

Weekly devotion based on Psalm 106

Wednesday 6th October 2020

UCA Congregations: AML, Drysdale, Lara, Portarlington and St Leonards

Welcome

Opening Words

Praise the Lord!

O give thanks to the Lord for he is good;

for his steadfast love endures forever.

Bible Text: Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23

¹Praise the LORD! O give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever.

²Who can utter the mighty doings of the LORD, or declare all his praise?

³Happy are those who observe justice, who do righteousness at all times.

⁴Remember me, O LORD, when you show favour to your people; help me when you deliver them; ⁵that I may see the prosperity of your chosen ones, that I may rejoice in the gladness of your nation, that I may glory in your heritage.

⁶Both we and our ancestors have sinned; we have committed iniquity, have done wickedly.

¹⁹They made a calf at Horeb and worshiped a cast image.

²⁰They exchanged the glory of God for the image of an ox that eats grass.

²¹They forgot God, their Savior, who had done great things in Egypt,

²²wondrous works in the land of Ham, and awesome deeds by the Red Sea.

²³Therefore he said he would destroy them— had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them.

Reflection: It's a common theme in many of the Psalms where memories of past continues to shape the identity of the people through the re-telling of its stories in worship, in art, in poetry and relationship to God, land, sea and sky as well as the neighbours.

Psalm 106's main theme is Confession recalling historical events in the lives of the people and their covenantal relationship with God:

- (a) The Psalmist *praises God* as he and his community remembers God's steadfast love and God's mighty deeds
- (b) The Psalmist *pleas with God* to remember not only him but also his community – signalling that the relationship is not smooth sailing.
- (c) The Psalmist *recalls the history* of broken relationship with God (sinfulness of the people) in its failure to act justly and righteously, as highlighted in the selected versus at Mt Horeb, where worshipping a false god (golden calf) and forgetting God's acts of generosity, as well as Moses' intervention.
- (d) The Psalmist concludes with *an affirmation* of God's saving grace and praise is again echoed in response.



Nikki Rasmussen reflects on Psalm 106 and offers these insights:

“It’s always striking to me how patient and forgiving a father our God is. To look back through human history is to review a long succession of sin; we push God away, disobey Him, allow the enemy to seep into our very culture and establish “norms” that are toxic and painful and that go against all that God had intended for us. We get a clear perspective of this in Psalm 106 as the psalmist lists out all that God’s people have done and yet, in spite of it all, God remembers His covenant.

Every time we trip and fall, God the Father is there to pick us up and bandage our wounds so that we can continue on, learning from our mistakes and using them to grow more into the people He intended us to be.”

Nikki chose to focus the image not on the falling or the lifting up, but rather on the wounds now covered by God. Sin is shameful and scary, but we can wear these bandages with immense gratitude knowing that they came from God and that from them we will experience growth we might not have even known we needed.

Ponder:

How does the reading of Israel’s story (Psalm 106) remind us of our story?

What does confession teach you about God’s glory and grace?

Rejoice for all God has done to forgive us of our sins (106:5), and praise the LORD (106:1, 48).

Thanks be to God. Amen.

Prayer (*take a moment to pray and share what’s in your heart with God*)

Blessing

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make his face to shine upon you,
and be gracious unto you.

The Lord lift up his countenance upon you,
and grant you peace.

Amen

Acknowledgement:

- Art piece: Nikki Rasmussen is a Colorado-raised artist and designer who graduated with a BFA from the Rocky Mountain College of Art and Design in 2014. She has been drawing since she could hold a crayon and has always found visual art to be key to her self-expression and identity.
- Bible Text: NIV translation
- Prepared by Rev Sani Vaeluaga & Rev Temukisa Amituana’i-Vaeluaga