

“Restoration” Psalm 126

CHS Treasury of David:

TITLE. A Song of Degrees. This is the seventh Step, and we may therefore expect to meet with some special perfection of joy in it; nor shall we look in vain. We see here not only that Zion abides, but that her joy returns after sorrow. Abiding is not enough, fruitfulness is added. The pilgrims went from blessing to blessing in their psalmody as they proceeded on their holy way. Happy people to whom ever ascent was a song, every halt a hymn. Here the trustor becomes a sower: faith works by love, obtains a present bliss, and secures a harvest of delight.

There is nothing in this psalm by which we can decide its date, further than this,—that it is a song after a great deliverance from oppression. "Turning captivity" by no means requires an actual removal into banishment to fill out the idea; rescue from any dire affliction or crushing tyranny would be fitly described as "captivity turned." *Indeed, the passage is not applicable to captives in Babylon, for it is Zion itself which is in captivity and not a part of her citizens: the holy city was in sorrow and distress; though it could not be removed, the prosperity could be diminished.* Some dark cloud lowered over the beloved capital, and its citizens prayed "Turn again our captivity. O Lord."

This psalm is in its right place and most fittingly follows its predecessor, for as in Ps 125:1-5, we read that the rod of the wicked shall not rest upon the lot of the righteous, we here see it removed from them to their great joy. The word "turn" would seem to be the keynote of the song: it is a Psalm of conversion—conversion from captivity; and it may well be used to set forth the rapture of a pardoned soul when the anger of the Lord is turned away from it. We will call it, "Leading captivity captive."

DIVISIONS. The Psalm divides itself into a narrative (Ps 126:1-2), a song (Ps 126:3), a prayer (Ps 126:4), and a promise (Ps 126:5-6).

This Psalm is not of David, has no title in the Hebrew or any of the Versions, and certainly belongs to the close of the captivity. It might have been composed by *Haggai* and *Zechariah*, as the *Syriac* supposes; or by *Ezra*, according to others. It is beautiful, and highly descriptive of the circumstances which it represents. StudyLight.org

Introduction: Even I have to admit that David is probably not the author of this psalm. This was probably one of the prophets that came back with the exiles from captivity. Nonetheless, this psalm is quite beautiful and records a special time in the life of God's people. There has to be nothing better than having a time of discipline come to an end and the favor of God restored in our lives. Forgiveness is always given from the Lord but the consequences to sin are often hard to live with.

Spurgeon, on the other hand thinks differently. Note his comments above. He does have a point and it makes me nervous to not side with the prince of preachers. His thoughts may be right as well. Maybe David speaks prophetically. Whether it was the Babylonian captivity or some other calamity, I do not know, but the city was in need of restoration.

This is the seventh in the order of 15 songs of ascent. The people of God would be reminded of these wonderful days for thousands of years to come as they etched these inspired words of God into their history and memories. These scriptures would be sung in and around the temple for years to come.

The mood is celebratory and restoration had brought a renewed hope to the Jews future and eternal existence. The grace of God was on their minds. This reminds me of the parables and narratives in the NT about the prodigals coming home and the restoration they felt. There is nothing like a sinner coming to faith in Jesus, and there is nothing like a wayward sheep coming home.

The Christian often goes through dry spells and needs times of restoration, revival, and refreshing. There has been no sin, but the trials of life and the discipline of the Lord have brought us through a time of intense growth and then the fruit of restoration falls upon us in an immeasurable amount of grace. A bumper

crop of blessings and grace are lavished upon us. Oh, how good our God is.

I can liken this passage to standing before God as a redeemed sinner that was held captive by sin for years. Then the Lord removed the chains of death and disease of sin and released me from my captivity. I will never forget the realization of joy and gladness as a new Christian. What a great time that was in my life. To finally know for certain that even as a 21 year old I understood the meaning of life. I had purpose and direction for the first time in my life. I was at peace and had real joy.

In **Luke chapter 15** Jesus deals with three lost entities... a coin, a sheep, and a boy. Jesus, is as R. G. Lee says, "The Hound of Heaven." I like that. There is rejoicing in all three reunions. Never forget the joy of restoration. Never get over the joy of worship and God changing someone's life for eternity. If that doesn't move you, you are either lost or way out of God's will.

Verse 1: The term Zion is in this verse. The term Zion carries all the hopes and dreams of the Jewish people. That is a prophetic word. The word Zion holds all the prophetic words in scripture within it. Jesus will return to Zion in the latter days. The captives understood where they were standing and what God had given back to them. They had not just returned to their home land, they were at that time encouraged that God was not finished with them. Their restoration to Zion meant so much more about their future.

2 Sam 5:7

7 Nevertheless, David captured the fortress of Zion, the City of David.

NIV

Ps 2:6

6 "I have installed my King
on Zion, my holy hill."

NIV

Ps 53:6

6 Oh, that salvation for Israel would come out of Zion!
When God restores the fortunes of his people,
let Jacob rejoice and Israel be glad!

NIV

Isa 14:32

"The Lord has established Zion,
and in her his afflicted people will find refuge."

NIV

Zech. 8:3

3 This is what the Lord says: "I will return to Zion and dwell in Jerusalem. Then Jerusalem will be called the City of Truth, and the mountain of the Lord Almighty will be called the Holy Mountain."

NIV

Have you ever had such a great day or time that you thought to yourself that it might be a dream. We often say that something is *a dream come true*. The restoration and return home was so great that they were experiencing a dream. While they were in captivity they surely had dreamt of getting back to the homeland. Now, the reality was in the present. They had either come from Babylon or had been rescued from some enemy and God restored the city.

Luke 15:4-32

4 "Suppose one of you has a hundred **sheep** and loses one of them. Does he not leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? 5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders 6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' 7

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

8 "Or suppose a woman has ten silver **coins** and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? 9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' 10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of

God over one sinner who repents."

11 Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

13 "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. 14 After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.

15 So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. 16 He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

17 "When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired men have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! 18 I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired men.' 20 So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

21 "The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

22 "But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. 24 For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

25 "Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. 27 'Your brother has come,' he replied, 'and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.'

28 "The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. 29 But he answered his father, 'Look! All these years I've been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!'

31 "'My son,' the father said, 'you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.'"

NIV

Verse 2: notice that there were songs of Joy and laughter. I have a hard time with people so serious they can't laugh and enjoy life. God actually gave us life to enjoy. Fun is okay. A merry heart is good medicine. Joy and laughter is contagious. A restored soul is a good thing.

Acts 3:19-22

19 Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of **refreshing** may come from the Lord, 20 and that he may send the Christ, who has been appointed for you — even Jesus. 21 He must remain in heaven until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets.

NIV

The nations will see the joy and know that God has restored us. The nations will also see a bunch of crabby old goobers that have no joy too. The old motto is us four no more. They have a sign on the top of the church, “Go to hell” we’re full. How sad to be so crabby in Jesus. Maybe the chosen frozen need restoration? Let’s show the world real joy.

Verse 3: no one can do what God can do. God can turn the tide in no time flat. He can make grace abound towards us in abundance. He can fill us with joy in a moment.

Prov 13:12

12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick,
but a longing fulfilled is a tree of life.

NIV

Lam 3:21-23

21 But this I call to mind,
and therefore I have hope:
22 The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases;
his mercies never come to an end;
23 they are new every morning;
great is your faithfulness.

ESV

Ps 51:8-12

8 Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

9 Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

11 Cast me not away from thy presence; and take not thy holy spirit from me.

12 *Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*

KJV

Verse 4: Restore our fortunes: The Hebrew word here for restore is **shuwb**. This is the word for repent or turn around. Relieve, refresh, restore, recover, or reverse. This is a popular word in Hebrew and has multiple renderings. Some of my favorite translations are set again, draw back, come back, consider, lodge, or dig. The idea is that a person is brought back

and digs in. God reverses their course and makes them come home.

The word for fortunes (NIV) and captivity is the word **shebuwth**. It means to return to a former state. It's means to return us from exile or as from being prisoners.

Like streams in the desert, may God restore life and joy and growth in our lives. May He bring us back from the captivity of sin. May God restore our former way of life.

Restoration is always the goal with he wayward soul.

Verse 5-6: The pronouns change in these last two verses. We now see the personal pronouns end. The psalmist now gives us the truth in illustrated form. The law of the harvest is introduced to us. We reap what we sow, more than we sow, later then we sow. Our spiritual life is a journey, not a race. There will be times of captivity and prayer. We will sow in tears. We will pray over our children and families with tears and pain. We will pray and beg God for deliverance and help for ourselves and other. We will go to war spiritually speaking for so many things.

The plowing and preparing of the soil will bring tears, but we must remember that God will give us Joy in the proper time. The soil is hard and the climate fierce, but as we go and sow the seed, God will bring the harvest.

The Hebrew says we go out and continue to sow. We never stop trying to spread the seed. We never stop praying for restoration and for the sheep, coins, and wayward boys to come home. Repentance is sweet and bringing the sheeves home is awesome.

Jerry Grey: Theology of The Resurrection 1 Cor 15:20-21

1. Christ, the first-fruits: verse 20-21: The sheaves

The first fruits were the chief and best part of the harvest. The first sheaf of the harvest was given to the Lord. This was the command of the OT. God gets the first and the best. It was a way of saying, “all my harvest belongs to the Lord.” If I trust God with the first and the best, He will increase the latter. This act was a symbolic way of saying that the harvest was dedicated to the Lord.

Do you see the comparison? The tithe belongs to the Lord. The first part is given to God as an act of obedience and trust that God will provide.

Second, the sheaves were a picture of the resurrection of Christ. The victory that Christ won was not limited. Jesus is the first fruits of the resurrection- the resurrection guarantees that we will also be raised. The dead in Christ first, then the rest.

Those who sow in tears have a heart for the lost. They pray and weep over the lost. The God of the lost man will see that. The compassion of God cannot ignore the weeping of man over his family and friends.

We will bring them back with songs of joy. We will carry them if necessary.

Closing:

The Prodigal Sons Luke 15:11-31

Introduction: R. G. Lee has said that God is the hound of heaven. The Psalmist has said the exact words (Psalm 139:7) many years ago. We see the picture of the compassion of God in the story of Gomer and Hosea as Hosea is told to go after an unfaithful wife. Jesus came to seek and save that which was lost. The story that unfolds in this passage is one of interest and hope to us all.

The context of this passage should not go unnoticed. Jesus is speaking to the tax collectors and sinners. Jesus was always around sinners. There were also others there who looked down on the

sinners. He seeks the lost and the lonely. Many try to decide if this parable is about the backslider or the lost man. The context will tell us how to proceed. Look at the scripture.

Luke 15:7

*“I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one **sinner** who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”*

The context tells me that Jesus is speaking to sinners. If you fall into that category, then this is for you.

Outline:

A Prodigal is Made: Verses 11-13

1. Selfishness: He asked for his portion of the estate.
2. Loss of Contentment: The son had all and wanted and more.

Proverbs 12:9

“Better to be a nobody and yet have a servant than pretend to be somebody and have no food.”

3. Tunnel Vision: He looked only at his circumstances and not at reality. He had a distorted worldview (Jeremiah 17:9).
4. Impatience: Notice the phrase “not long” in verse 13
5. Removal of Accountability: He wanted to go to the “broad country” or “far country” to act out all his sin. The broad country in Matthew 7:13-14 speaks of a place without fences. He removes authority and accountability in his life.
6. Irresponsibility: Notice that he took all he had. He was not planning on coming back. He trusted flesh rather than God.

Jeremiah 17:5-6

*“This is what the LORD says:
Cursed is the one who trusts in man,
who depends on flesh for his strength
and whose heart turns away from the LORD.
He will be like a bush in the wastelands;
he will not see prosperity when it comes.
He will dwell in the parched places of the desert,
in a salt land where no one lives.”*

Word studies: The word for “**wasted or squandered**” is used mostly of scattering something. This prodigal spread around his wealth. The picture is clear; it is like a farmer throwing seeds around with abandon. The picture can also be seen in a drunk in a bar that buys everybody in the bar a drink and he does not know who they are. I have seen men take their grocery money and buy liquor with it and deny their own children.

The word for “**wild or riotous**” means to live unsparingly. There is no thought for tomorrow. It is used in Ephesians 5:18 as the word “**in excess.**” The LXX (Septuagint, the

Greek translation of the Hebrew OT) uses the word lasciviousness as a synonym for wantonness and indecency. We call it debauchery.

A Prodigal is Broken: Verses 14-16

1. God Changes the Circumstances: Just like the Jewish family (The book of Ruth) who went from Bethlehem (The House of Bread) to Moab (God's Wash Pot), the prodigal went to the far country and the circumstances changed. It is better to stay with God in the famine than to leave for better real estate and die. There will always be a famine in the far country.
2. God Causes Need to Arise: Sin is full of unexpected circumstances.

Proverbs 29:3

*A man who loves wisdom brings joy to his father,
but a companion of prostitutes squanders his wealth.*

Psalm 37:16-25

“Better the little that the righteous have than the wealth of many wicked; for the power of the wicked will be broken, but the LORD upholds the righteous.

The days of the blameless are known to the LORD, and their inheritance will endure forever. In times of disaster they will not wither; in days of famine they will enjoy plenty.

But the wicked will perish: The LORD's enemies will be like the beauty of the fields, they will vanish- vanish like smoke.

The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously; those the LORD blesses will inherit the land, but those he curses will be cut off.

If the LORD delights in a man's way, he makes his steps firm; though he stumble, he will not fall, for the LORD upholds him with his hand.

I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread.”

3. Dignity is Lost: The lowest a man can go is when he participates in that which he himself hates and detests. The Jewish boy is feeding pigs. (1 Corinthians 6:15)
4. Loneliness Sets in: Notice that “no man gave him anything.” The man who owned the pigs cared more for the pigs than the boy. When the money is gone the bar tender and prostitutes don't find the wayward boy so much fun anymore. ***There was once a boy who could have had anything that his father had and he wanted more; now he has nothing and will settle for anything.*** He will even eat carob pods to fill his stomach. When the soul is empty the body will fill itself with anything.

Proverbs 14:20

*“The poor are shunned even by their neighbors,
but the rich have many friends.”*

Proverbs 19:4,7

*“Wealth brings many friends,
but a poor man's friend deserts him...”*

*A poor man is shunned by all his relatives--
how much more do his friends avoid him!
Though he pursues them with pleading,
they are nowhere to be found."*

A Prodigal is Repenting: Verses 17-19

1. Truth is Revealed to Him: Verse 17 shows how his conscience starts to work. He gets custody of himself. The Holy Spirit wakes him up. He comes to his senses. The servants have more than he does and he is a son.
2. He Takes Responsibility for His Sins: He knew that he had sinned against heaven and earth.
3. He Realizes that He is not Worthy of Forgiveness: Grace never saved a good man. He must know that he is coming back home on God's terms, not his. When you see humility, genuine brokenness, and sorrow displayed, you can know your prodigal is coming home. If you come back a servant, He will make you a king.
4. He Changes Direction: He got up. He repents and turns towards home.

A Prodigal is Accepted: Verses 20-24

1. The Father is Always Watching: The compassion of God teaches that His arms are always open.
2. Compassion: God's compassion is there because of the blood of Christ. He can cleanse all of the vilest sin.
3. The Father Gives Life: "He was dead and now is ALIVE. You can come back as a son.

The Resident Prodigal: Verses 25-32

1. Always at home but far from the Father's heart.
2. Bitter and cold.
3. Angry at the repentance of the lost.
4. Feels like a slave instead of a son (v. 29).
5. Thinks too highly of himself, never disobeyed (v. 29).
6. Ignorant of all he has, "all is yours" (v. 31).

Ps 139:2

7 Where can I go from your Spirit?
Where can I flee from your presence?

NIV

