

The Lord is Ready to Set Us Free

Psalm 102:18–22

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I'm feeling good lately. I trimmed about half the bushes around the house and filled a dozen big bags. After having made some hard choices a weight has been lifted from me. I no longer feel the burden. I have been set free.

You want to hear that your pastor talks to Jesus all the time, right? I do, but sometimes I'm complaining. I don't always give thanks. I'm not always filled with joy. You want to hear that your pastor is grateful, thankful, and rejoicing.

I believe that giving thanks is an important part of our faith in Jesus. I often tell people to be thankful. They often look at me like I'm nuts. Every biblical hero has had some Praise the Lord moments. But all of them have had troubles, problems, and difficulties. Each of them had a hope, not wishful thinking, the inner awareness that God's promises were true. Holding onto those promises, to the God who made them, resulted in an empowering faith.

Let this be written for a future generation, that a people not yet created may praise the Lord: "The Lord looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death." So the name of the Lord will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the Lord. Psalm 102:18–22 (NIV84)

In our troubles the Lord of Life, the God of Salvation sees us. In case you didn't know it we are in trouble. Inflation is taking away our money. We are limited in what we can buy. The interest rates are rising. Credit is costing us more each day. Debit is getting harder to reduce. Cars and houses are becoming more difficult to purchase. Hamburgers are getting more and more expensive. The poor are feeling it more than anyone else. The trap of staying poor or trying to get ahead has become more difficult.

The God of our salvation sees all this. The Lord of life cares about us. Jesus is ready to deliver us.

In case you didn't know it we are in trouble. Our elected leaders are playing politics with our lives. They refuse to work together to accomplish what is good for everyone. They look only at their own ideas. Everyone has their own spin on the truth. People are believing the spin. No one listens, but everyone talks. Individual rights, fear, and division are at their highest. If a person takes a side they get labeled. If they don't take a side they get labeled.

The God of our salvation sees all this. The Lord of life cares about us. Jesus is ready to deliver us.

In case you didn't know it we are in trouble. Sinners are sinning. Sin has become more popular than faithfulness. All the commandments are being broken. Defiance has become the most favored way of life. There is no longer a moral standard. Right and wrong no longer exist. Good and bad have switched places.

The God of our salvation sees all this. The Lord of life cares about us. Jesus is ready to deliver us. The Lord is always watching, aware, and ready to set us free. We have not been abandoned. Even though we may feel alone Jesus is with us. Even though the burden feels heavy Jesus is with us. Our God and Savior is still Lord of all life. He is still supreme over all things. His love and concern, His compassion and goodness are unchanging. God is watching because He cares and wants to deliver us. He hears our cries for help. He is aware of the great hardships we face. He is ready to answer our prayers.

“The Lord looked down from his sanctuary on high, from heaven he viewed the earth, to hear the groans of the prisoners and release those condemned to death.” Psalm 102: 19-20 NIV

We are held captive by the troubles instead of calling out for God’s deliverance. Human nature is to see our problems and to complain about what’s wrong. I just did that. I could tell that you had enough. You were about to start complaining about me being a problem.

Rare are the people who don’t complain about what’s wrong. I’m not talking about the people who want to look good, so they don’t complain. I’m talking about the people who see the positive in everything all the time. The people who are not just not complaining, but see good, think good, and are good; they are rare.

I want to be known as a positive person who looks for the possibilities. When I get discouraged that discourages me. When I get anxious that makes me anxious. When I can’t see another way, I don’t just get give up, I get angry. For me that is defeating. I am human. I need a savior. His name is Jesus.

Human nature leads us to self-pity or self-reliance. Once we start complaining about the rest of the world it becomes personal. We start to feel bad about ourselves. We complain that our life is the worst possible life. We’ve been there. Then we hear grandma say, “pull yourself up by your bootstraps and get going.” That means fix yourself, stop whining, and go do something. Not bad advice, but could it be better? I think so, because I can’t sustain anything on my own. Eventually, I fade if I don’t have a motivation or inspiration.

When I look at the world around me I see three things. The first thing I see are people who speak as though every word is the truth. Just because they speak, they believe what they say. They present information as though it’s a fact. They talk making up words that reveal their own desires and not the truth. Go on YouTube, X, Instagram and you will see what I mean. Listen to a podcast, read a blog, turn on your least favorite and your favorite news source and there is talk but little truth.

God sees this happening. The Lord is aware. The Lord has not forgotten the cries of people to be set free this bondage. One day the Lord will return in all of His glory and power, setting free from this bondage those who trust Him. On that day we will rejoice, give thanks, and praise God. Look forward to that day.

The second thing I see are people who want to feel good all the time. They seek pleasure and personal satisfaction. They throw off accountability. Their goal in life is to do only what feels good.

God sees this happening. The Lord is aware. The Lord has not forgotten the cries of people to be set free this bondage. One day the Lord will return in all of His glory and power, setting free from this bondage those who trust Him. On that day we will rejoice, give thanks, and praise God. Look forward to that day.

The third thing I see are people blinded by their sins. These are not the prisoners sitting in prison cells. I see good people, upstanding folks, politically correct folks, hardworking laborers. They don't see their greed, their selfishness, their own incorrectness.

God sees this happening. The Lord is aware. The Lord has not forgotten the cries of people to be set free this bondage. One day the Lord will return in all of His glory and power, setting free from this bondage those who trust Him. On that day we will rejoice, give thanks, and praise God. Look forward to that day.

So the name of the Lord will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem. Psalm 102: 21

Praise, thanks, and adoration is our strength until we are delivered. Since we know that God hears our complaints and our requests, give thanks. Praise and thanks are more than gratitude for the past. It's easy to be blessed and to give thanks. It's faith to give thanks for what we don't see. Hope is more than wishful thinking. Trust is revealed when we give thanks.

Anybody can tell a lie, but those who trust in the Lord give thanks as they stand on His promises. Anybody can seek out pleasure and happiness, but the people who believe God is watching praise Him for what He is going to do. Anybody can ignore their sins, but the man, woman, or child whose faith is in God praises Him for His mercy, grace and love.

We don't know when Jesus will set us free from this world, but we know that He is coming. When He comes He will make all things new. The sin of the past and the present will no longer exist. The troubles, the pain, the hardships will be gone forever. We give thanks for the promises. We also give thanks that God is the one who makes promises and keeps His promises. No social influencer, blogger, podcaster, business owner, car salesperson, or politician can keep their promises. They don't have the power. They don't have the authority. They are human.

The Lord is God. Jesus is God. He is the promise maker and the promise keeper. We stand firm in our faith when we praise, give thanks, and adore Jesus. It is easy to be torn between the warring sides in our world. We are on information overload. We're told lies, we're given half-truths, we're told what we want to hear. We bend with the hot-air of the words all around us. We let ourselves be influenced.

To stand firm maybe to shout out in anger. Standing firm may include weeping. Standing firm on God's promises needs to include adoration, praise, and thanks. Without gratitude for who God is – gracious, merciful, loving, just, sovereign, powerful – we fall into our nature and complain.

The promises of Jesus are fully true. The world suffers because it believes the lies, seeks pleasure, and is selfish. But believing the promises of Jesus to return and set us free changes our lives, gives us a reason to be thankful. Our adoration is the sign we are standing firm in Jesus' promise. Offering our words of praise is trusting Jesus will return. Giving thanks is a living hope of what Jesus is about to do.

Our words of adoration, praise, and thanks make us strong. We are empowered spiritually as we reconnect with our Savior. We are encouraged emotionally as we return to our Lord. We are strengthened physically as look to Jesus.

So the name of the Lord will be declared in Zion and his praise in Jerusalem when the peoples and the kingdoms assemble to worship the Lord. Psalm 102:21–22 (NIV84)

While we wait for His deliverance make giving thanks your testimony. The people you meet today need your testimony. You struggle from one day to the next, right? You hear all the junk everyday, right? You come here and praise God with other believers, right?

But there are five times as many people who aren't hearing the truth, who aren't gathering with others, and who aren't praising God. They're thinking about leaving their wife. They're looking forward to playing video games. They're waiting for this day to end and another to begin.

They need a new message. They need to hear a word of praise, a word of thanks. They need to hear that this life is not all that there is. They need to know that Jesus is aware of their troubles and that He is coming to set free those who trust Him.

People need to know the promises of God. They hear the false, lame, unreliable promises all day long. They can't stand firm on the truth because they don't know the truth. They believe what they have heard is true, when it's not. They view God's Word as just another book. Christians have come to question the Bible and don't always hold it as their authority for life and salvation.

God promises to hear and answer our prayers. But people have asked without faith and God didn't answer. God promises to be near those who trust Him. But people don't understand trust and faith. God promises to never leave His followers. But people are unwilling to follow. God promises to save anyone who calls upon Him. But people don't call out.

They need a new testimony. They need to hear from people who have suffered and been delivered. They need to hear from people who are suffering and are being renewed. They need to hear your words of thanks for the blessings of the past and the promises of the future.

People today, need Jesus to be their Savior. Our words of praise to God, thanks to Jesus, are the testimony they need to hear. Everyone is in trouble. Everyone needs mercy, grace, and love. Everyone needs Jesus.

Life is miserable. Life without Jesus is meaningless, empty, and miserable. Jesus promised He would take away our sin. He died on the cross as our sin. Jesus promised to overcome sin and death. He rose from the dead on the third day. Jesus promised to never leave us. He gave us His Holy Spirit to walk with us every moment. Jesus promised to return and set us free. Everyday we are one day closer to the return of Jesus.

Choosing Jesus is uncomplicated. Call out His name in faith. Call out His name believing. Call out His name trusting.