

The Steadfast Love of God

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Date: 29 June 2025

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- [0 : 0 0] We're in Psalm 107 this morning. Psalm 107, and I'm going to begin with the very last verse of the psalm. It says in verse 43, Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things.
- Let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord. Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things. Let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord.
- So what we see here is that one of the key issues, I believe, actually developing in our culture, that's always been attention, but it's going to be an increasing one, and that is we are filled in a world where knowledge stands forth as most important and wisdom stands distant in the background.
- The people who make all the money and have all the power are people who know things, at least until recently. Wisdom, which might be something like knowledge plus understanding of what to do with the knowledge, wisdom has often suffered in second place in this particular world to knowledge.
- But we're living in a time where knowledge, the collection of information, the gathering of information is essentially going to be automated. Knowing things will be far less important than knowing what to do with those things.
- [1 : 3 1] We're moving into an age where wisdom is going to become prominent. And if you're raising kiddos, the best advice I can give you is to understand the absolute asset that wisdom will be as they launch into their adulthood.
- Having understanding will be key. This psalm tells us that one of the things wise people do is they think about the steadfast love of the Lord.
- More than think about it, they consider, they meditate upon the steadfast love of the Lord. And it says here something interesting. You'll see this language elsewhere in the Psalms that there is a singular thing, the steadfast love of the Lord, that has somehow multiple features to it.
- Look again at the verse. Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things. Let him consider, let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord. In other words, when you think about the steadfast love of the Lord, a bunch of subcategories emerge.
- A bunch of truths emerge about the nature of God and the world and so forth that flow out of a careful, wise consideration of the steadfast love of the Lord.
- [2 : 4 9] And so I'm just going to bring three truths related to the steadfast love of God that we see in this psalm to you this morning. And the first one is, is that being properly loved has a lot to do with power.
- Being properly loved has a lot to do with power. Let me put it this way. If you are really fortunate, you will at some point in your life have a group of friends and church members who are interested in spending a fraction of their limited power on loving you.
- This is if you're an incredibly fortunate person, there will be other people that will come into your life and they will be interested in spending a little slice of their time and attention and ability on loving you.

Now bear in mind, you won't be the main thing they're loving. That's probably going to be their family. But if you're really fortunate, you'll have a collection of people who will spend some of their time, some of their attention, some of their money, some of their efforts, some of their health, some of their attention span on you.

And that's great, but just bear in mind, they don't really have that much to give you. They have other people that they have to love and some they're supposed to love more than you.

[4 : 0 7] They have limits to their time and their abilities and their resources. They have limits to their intuition and their listening skills and just their basic ability to be loving.

Furthermore, if you are really fortunate, you'll have a very small group of people who won't make you simply a fraction of their lives, but will give you the majority of their heart.

And here I'm talking about parents or spouses, people who will give you really, honestly, a big chunk of their heart.

Even then, understand how limited that really is because those people die. And not only that, but they too have limited time, energy, resources, and skill with which to love you.

The truth is, is that there is only one being in the universe that can love you in the way that you were designed to be loved. It won't be your friends and it won't be your family.

[5 : 1 4] Guys, I just personally would say that as I've walked with families over the years and singles over the years and so forth, I think that many women are searching for a man to love them like only God can love them.

And I think that many men are searching to become more than what they can be. They're trying to be that God that many women are looking for them to be.

But the wise person always sees the limits of the created order. That's what's happening in the book of Ecclesiastes. It seems like, yeah, it's great and everything, but there's a limit.

There's a vanity to it. There's an end to it. The wise person, see the dumb person will spend their whole lives consuming things and they won't ever think about the ends. They won't ever think about the fullness.

Does it bum anyone else out to realize that there's a pretty decent percentage of humans on the face of the earth whose whole point is to consume? That's really what they're about. They want to be safe.

[6 : 1 1] They want to be fed. They want to be entertained. They want to have some sense of fulfillment in and of themselves, but they basically exist to consume. Well, those are dumb people. And they're not going to see the end.

They're not going to see the end of all that stuff. They think that that stuff is the end. That stuff is the point. But the wise person looks and says, well, I love that I have a wife. I love that I have parents that love me.

I love that I have friends. I also can see that that will be an insufficient amount of love for what I actually and ultimately need.

So one of the things we think about when we think about the steadfast love of the Lord is that he alone has no limits to his love. He alone is an eternal and infinite being.

And think about this. He can give 100% of his care, attention, wisdom, and skill to 100% of his children. He can give all of himself to all of his children all the time.

[7 : 1 1] This isn't multitasking. This is something only an infinite being is capable of. So, you know, a lot of people, when they talk about the love of God, talk about his willingness.

But I'm kind of honestly fundamentally interested in the ability. You know, when someone is both willing and able, that ability is key. I have lots of people who are willing to love me.

Thank God. Who are simply not able to love me as deeply as I need to be loved. As carefully as I need to be loved. And so there's just one being who fits that perfect bill.

I think about it this way. When we think about God's love, we usually think about his heart. But I want to talk about his horsepower. Like, he actually has the power to do something that no one else, no matter how well-intentioned, can do for you.

And I've realized over the years, you know, I'm a huge music guy. I'm not a huge Christian music guy. And I've realized over the years, as I've listened to all of this music, music, music, music, you know, how much romantic love is idolized and ascribed infinite powers in the music that I listen to.

[8 : 23] And it's such a shame because that's not a wise person. They actually think that this, like, romantic love, like, boy, I would really be set if someone would just make me the main object of their love.

No, you would not. You would not. I have that. I'm not set by that. No one is. They need something beyond what any human being could give.

And that's one of the things that's being portrayed in this psalm. You've got a bunch of neediness happening in this psalm. I think it's kind of comical. I almost imagine a shepherd in a field with all of his sheep.

And say there's a thousand sheep there. And I almost imagine, like, every single one of them has done something stupid at the same time to imperil their lives. You've got a sheep over here who's stuck in a hole. You've got a sheep over here who's shaking hands with a wolf.

You've got a sheep over here who's trying to eat a poison mushroom. And, you know, the shepherd's just looking out, and all he sees are dumb sheep causing themselves heartache. That's kind of what the psalm is portraying.

[9 : 25] Whenever you see in the scripture a reference to the four cardinal directions, northwest, east, south, there's almost always the intention to describe expansiveness. When we talk about God's forgiveness as far as from the east as from the west, it's the idea of just unlimitedness.

So what this psalm is doing is it's really bragging about the horsepower of God's steadfast love. It's really bragging about not only his willingness, but his ability to care for us.

The psalm is broken down into people in the north, the south, the east, and the west in four different situations. In verse 4, we have this.

Some wandered in desert wastes, finding no way to a city to dwell in, hungry and thirsty. Their soul fainted within them. In verse 10, some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons.

For they had rebelled against the words of God and spurned the counsel of the Most High. So he bowed their hearts down with hard labor. They fell down with no one to help. Verse 17, some were fools through their sinful ways, and because of their iniquities suffered affliction.

[10 : 33] They loathed any kind of food, and they drew near the gates of death. Verse 23, some went down to sea and ships, doing business on the great waters. They saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep, for he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea.

They mounted up to heaven, and they went down to the depths. Their courage melted away in their evil plight. They reeled and staggered like drunken men, and they were at their wit's end. So you've got four groups of people all going through calamitous stuff at the same time.

Does God have to take his eye off of, say, the sea people to look at, say, the prison people? No, no. God is capable. God doesn't suffer from the trolley problem, if you're familiar with that.

You know, a conductor sees a train about to run over his son. If he derails the train, then everybody dies in the train, but he saves his son. God doesn't suffer from that. He's actually able to love everybody exactly as they need to be loved, according to his perfect will.

No compromises, no pause button, no hold music. He is able to care for everyone in every place. We see in verse 6, 13, 19, and 28 the same phrase.

[11 : 49] They cried to the Lord, and he delivered them. In each one of these situations, however unique, however distant from the other one, the response is always the same. When they cry to the Lord, he delivers them.

When they cry to the Lord, does God need to shush one so he can hear the other? Does he need to break out Google Maps to figure out the most efficient route to visit all four people in all four corners?

No, that's the psalm is telling you the steadfast love of the Lord isn't simply his willingness to love you, but his unique ability as God, as sovereign being, as transcendent one, to love you.

Not only are these people spread around, but they're in some really serious difficulties. The first group of people, it says, they were wandering around in desert wastes, finding no place to a city to dwell in, hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted within them.

This is almost certainly, knowing the Bible, this is almost certainly a reference to someone who has been cast out for one reason or another. The people here who are wandering in desert wastes are wandering because no one wants anything to do with them.

[13 : 02] They can't find a city because they are outcasts. That's the idea of this passage. Think Jacob, think Cain, so on and so forth. And so this was a great curse in the Old Testament ancient world to be cast out and no longer have a place to go.

So the people in this first section are social outcasts. They don't have any connection. Maybe because they don't deserve to have any connection. Maybe they've done something like Cain.

Or maybe it's a bit more complicated. But the point is, is that the problem itself is actually a really difficult and thorny problem. These are not people who are in the desert and lost directions to the nearest Buc-ee's.

These are people who, for whatever reason, have been rejected by the majority of people in the world. The next section. Some sat in darkness and in the shadow of death, prisoners in affliction and in irons, for they had rebelled against the words of God and spurned the counsel of the Most High.

So the first group is in the desert somewhere, wandering around as outcasts. The second group is in prison. And they're not in prison because they were charged unjustly. They are in prison because they were wrong.

[14 : 12] Because they rebelled against the words of God and spurned the counsel of the Most High. Nevertheless, when they called out to the Lord, just like the desert people did, God was both willing but also able to deliver them.

Verse 14. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death and burst their bonds apart. The third group is sick. Like the people in the second group, they're suffering because of their sins.

Look at verse 17 and 18. Some were fools through their sinful ways and because of their iniquity suffered affliction. They loathed any kind of food and they drew near to the gates of death.

This reminds me of my days in Africa during the AIDS pandemic. You'd walk into a whole room full of people that were in beds and you couldn't tell who was alive and who was dead. They were all dead in a few days.

And they're all laying there, all languishing because they were fools in their sinful ways. And they are literally unable to eat, unable to do anything, literally languishing away, waiting to die because of their sexual sin.

[15 : 18] Nevertheless, the Bible says here that when these folks who are languishing away on their sickbed because of their sin call out to the Lord, he is not only willing but also able to deliver them.

Verse 20. He sent out his word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction. The final group out at sea, they're just trying to make some money. The sea in ancient times is a very mysterious and chaotic place in the ancient mind.

So this fourth example is meant to serve as a kind of crescendo to God's power. It's the idea of God can take care of people all the way out there and see that he really does have the power to take care of everybody.

This is similar to when the disciples say of Jesus, who is this man that even the wind and the waves obey? So this fourth category is kind of the crescendo showing God really does have power.

They're out at sea, they get into trouble, like the other groups, they call out to the Lord, and he again is both willing and able to save them. So the main point here is that don't forget about the importance of power when you're thinking about love.

[16 : 28] It actually is a very necessary condition. It's nice to be loved by a two-year-old. They really can't do much for you. They really don't have much power. So as sentimental and sweet or even romantic as other forms of love are, ultimately, let's be honest, we all need someone who loves us who actually can do something about it.

And that alone is God, ultimately. I just don't know what the plan would be to go through this world without God, knowing, if you're wise, that no matter how well-intentioned the people in your lives, you will hit places where no one can do anything for you.

In fact, note in this passage, in this psalm, that there are two groups of people, at least, who are suffering because they were twerks. There are at least two groups of people, it might be more, who are suffering because they messed up their own lives.

Well, in that situation, you'll find lots of people who were formerly committed to loving you, no longer interested in loving you. We've got at least two of the four groups of people here who have made a mess of their own lives.

And as a consequence of that, almost certainly have lost many friends. So, first point, God is unique in his ability to deliver on his loving intention.

[17 : 45] Nothing separates us from God's love, not distance, not time, so on and so forth. The second point is going to focus in on the sea people.

And the second point, you could describe it as this. Discipline as deliverance. The first point is, don't neglect the importance of power when being loved.

You need power to be properly loved. The person who loves you needs to have power. The second point is that the person who loves you, God, will sometimes discipline you as a means of delivering you.

Look at verse 23. Some went down to the sea in ships doing business on the great waters. They get into trouble. Verse 25.

He commanded, this is God, he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven and they went down to their depths. Their courage melted away in their evil plight.

[18 : 42] They reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits end. So the trouble that these sea folks get into is directly from the Lord. They weren't having trouble until God sent a storm.

So if we were to say, God delivers you from your difficult circumstances, we would kind of be missing a key truth here. So at the end, the sea people do arrive at their preferred haven, the place that they wanted to go.

But the only reason they had to call out to the Lord at all was because God sent the storm. Well, friends, let's understand that when the Bible says in this psalm in particular or any other psalm, when the Bible talks about God delivering us, saving us, redeeming us, it can include personal circumstances.

But God is doing much more than delivering us from difficult circumstances. He's really ultimately delivering us from our own sense of independence and this foolish idea that we can live life without him.

And in order to deliver us from that, which is a far greater enemy than any circumstance, he will sometimes kick up a storm when there was no storm. God's discipline is aimed primarily at giving us the one thing we need deliverance for more than anything else.

[20 : 05] Independence, self-satisfaction, indifference to him. And so one of the things we have to remember is when we think about what redemption actually is, is yeah, sure, God actually does care about your personal circumstances.

He actually has a plan to remove every single one of us from all of our difficult circumstances one day. That's the promise of heaven. And we will all eventually be delivered out of all the difficulties. We're all going to be rosy and shiny and great.

It's all going to be great. But let's remember, in the meantime, if God has delayed some deliverance, some quieting, if God might even have kicked up a storm in your life, understand he is actually still loving you and actually loving you the best way you need by giving you something that reminds you of how much you need him.

God's deliverance isn't always circumstantial. Sometimes it's spiritual. In fact, if God were to deliver you from some difficult situation without first ensuring that that situation served your soul, then he would have wasted the difficulty.

Understand that God's deliverance sometimes includes the storm, not merely the removal of the storm. Look at verse 10. Let me ask you a question.

[21 : 41] Do you understand that when God bows their heart down with hard labor, he is loving them? Do you understand that? Do you understand just objectively, not you.

We're not talking about you. Let's talk about these randos in the, you know, in the ancient world. Do you understand that for these people, when God made their life terrible, made it harder than it needed to be, that he was loving them?

Do you understand that? It's absolutely what this text is saying. It's absolutely saying this is an evidence of God's steadfast love. When they rebelled against him, he bowed them down with hard labor.

That's because the Bible tells us that discipline is an evidence of God's fatherly love. Hebrews 12, 4 through 11. Have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastises every son whom he receives.

[22 : 48] It is for your discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons. For what son is there whom the father does not discipline? If you are left without discipline, in which all have participated, then you are illegitimate children and not sons.

Besides this, we have had earthly fathers who disciplined us, and we respected them. Shall we not much more be subject to the father of spirits and live? For they disciplined us for a short time, as it seemed best to them.

But he disciplines us for our good, that we may share his holiness. For the moment, all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant. But later it yields the peaceful fruit of harvest, the peaceful fruit of righteousness, to those who have been trained by it.

So, maybe understand that if you are not in the haven of your desire, if you are not where God, where you would like to be, and you keep calling out to the Lord to deliver you from this difficult circumstance, I want to invite you to consider, In fact, I just want to invite you to count on this.

That deliverance would have happened yesterday, if there was not more good for your soul, and the difficulty, than there is in the deliverance. God disciplines those whom he loves.

[24 : 09] If he brings a storm, it is only to last as long as it serves your sanctification, and no longer. But it is absolutely one of the ways God loves his people.

Okay, third point. This one's a little bit broader. We've talked about some areas of God's steadfast love. Personally, third point is, God loves you, he just doesn't only love you.

The main point of the psalm is that God is at work everywhere. This isn't a regional God with a restricted locale where he has to stick.

The Lord God in this text is at work seeking and saving the lost across both space and time. Let's think about this for a second.

The Lord God, the creator of the universe, is the most active evangelistic force in the world, ultimately the only evangelistic force in the world, and he is actively seeking and saving the lost across both space and time.

[25 : 11] Where do I get space? Well, anytime you get the cardinal directions, again in scripture, there are certain things that are referenced by this. And one of the things you'll see when you see, for instance, a reference to east and west and north and south, like in this psalm, is this idea of God going around the world to gather in his elect from the four winds, is sometimes how it's described.

It's crazy to think, but God is actively all over the world seeking and saving his people, redeeming people out of various troubles as they call upon him in faith.

You know, there's this interesting thought I've had. It will not happen, but one of the fantasies I've had about heaven is that I'd get access to a database. So this will tell you how kind of nerdy sometimes people can get.

I would like to go into the heavenly computer room and get access to the personnel files. And, you know, in the personnel files, it would say, you know, it would say, you know, Caleb Wilson, you know, bass player, you know, chair mover, whatever.

And it would say his salvation date and it would say, you know, like where he's from and whose parents were and all that kind of stuff. And you could sort all the fields. And so I could say, okay, Lord, tell me everybody who was saved in Johnson County in 1973.

[26 : 37] Tell me everyone who was saved on April 16th of 1946 in the Western Hemisphere. Tell me everybody who was saved at 1 a.m. on March 30th in China on this year.

And what you would find in my little fantasy of my computer, my heavenly database, is you would find the God of the universe who made all things has been doing one thing, mostly, for thousands and thousands of years.

He's been knocking on the doors of hearts, extending salvation person by person, soul by soul, all over the known world, forever.

The clear meaning of the text is that this God moves effortlessly from north to south and east to west. He's everywhere. That's the space element, but I said that God is saving in time and space.

The time element's this. This psalm was written, let's say, about 2,700 years ago. Do you know not a day has gone by in 2,700 years where God hasn't been doing this psalm?

[27 : 48] That even right now there are some in prisons of their own doing. There are some afflicted by various mental or physical sicknesses because of their own sin.

There are people just trying to go about their lives and God creates a problem for them so they have to seek him. There are people who have been rejected by their tribe, by their family, and so forth.

Do you understand that just literally every single day for the last 2,700 years plus, the God of the universe has been seeking and saving the lost? There are all sorts of glorious promises about this throughout the scriptures.

And one is in the call to worship that I read this morning. God doesn't take days off. Psalm 121 says he neither slumbers nor sleeps. Proverbs 15, 3 says the eyes of the Lord are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good.

In Jeremiah 31, there are all these prophetic passages in the major prophets in particular where God promises to gather his people from all over the world back into one tribe.

[28 : 56] And it's in Jeremiah 31, 8 through 10, it says, Behold, I will bring them from the north country and gather them from the farthest places of the earth. Among them, the blind, the lame, the pregnant woman, and she who is in labor together, a great company, and they shall return here.

With weeping they shall come, with pleas for mercy, I will lead them back. I will make them walk by brooks of water in a straight path in which they shall not stumble.

For I am a father to Israel, for Ephraim is my firstborn. Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it to the coastlands far away. Say, He who scattered Israel will gather him and will keep him as a shepherd who keeps his flock.

Now in John 10, Jesus tells us real clearly that this passage is not about an ethnic group of people, but rather about a group of people who will be saved from every tribe and tongue.

Because in John 10, verse 16, Jesus says, referencing this very concept in Jeremiah, I have other sheep that are not of this fold, and I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice, and so there will be one flock and one shepherd.

[30 : 06] So let's start applying some of these truths. The first one, it's not enough that someone be willing to love you. Their ability to love you is really important.

And based on that, God stands alone. He uniquely has the power to love you in a way no one else does. Number two, He is infinitely, intimately aware of everything happening in your life.

He's taking care of you. He's handling a billion variables that you don't even know about. He's probably shot down cancer cells dozens of times in your body, and you don't even have a clue, and you won't know until you get to the heavenly database.

But whatever God is doing, His main aim is always to help you to learn to love Him. And He'll sort the circumstances of your life into the perfect combination that meets His perfect purpose to sanctify you according to Christ Jesus.

And when He has done so with this or that storm, then He will deliver you to your desired haven. Those storms always serve His sanctifying purpose. Number three, God loves you, but He doesn't love only you.

[31 : 13] He has been extending His steadfast love to the four corners of the world for a very long time. And one of the great consequences of this is that we are entering into, one day, a heavenly reunion full of people we've never met who came to Jesus through a thousand different circumstances.

Even in this room, we've got dozens and dozens of different paths that people took, different problems that the Lord overcame. But they all have this interesting kind of algebraic math sort of thing.

The variable, where we came from, that's the variable. And it's different for each one of us. But everything else in the math formula is exactly the same. My unique lostness, I called out to the Lord and He delivered me.

And so as diverse as our stories are even in this room, we have most of it in common. We were all in some kind of need, we all called out to the Lord, and He was not only willing but able to deliver us.

Friends, I want to encourage you, do not make too much of what's known as standpoint epistemology. This is a real problem, especially in Christian world, and I want to encourage you to not think about it. Standpoint epistemology is actually a Marxist idea that suggests that in order for you to perceive something well, you have to be standing in a particular place.

[32 : 29] That means that's why white privilege is a thing and so on and so forth. It's all stupid. But really where standpoint epistemology comes into play is you're the single guy or you're the 60-year-old man or whatever, and you think, only that person.

I need to be around people like that. I need to be around people who are like me. That will make sure I'm understood. That's Marxist. That's standpoint epistemology. That's actually not true.

The truth is is that you have two of the three things in common with every single person in this room who called upon the name of the Lord Jesus. The only unique thing is your problem, and your problem is the least interesting part about you.

The most glorious and wonderful part about you is that you called on the name of the Lord Jesus and he was mighty to save. He heard you and he ran to you and he redeemed you, and that you have in common with every other saint in this room.

So don't fall for this notion that you need to find all the other people who were at sea and spend most of your time with the people who got delivered out of sea problems, and some of you need to go find the most people that were delivered out of prison problems and so forth.

[33 : 34] Nonsense! The variables are the least interesting part of this. What's the most important part? You called the name of the Lord. He was not only willing, but he was able to save.

The main application of this text is real simple. We're just supposed to be grateful. We're supposed to give thanks. Four times, the phrase appears in verses 8, 15, 21, and 31.

Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man. Let them thank the Lord for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man.

So we have four things. We only have one thing that we might not have in common. We might all have come from different things. We all called upon the Lord. He answered us, and we are all called to be thankful for his wondrous, steadfast love.

For as it says in verse 35, he turns the desert into pools of water, a parched land into springs of water, and there he lets the hungry dwell, and they establish a city to live in. They sow fields and plant vineyards, and they get a fruitful yield.

[34 : 38] By his blessing, they multiply greatly, and he does not let their livestock diminish. When they are diminished and brought low through oppression, evil, and sorrow, he pours contempt on princes and makes them wander in trackless wastes.

But he raises up the needy out of affliction and makes their families like flocks. The upright see it and are glad, and all the wickedness shuts its mouth. Whoever is wise, let him attend to these things.

Let them consider the steadfast love of the Lord. Hey, for communion today, I want to celebrate this idea of God's global seeking and saving. Let's just scan through the headlines real quick.

You know what country's been in the news a lot this week? Iran. Friends, do you know that the biggest thing to happen in Iran in the past few decades is not the destruction of some nuclear facilities, but the faithful building of the church in Iran?

What's, the most glorious victory that's happened in that country is not that we destroyed this or that thing. The most glorious thing that's happened in Iran is the fact that decade after decade, Jesus Christ has been seeking and saving the lost, bringing people to the knowledge of his gospel.

[35 : 58] Pakistan, man, it's always in the news. It's just going to be in the news until it becomes a Christian country. It's just a mess of a place. But in the midst of that mess, we know, because we know some of the men he is using, Jesus Christ is seeking and saving the lost.

This God that we're going to sing about here in a moment, this Jesus that we're going to remember by participating in his table, he is actively out there finding people that he has chosen to save.

I recently made a commitment to go to the Philippines again this fall, and I'm going there to teach pastors how to preach the Psalms. You know how often I hear from these young men saying, when are you coming back and we need to do this and we need to do that, and you know what's going on there?

All of these young men are thrown into the pastorate and they're qualified and I'm excited about all of them, but they've got so many hungry Christians that are coming to faith in Jesus recently, and it's like they need to learn how to cook faster because there are so many hungry Christians who want God's word, and so I'll be going back there in September.

So as we participate in the table today, why don't we just say what an amazing God we serve, who is not limited by either time or space, but even today as we observe this, is having his way with souls all over both time and space.

[37 : 26] It reminds me of Revelation 7, and I'll read this and then you can come and get your elements. Revelation 7, verse 9 through 12. After this I looked and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb.

And all the angels who were standing around the throne and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshiped God, saying, Amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever.

Amen. Let's pray. First God, we do praise your holy name. It is wonderful just to pause and consider the way that your steadfast love has been working and will keep working until the end of the age.

We praise your holy name that you love people. You don't have to, but not only do you love them, but you have all the power necessary to love them well. And so that even today, Father, there are newborn baby Christians all over this world just woken up out of their death to sin and trespasses, just woken up to walk in newness of life, to behold the face of Christ Jesus and to follow him the rest of their days.

We praise your holy name that there are thousands of people all over the world who have been brought into the kingdom of light, delivered from the domain of darkness, darkness, and yeah, there's little details of their stories that are different than ours, and that's exciting, but that's not the main story.

[39 : 09] The main story is is that when people call upon the name of the Lord, they will be saved, and that Lord, you are faithful to save according to your word. So we praise your holy name for the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ that you have dropped on this earth and that continues to transform it, and we look forward to the day when we gather with all of the saints from every tribe and tongue and even time.

Across thousands of years, we gather together in this great desired haven, free from all of our troubles, free from all of our pains, free from all of our sins, and we simply, along with all of these saints from all over the time and all over the place, gather to worship you, for you are indeed worthy of our worship.

Today, as we partake of this table, let's partake as grateful citizens of a massive people that you are seeking and saving even to this day. In these things we pray in Jesus' name.

Amen.