

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Bible Study Notes Book of Psalms

11-16-11

Psalm 115

The Story Behind the Psalm

Psalm 115 was a choir number. The choir was divided into two parts, and it was sung with each part of the choir singing a portion and the leader singing a portion. One part of the choir would sing verses 1-8, the leader would sing verses 9-11, the other half of the choir would sing verses 12 and 13. The leader would sing verses 14-16 and then all would join together in singing verses 17 and 18. It was written specifically for choir use.

The Way It Was Used by God's People

Psalms 115–118 were traditionally sung at the Passover meal, commemorating Israel's escape from slavery in Egypt (Exodus 11–12).

Theme: God is alive. He is thinking about us and caring for us, and we should put him first in our life.

Author: Anonymous

PSALM 115:1

The psalmist asked that God's name, not the nation's, be glorified. Too often we ask God to glorify his name *with* ours. For example, we may pray for help to do a good job so that our work will be noticed. Or we may ask that a presentation go well so we will get applause. There is nothing wrong with looking good or impressing others; the problem comes when we want to look good no matter what happens to God's reputation in the process. Before you pray, ask yourself, Who will get the credit if God answers my prayer?

PSALM 115:4-8

When the psalms were written, many people worshiped idols—statues of wood, stone, or metal. They took pride in what they could see and had contempt for what they couldn't see. Today, we still may value tangible objects (home, clothing, possessions) rather than intangible realities (spiritual growth, salvation, giving to those in need, spending time with loved ones). Those who spend their time obtaining tangible objects are as foolish and empty as the idols themselves. (For more on the foolishness of idols, see Isaiah 44:9-20.)

PSALM 115:12

"The LORD remembers us," says the psalm writer. What a fantastic truth! There are many times when we feel isolated, alone, and abandoned, even by God. In reality, he sees, understands, and thinks about us. When depressed by problems or struggling with self-worth, be encouraged that God keeps you in his thoughts. If he thinks about you, surely his help is near.

Psalm 116

The Story Behind the Psalm

It was written at a time of thanksgiving for congregational singing. Just as Psalm 115 was a choir number, so Psalm 116 was written for all to sing. The power of singing is limitless. Once a famous atheist was speaking to a crowd of several thousand people in a giant auditorium. He disproved to his own satisfaction and to the satisfaction of many that there was no God, that the Bible was not true and that Heaven and Hell were both myths. When he finished the address, he then looked on the lower floor, then to the first balcony, then to the second balcony, and challenged anyone to disprove what he had spoken. Not a noise could be heard until out of the stillness of the quiet came a lovely soprano voice from out of the top balcony as a teenage girl arose to sing, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross! Lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss. From victory unto victory, His army shall He lead, 'til every foe is vanquished and Christ is Lord indeed." Soon other people in the second balcony had joined in the singing. Then the entire upper balcony and the first balcony and then the lower floor people joined until all the people rose and sang together that wonderful song, "Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the trumpet call obey. Forth to the mighty conflict in this His glorious day." It is said that there was not a dry eye in the house. When the song was finished someone noticed the atheist had left the platform. The congregational song had not only turned many to faith but caused the atheist to flee!

The Way It Was Used by God's People

Psalm 116 was used for congregational singing.

Theme: Praise for being saved from certain death. Worship is a thankful response and not a repayment for what God has done.

Author: Anonymous

PSALM 116:1, 2

God is so responsive that you can always reach him. He bends down and listens to your voice. This writer's love for the Lord had grown because he had experienced answers to his prayers. If you are discouraged, remember that God is near, listening carefully to every prayer and answering each one in order to give you his best.

PSALM 116:15

God stays close to us even in death. When someone we love is nearing death, we may become angry and feel abandoned. But believers (the Lord's loved ones) are precious to God, and he carefully chooses the time when they will be called into his presence. Let this truth provide comfort when you've lost a loved one. God sees, and each life is valuable to him (see Jesus' statement in Matthew 10:29).