

I Love the Lord

Why should we love the Lord?

Psalm 116

Don Ruhl • Savage Street, Grants Pass, Oregon • December 25, In the year of our Lord, 2016

Scripture Reader and Reading: Wayne Duncan – Psalm 118.1–3

Song Leader and Song Suggestions: Phil Joseph – Songs on loving God; “I Will Call upon the Lord” (866)

Persuasion:

I. Psalm 116.1–2 | I Love the Lord

- 1 I love the LORD, because He has heard
My voice and my supplications.**
- 2 Because He has inclined His ear to me,
Therefore I will call upon Him as long as I live.**

A. The psalmist committed to keeping the highest command, for

1. when a scribe asked Jesus,

28b “Which is the first commandment of all?” (Mark 12.28),

2. Jesus declared,

29 “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. 30 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment” (Mark 12.29–30).

3. The Lord liked what He heard from this psalmist, and

a) preserved the words of the psalmist in Scripture

b) that we might also value loving the Lord, for

(1) He loves us with a love that we cannot describe,

(2) even if every man were a scribe and

(a) the ocean was ink,

(b) we would drain that ocean before completing the job.

B. We show that we love God in a distinct way, as John wrote,

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome (1Jo 5.3).

1. When you read of His love in the Scriptures, and
2. experience it in your life,
 - a) you will want to love Him back, and
 - b) nothing surpasses the feelings that combination creates!

C. The psalmist began to explain why he loved the Lord,

1. the Lord heard his voice,
2. the Lord heard his supplications,
3. the Lord inclined his ear toward the psalmist.
 - a) Think on that last one.
 - b) The fact that the Creator
 - (1) would even incline His ear in the direction of the psalmist
 - (2) moved the psalmist to love the Lord.
 - (a) It also moved the psalmist to call upon the Lord
 - (b) for the rest of his life.

D. The rest of the Psalm continues to show

1. why he loved the Lord, and
2. upon what occasion the psalmist had prayed.

II. Psalm 116.3–4 | The Lord Delivered My Soul

- 3 The pains of death surrounded me,
And the pangs of Sheol laid hold of me;
I found trouble and sorrow.**
- 4 Then I called upon the name of the LORD:
“O LORD, I implore You, deliver my soul!”**

A. He had been ready to die!

1. Death with its pains surrounded him.
2. Sheol, the unseen abode of the dead, pierced his soul.
 - a) No wonder he had trouble and sorrow!
 - b) What could cause more trouble and sorrow than the embrace of death?
 - (1) If you have ever had a face-to-face encounter with death,
 - (2) you know of what the psalmist spoke.
 - (a) Yet, we all know enough about death
 - (b) that we do not have to have a close encounter with it.
 - i) We avoid it at all costs.
 - ii) And you know why.

B. Beyond his ability to help himself,

1. the psalmist did the only thing anyone can do in such a situation,
2. he called upon the name of the Lord,
 - a) pleading with the Lord,
 - b) begging the Lord
 - (1) to deliver his soul from death.
 - (2) And the voice and pleadings of the psalmist
 - (a) touched the heart of the Lord and
 - (b) He saved the psalmist.
 - i) And the psalmist did not forget it, but
 - ii) made the commitments of which this Psalm speaks.

III. Psalm 116.5–6 | The Love Saved Me

**5 Gracious is the LORD, and righteous;
Yes, our God is merciful.**

6 The LORD preserves the simple;

I was brought low, and He saved me.

- A. After horrific confrontation with death, and
- B. his supernatural escape from it,
 - 1. He could only conclude
 - a) that the Lord is gracious,
 - b) that the Lord is righteous,
 - c) that the Lord is merciful.
 - 2. The psalmist concluded further
 - a) the Lord preserves the simple, and
 - b) the Lord saves those brought low.
 - (1) Regardless of who you are,
 - (2) regardless of your power and ability,
 - (a) death has a way of reducing life to something very simple, and
 - (b) to humbling us greatly.

IV. Psalm 116.7-9 | The Lord Deals Bountifully with Me

- 7 Return to your rest, O my soul,
For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.**
- 8 For You have delivered my soul from death,
My eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.**
- 9 I will walk before the LORD
In the land of the living.**

- A. After talking to the Lord,
 - 1. the psalmist had to talk to himself,
 - 2. telling himself that now his soul could return to rest.
 - a) No longer did the psalmist have to fear.
 - b) No longer did the psalmist have to fill his soul with anxiety.

B. The Lord had dealt bountifully with the psalmist, and

1. the time had come to enjoy the rest.
2. Death teaches us that we do not run the world.
 - a) The God revealed in the Bible does.
 - b) Therefore, let your soul rest.

C. The Lord had delivered the soul of the psalmist

1. from death,
2. his eyes from tears, and
3. his feet from falling.
 - a) Life would go on.
 - b) Loosen up and just walk before the Lord.
 - (1) Since you remain in the land of the living,
 - (2) enjoy it before the Lord.

V. Psalm 116.10–11 | I Spoke as I Believed

10 I believed, therefore I spoke,

“I am greatly afflicted.”

11 I said in my haste,

“All men are liars.”

A. Again, to show you the power and the relevance

1. of what we call the Old Testament,
2. Paul quoted verse 10 when we had a confrontation with death,

8 We are hard-pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed— 10 always carrying about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our body. 11 For we who live are always delivered to death for Jesus' sake, that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. 12 So then death is working in us, but life in you. 13 And since we have the same spirit of faith, according to what is written, “I believed and therefore I spoke,” we also

believe and therefore speak, 14 knowing that He who raised up the Lord Jesus will also raise us up with Jesus, and will present us with you (2Co 4.8–14).

B. The psalmist also had a problem of saying

1. that all men are liars.
2. Are there plenty of liars out there?
 - a) Yes, but does that mean you could classify everyone as a liar?
 - b) If so, then you have to include yourself.

VI. Psalm 116.12–14 | How Shall I Benefit Him Who Has Benefited Me?

12 What shall I render to the LORD

For all His benefits toward me?

**13 I will take up the cup of salvation,
And call upon the name of the LORD.**

**14 I will pay my vows to the LORD
Now in the presence of all His people.**

A. Resting and walking before the Lord did not seem like enough.

1. The psalmist wanted to render something to the Lord.
2. He wanted to show the Lord his deep appreciation.

B. He figured out what to do:

1. He would take up the cup of salvation and call upon the Lord.
2. He would pay his vows to the Lord in the presence of the Lord's people.
 - a) He had probably made a vow during his near-death experience,
 - b) now it was time to pay up.
 - (1) Once the threat of death has vanished,
 - (2) often so does our urgency for doing what we had committed.
 - (a) I knew a man who witnessed a murder.
 - (b) He became a Christian immediately.

- i) I knew another who had brain cancer.
 - ii) He became on fire for the Lord.
- (3) In both cases, as the memory of the event faded,
- (4) so did their Christianity.

VII.Psalm 116.15 | The Lord Considers My Death Precious

15 Precious in the sight of the LORD Is the death of His saints.

- A. All the previous statements being true, and
- 1. knowing that the Lord does deliver us from death,
 - 2. perhaps even more times than we know,
 - a) it is also true
 - b) that when His saints die,
 - (1) it is precious to the Lord, for then
 - (2) they get to see the Lord Himself and
 - (3) forever remain in his presence and
 - (a) no longer pine away in fear of death and
 - (b) the troubles and sorrows that accompany it.
- B. Contrary wise, the death of the wicked is not precious in eyes of the Lord,

11 "As I live," says the Lord GOD, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die, O house of Israel?" (Eze 33.11).

VIII.Psalm 116.16–17 | I Serve the Lord

**16 O LORD, truly I am Your servant;
I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant;
You have loosed my bonds.
17 I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving,**

And will call upon the name of the LORD.

- A. The psalmist also determined to devote himself to the Lord as a servant.
 - 1. His life did not belong to him anymore, for
 - 2. he had almost lost it anyway.
 - a) The Lord is the Master and
 - b) His people are His servants, and
 - (1) gladly so
 - (2) when they think of His countless benefits.
- B. In this case, the Lord had loosed the bonds of the psalmist,
 - 1. freeing him from death and Sheol,
 - 2. the Hebrew equivalent of the Greek Hades.
- C. Thinking on what the Lord has done for us
 - 1. makes us see that He is worthy of sacrifice.
 - 2. May we live living sacrifices for Him.

IX. Psalm 116.18–19 | I Will Keep My Promises to the Lord

**18 I will pay my vows to the LORD
Now in the presence of all His people,
19 In the courts of the LORD'S house,
In the midst of you, O Jerusalem.
Praise the LORD!**

- A. The psalmist reiterated what he would do.
- B. He would pay his vows
 - 1. without shame or embarrassment before the Lord's people,
 - 2. keeping His vows right in courts of the temple in the city of Jerusalem.
 - a) Others of the Lord's people needed to know
 - b) what the psalmist was doing and why, for

- (1) it would encourage them to do the same and
- (2) it would bring the psalmist to the Lord's people whom He loved.

Exhortation:

I. The psalmist presented us with several reasons for loving the Lord:

- A. He hears my prayers (vv 1–4).
- B. He is gracious toward me (v 5).
- C. He is merciful toward me (v 5).
- D. He preserves me (v 6).
- E. He saved me (v 6).
- F. He deals bountifully with me (v 7).
- G. He delivers my soul from death (v 8).
- H. He renders benefits toward me (v 12).

II. Seeing these benefits from the Lord, the psalmist determined:

- A. To love the Lord (v 1),
- B. To call upon the Lord (vv 2, 4, 13, 17),
- C. To return his soul to rest (v 7),
- D. To walk before the Lord on the Earth (v 9),
- E. To speak as he believed (v 10),
- F. To render something to the Lord (v 12),
- G. To take up the cup of salvation (v 13),
- H. To pay his vows to the Lord (vv 14, 18), and
- I. To offer the sacrifice of thanksgiving to the Lord (v 17).

III. Hebrews 2 shows how we can escape just fear of dying,

14 Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage (Heb 2.14–15).