

At Wit's End: Four Desperate Situations, One Deliverer

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References: Psalm 107, Luke 15:11-15; Luke 4:16-19; Psalm 107:1-3; 1 Corinthians 15:3; 1 Corinthians 6:19-20; Psalm 107:4-5; Psalm 107:10-12; Psalm 107:17-18; Psalm 107:23-27; Psalm 107:6-7; Psalm 107:13; Psalm 107:19; Psalm 107:28; Romans 10:13; Luke 18:13; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4

Introduction: Wandering in a Broken World

That song that we sang, she sang a verse that said:

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love."

I read a story where there was a lady in a stagecoach in England in the 1800s, and she had a copy of that song, and she was just completely overwhelmed by the words of it. So she turned to the man next to her in the stagecoach and said, "Would you listen to this hymn?" And she read the hymn to him. And he said to her, "I wish I had the joy in my heart today that I had then, that I had when I wrote that song." He was the author.

"Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it." Let that be a testimony to us all today.

Glad to be with you at this family Bible hour. I'm just going to make an adjustment here for a moment so I can see you. There we are. Great.

I did a little quick search before I came on Zoom with you today, and things are not going down in Vancouver—the price of things. Do you know that? Probably you know that. I looked at the price of fuel. That was kind of interesting: regular gas is over \$2 a liter now; diesel is up to \$2.90. Eggs are somewhere between \$4 and \$5 depending on—you should come to our house, we'd give you some eggs. We have eighteen chickens, you know. Milk is between \$6 and \$7. A one-bedroom rents for somewhere between \$2,300 and \$2,400. If you want a house, depending on the location and the size, between \$3,000 and \$5,000. That's just a

little bit out of my range! I don't know how you guys are actually coping with that situation. I think this might be called inflation. I'm not exactly sure what it is, but there's no sign of decline, if you know what I'm talking about. There's wars and rumors of wars. We all know that. Things are escalating, could we say? I don't know. I'm sure you're preparing, right? Of course you are. You're smart people. You want to prepare for what comes as best you can.

Take your Bibles and turn with me to Luke chapter 15, please, for an introductory thought. Luke chapter 15, New Testament—Matthew, Mark, Luke chapter 15. The Lord Jesus is engaging in storytelling. He's a storyteller, and He said to His audience, which was varied, He said, "Let Me tell you a story." And so He started telling stories, and He ended up not just telling one story; He told four stories, but He called it a parable because it has virtually the same meaning, the same conclusion.

And so, in the first part of this parable, He talked about a man who had two sons. Now, look at verse 11. This is where I want to read for you, verse 11:

[Luke 15:11-12 NKJV]

¹¹ Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his livelihood.

That is, could I have my inheritance now, please? Please, I don't want to wait till I'm old. And the father somehow in his wisdom divided to them. Now, the younger son said, "Please give me my portion," and he had two sons. You'll notice verse 12, the father divided to them. I guess he thought he would just go ahead and divide the whole thing. But anyhow, in verse 13:

[Luke 15:13 NKJV]

¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living.

And there he blew it! He wasted his inheritance with wild, loose—verse 14, but when he spent everything, when the bag was empty, he had blown it all:

[Luke 15:14 NKJV]

¹⁴ But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want.

He didn't have anything left in his bag, and he's in a desperate situation. Verse 15:

[Luke 15:15 NKJV]

¹⁵ Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

We ask ourselves the question: what country? Well, that's the country he went to. That's the far country over the hill, across the river, out of Daddy's sight, away from the farm. "I'm going to have a life like you can't believe. I have a bag full of money and nobody to be accountable to, and I'm going to really live it up," he said. Well, it didn't work too well for him. He had a lot of friends while he had a lot of money, but when the bag was empty and there was a famine in the land, there was certainly a famine in his land and in his heart.

And he's desperate. Eggs have gone up, rent's gone up, gas has gone up. "I don't know how I'm going to make it. Where do you look for help? Who do you call? How do you fix it?" It's desperate. Well, he decided that he would ask somebody in that country. He wants somebody—a citizen of that country. Let me remind you and remind myself: that's the country, that's the citizens, that's the people that took all the money out of his bag. Well, they didn't really take it; he gave it to them. That country represented the place that he was going to have a big party with all of his friends, and he did. But the money was gone, and the friends was gone. And so the citizen of that country—in other words, the system that took everything from him—said, "We know what you could do. You could go feed pigs, you little Jewish boy. That'd be a good job for you."

Okay, that's all we're going to read there.

The Anointed Deliverer

Now I want you to take your Bible and turn to Luke chapter 4. Luke's Gospel chapter 4. Just thinking about tough times. Just thinking about how we're going to make it financially, physically, my job. How am I going to stay on top of things? How am I going to make it in this world?

“Oh, well, just go to a citizen of your country. Go ask a financial advisor. Go ask a counselor. Go ask your best friend. Go get some advice from people who are in the same world, the same society, and the same problems that you are. Maybe they have some advice.” It didn’t work very good for the younger son in the story that Jesus told, and it won’t work very well for you.

But our hope is in **somebody else**. Let me read in verse number 16 of Luke chapter 4, speaking about the Lord Jesus Christ:

[Luke 4:16-17 NKJV]

¹⁶ So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read. ¹⁷ And He was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah.

We still have a copy of that in our Bibles today. If you have a Bible, you have a copy of the book of Isaiah. So they handed Him a copy of the book of the prophet Isaiah, verse 17, and when He had opened the book, He found the place where it was written. And this is what He read, verse 18:

[Luke 4:18-19 NKJV]

¹⁸ “The Spirit of the LORD is upon Me,
Because He has anointed Me
To preach the gospel to the poor;
He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted,
To proclaim liberty to the captives
And recovery of sight to the blind,
To set at liberty those who are oppressed;
¹⁹ To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

(Thank you.)

If we had time—and it’s not my purpose or desire today to preach on that—let me summarize that for you. Jesus says, “I am the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy. It is Me. The Spirit of the Lord has come upon Me. He has anointed Me.” And we could put it like this: He’s anointed Me to help the lonely, to heal broken hearts and broken homes, to help those who are in

despair and depression and have all hope that is lost. For those who see nothing but danger and fear—children and adults—I have come to help them, to heal them, and to give them hope.

And I could add to that, Jesus could say, “I’m not a citizen of this country. I’ve come from another country. I’ve come from a place called heaven. And I’ve come to do the will of God.” And we know that He came to do good, and He healed the sick and the brokenhearted, and He set the captives free, and so many things.

But ultimately, He came to go to a cross. And you, dear friends, this morning—and I include myself—are the reason. All hope is lost. The world is in a terrible condition. And we need help, and we need hope, and we need salvation. We need light in the darkness. We need a door to be opened to go through to show us how to cope, how to handle, how to make it through. For you men, how to lead your wives and children. For you ladies, how to keep your children and your homes and love your husbands. For the children, how to not be afraid, but honor your parents, your fathers and mothers. We need life and liberty. We need help today, and Christ is the answer.

The Song of the Redeemed

Now, got a Bible? Old Testament, Psalm 107, please. Psalm 107. I’ll give you just a moment to get there. Because in this world of sin and woe, in this world of broken hearts and broken homes, where financially and circumstantially things are not looking good, there is hope. And the psalmist writes for us the answer to all of the circumstances of life that we could imagine. And he gives us four circumstances in this psalm, and we’re going to briefly look at them. But before we do so, I want to read the first three verses of this psalm as an introduction to the psalm. Verse 1, Psalm 107:

[Psalm 107:1-3 NKJV]

¹ Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for He is good!

For His mercy endures forever.

² Let the redeemed of the LORD say so,

Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,

³ And gathered out of the lands,

From the east and from the west,

From the north and from the south.

And as the phrase goes among the Christians of today, “He is good all the time.” His mercies endure forever. Verse 2: “Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy, and gathered out of the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.” I think that would include you and me if you are redeemed.

The word redeemed simply means to buy. Let those who have been bought—verse 2—let those who have been bought of the Lord say so. Did you know that God bought you at a terrible cost? It’s as though, if you can visualize in your mind, that God steps out of heaven one day, and He comes to earth to the marketplace of sin. And He walks up and down in the marketplace of sin, and He buys sinners. And the cost was the highest price He could afford. He said, “I will pay the price of My Son’s life.”

The Scriptures put it like this:

[1 Corinthians 15:3 NKJV]

For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures,

And another place, it says:

[1 Corinthians 6:19-20 NKJV]

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? ²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.

Don’t you know that you’re not your own? You’ve been bought with a price. If you’re a Christian here today, if you’ve been born again, you’ve been bought with a price—the highest price heaven could afford. And you are one of the redeemed. Well, what do the redeemed do? They give thanks to the Lord. He’s redeemed them out of the four quarters of the earth: north, south, east, and west. And if you’re one of those redeemed, you ought to say, “Thank God He found me. Thank God He bought me. He bought me for Himself so that I can live with Him forever.” But it cost the lifeblood of His own Son to do that. Christ died for your sins.

And now for the rest of this psalm, it's as though He said, "Let me see if I can touch your life." Writing to Israel, I get it. Make an application to us today? Great.

Circumstance 1: The Lost and Wandering

Notice the first circumstance of desperate need. Verse 4:

[Psalm 107:4-5 NKJV]

⁴ They wandered in the wilderness in a desolate way;

They found no city to dwell in.

⁵ Hungry and thirsty,

Their soul fainted in them.

Does that sound common today? Does that sound routine today? Does that sound almost normal today? This category is people who don't know where to go. They don't know how to get there. They know what they're looking for: they're looking for a city, but they don't know where it is. They're searching. They're wandering. They're walking. It's a desolate way.

The city represented—please listen to this. Now, you've got a city; it's called Vancouver, okay? Most modern cities today don't even think like this, but in Bible times, you know what a city was for them? It had water, and it had a wall. That wall was for safety, and that water was provision for them. And so they're out in the wilderness: you've got no water, you've got no wall. It's a desperate, desolate situation. They're looking for a place of safety. They're looking for a place of peace. They're looking for a place of protection.

They're not much different today. What are people looking for? Well, they'd like to have peace in their life. They'd like to be provided for in their life. They'd like to have what they need in their life. They certainly'd like to be safe. That's the reason you spend hundreds of dollars, if not more, to have an alarm system on your car, on your house, or maybe even on yourself, you know.

But the bottom line of that was: "Hungry and thirsty." Did you read that? Verse 5: "Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them." They're looking, but they never found it. They're searching, but they haven't experienced it yet. Their soul fainted in them. That's a circumstance in life. I don't know if you identify with that or not. I don't know if you could say, "Well, I'd like things to be better. I'm looking for a better job. I'm looking for a bigger house. I'm looking for security. I'm looking, I'm looking." You're just wandering in the wilderness, and maybe you could say, as they said, "I'm still hungry, and I'm still thirsty."

Circumstance 2: The Rebellious in Darkness

Let's go to verse 10. There's another situation I want to call your attention to in verse 10:

[Psalm 107:10 NKJV]

¹⁰ Those who sat in darkness and in the shadow of death,
Bound in affliction and irons--

Now we've got the reason. The first situation we looked at, they were hungry and thirsty, and they were looking. Now, notice verse 11. Why do people sit in the shadow of death? Look at verse 11: because they rebelled against the words of God.

Oh, boy. Oh, boy. This is a different situation altogether!

[Psalm 107:11-12 NKJV]

¹¹ Because they rebelled against the words of God,
And despised the counsel of the Most High,
¹² Therefore He brought down their heart with labor;
They fell down, and there was none to help.

Oh, my. Oh, my. Now we know why these people are so desperate. We know why they sit in darkness and in affliction. We read it. They said, "God, get out of my life. I am not interested. I don't want Your counsel. I don't want Your family. I don't want Christians. I don't want church." You may know somebody like that.

So God said, "Well, if you want Me out of your life—I'm light. You don't want any light? Well, sit in darkness. I'm freedom. You don't want any freedom? Well, just get bound up in iron and affliction in your own life and the traumas of your own life. You want Me out of your life?" God's a perfect gentleman. He said, "Go ahead. I'm going back. I'm leaving you." And the consequence of that is that they are sad. They are depressed. They work and work and work; they're brought down, their heart with labor. They fell down; there's nobody to help them. You don't want God? Pretty desperate out there.

And so these people are in the shadow of death, and we know why. Let me tell you who they represent: they represent a little boy and a little girl brought up in a Christian home. They went to Sunday school. They had friends who were Christians. They've had some Christian influence in their life, because it says they rebelled against it; they despised it. But they

heard it—probably heard the gospel, certainly heard the Word of God preached, certainly heard the Word of God read. But they don't want anything to do with it, and they fell down and nobody to help them get up.

Circumstance 3: The Fool Afflicted by Sin

Look at verse 17, third situation in life. Verse 17:

[Psalm 107:17 NKJV]

¹⁷ Fools, because of their transgression,
And because of their iniquities, were afflicted.

Let me just say that these are people who know that they are sinners, who are living an immoral, sinful life, but they like it—or at least they like it better than the alternative. And so they are afflicted because of their lifestyle. Look at verse 18:

[Psalm 107:18 NKJV]

¹⁸ Their soul abhorred all manner of food,
And they drew near to the gates of death.

They know what to do. They know how to do it, but they don't want to do it. They know what they should do; they don't want to do it. And so the Bible says you're a fool. You're a fool because of your sin, your transgression. Your sin and your transgressions are killing you. They're taking your life. They're ruining your health. You have become an addict. You're addicted to different drugs or alcohol or immorality, and you won't do anything about it. And you're sitting on the doorstep of death because they won't admit their sin wrong. They won't confess they're sinners, and so they get the just reward of their deeds.

Circumstance 4: At Wit's End in the Storm

Let's go now to verse 23:

[Psalm 107:23-27 NKJV]

²³ Those who go down to the sea in ships,
Who do business on great waters,

- ²⁴ They see the works of the LORD,
And His wonders in the deep.
- ²⁵ For He commands and raises the stormy wind,
Which lifts up the waves of the sea.
- ²⁶ They mount up to the heavens,
They go down again to the depths;
Their soul melts because of trouble.
- ²⁷ They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man,
And are at their wits' end.

This is a story not of people wandering in the wilderness. No. This is a story not of people who have heard the Word of God and rebelled against it. No. This is not the story of those who have a sinful life and they know it, won't do anything about it. These are people who are desperately trying to make a good business in life, and nothing is working out for them. Everything they try, they go up and down like a wave. They stagger like a drunken man. Their investments won't work. Their plan—business plan—doesn't work. In this story, the ships are broken. The storm has hit their life. They've melted because of sin and their trouble. They reel to and fro.

But the last part in verse 27 is the interesting part: "They are at their wits' end." They've run out of suggestions. They've run out of ideas. They have reached the bottom. "Oh, I had a good plan, and that didn't work. But I got another plan. I got a little more investment, and things are going, and we go up, and that was great! And then we went down, and that wasn't good. And then, and then, and then—and all of a sudden, I'm at the bottom. I'm done. I have no more suggestions. I have no more thoughts."

You know what many people do when they reach that place in life? They kill themselves. They take their own life. I'd have to stop and think, but I've been at several situations where people have died, and some of them have taken their own life. That's—it's not a pretty picture. Why would you take your own life? Oh, you're at your wit's end. There's no hope, and there's no help.

One Answer for Every Distress

Okay, let's go back and do a quick little review, and I think you'll get the answer.

Those that wandered in the wilderness in verse 4—look at what they did in verse 6:

[Psalm 107:6-7 NKJV]

⁶ Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He delivered them out of their distresses.

⁷ And He led them forth by the right way,
That they might go to a city for a dwelling place.

Isn't that neat? You know what He did? He delivered them out of their distresses. He led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city for a dwelling place. God said, "I'll meet your need. You need safety, you need water, you need a wall, you need security, you need all that? I can give you all that. Just call on Me. My Son has come to heal you and help you and meet you right where you are."

What about those who rebelled against His Word? Notice what they did. Verse 13:

[Psalm 107:13 NKJV]

Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He saved them out of their distresses.

These are people who said, "I don't want God in my life." But thank God they came to the point they realized He's my only hope, and they cried out to the Lord.

What about those who were fools? They knew sin was killing them. What would they do? Verse 19:

[Psalm 107:19 NKJV]

Then they cried out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He saved them out of their distresses.

What about those at their wit's end? Verse 28:

[Psalm 107:28 NKJV]

Then they cry out to the LORD in their trouble,
And He brings them out of their distresses.

You notice that, right? There were different circumstances, but there was **one answer**.

So I don't know what your circumstance is in life today, but I know the answer. I know what the answer is. Let me use a New Testament verse:

[Romans 10:13 NKJV]

For "whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved."

If you're in the wilderness, yes, you've got to get out. If you rebelled and said, "God, I don't want You in my life," but you call on His name, He says, "I'm glad to come into your life. You've humbled yourself and want Me to come? I'll come." That's the kind of a God I am: I'm gracious and merciful. I can help you.

You say, "My lifestyle is killing me, killing my family. I'm addicted. I sin everywhere. I don't know what to do. I haven't done anything to help me, but I call on the name of the Lord to help me." You know what He'll do? He'll help you. He'll heal you. He'll give you a new life.

What about those so desperate they're willing to do anything? They're at their wit's end. They don't know what to do. Maybe they've contemplated suicide. If you call on the name of the Lord, what would He do? Well, it says here, He brings them out of their distresses. That's the hope that we have.

The sinner's prayer is not hard:

[Luke 18:13 NKJV]

And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!"

The key being: "I can't find my way in the wilderness. I've left God out of my life. Sin is tearing me up, and I'm at my wit's end." God says, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord." He came to heal you—the brokenhearted, the weary, those in prison, those who can't help themselves. He's come for you. Don't be stupid! Call on the name of the Lord. Believe:

[1 Corinthians 15:3-4 NKJV]

³ For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for

our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,

And He wants to come into your life and heal you and help you and deliver you and show you His wonderful plan for your life.

There's an old hymn called Just As I Am:

"Without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me."

Just as you are. You can't fix yourself up. You can't heal yourself. But He can. Trust the Lord Jesus today. He is the answer for every hopeless situation in life. Don't go to a citizen of that country. That's out those doors; that's out in the city; that's in the society; that's those of a world who have rejected Him. Don't go there for help. Call upon the name of the Lord. You'll be saved.

Father, if there's anybody that needs to call today, thank You that Your Spirit is more than able, working in their heart, encouraging them, convicting them, helping them to call on the name of the Lord in their distress. And You will deliver them. Thank You for that promise, in Jesus' name. Amen.