.”

Somewhere I read

about “a lamb slain from the foundation of the world.”

This grace calls for our gratitude.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would add a new stanza to Psalm 107. Just as Israel remembered its heritage and testified, so I encourage us to remember our Pentecostal heritage and testify about it.

Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,

Whom he has redeemed from the hand of the adversary,

The early Pentecostals;

Hungry and thirsty for God,

They were cast out of their churches;

Ridiculed and mocked.

Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble;

they cried unto the LORD ...

in a decrepit building on Azusa Street

they cried unto the LORD ...

in the factories of Memphis, TN

they cried unto the LORD ...

in the cotton fields of Mississippi

they cried unto the LORD ...

on the sawdust floors of tent revivals

they cried unto the LORD ...

in the storefronts of crowded cities

they cried unto the LORD ...

in the villages of Africa

they cried unto the LORD ...

in the barrios of Latin America

they cried unto the LORD ...

in prayer meetings in Asia and Europe
 they cried unto the LORD in their distress,
 and he delivered them from their troubles.
 He poured out his Spirit upon them,
 Making their lives rich with meaning.
 He sent his Word and healed them,
 Infusing life and vitality beyond their imaginations.
 Oh that *we* would give thanks to the LORD for his lovingkindness,
 And for his wonders to our ancestors.
 For he has satisfied their thirsty souls,
 And he has filled their hungry souls with goodness.

Finally, to those of us who are still in pain, Psalm 107 offers hope.⁷¹ With the hopeful words of Psalm 107—“the LORD is good and his lovingkindness is forever”—I urge you to cry out to the LORD from the midst of your pain:

Young women hearing the Spirit's call to ministry—
 Cry out to the LORD.
 Old women breaking forth from the chains of past hurts—
 Cry out to the LORD.
 Young men seeking lives of significance—
 Cry out to the LORD.
 Old men longing to see the promises fulfilled—
 Cry out to the LORD.
 Minorities and immigrants yearning for a home—
 Cry out to the LORD.
 Let us cry out to the LORD in our trouble, and he will hear us and deliver
 us from our distress.
 Amen.

71 Although the primary affection underlying Psalm 107 is gratitude, the affection of hope is also strongly expressed. Those who face life-depriving challenges are invigorated by the testimonies of the past.