

Old Words [Psalm 116]
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INTRODUCTION

1. Today, we explore a song from Scripture
 - a. Since this psalm was written over 3,000 years ago, it might seem out-of-date.
 - b. How relevant words of someone in a different era be to us today?
3. But this particular Psalm, Psalm 116, has maintained its relevancy over the centuries.
 - a. It's a song recited by Jews during their holidays.
 - b. It's a song remembered by Christians during the Passion Week,
 - c. It's a psalm perhaps written by David, copied by Johann Sebastian Bach and even used by the band U2.
 - d. Psalm 116 has staying power.

VERSES 1-4

1 I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. 2 Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live. 3 The cords of death entangled me, the anguish of the grave came upon me; I was overcome by trouble and sorrow. 4 Then I called on the name of the LORD : "O LORD, save me!"

1. The opening statement here is powerful, but more than we realize.
 - a. While verse 1 is translated "I love the Lord," the Hebrew text declares only, "I love."
 - b. Translators just assume that the object of that love has to be the Lord.
2. It's more powerful if we view it as it's written: I love BECAUSE OF THE LORD.
 - a. God's love for you is the reason why you are able to love.
 - b. If you love your parents, your spouse, your siblings, your friends, (even if you don't realize it) it is because you were made in God's image and he enables you to love.
3. The song-writer then talks about being surrounded by death (a near-death experience)
 - a. This experience serves as the source of much sadness.
 - b. We feel this: the deaths of multiple celebrates have forced people to mourn.
 - c. Even though we didn't personally know them, this reaction is natural.
 - d. Death moves us like nothing else.
 - 1) Ironically, this sorrow is motivated by the love we have for others.
 - 2) The recent quote from Wandavision: "what is grief but love persevering?"
4. How do we respond? Just like the psalmist does: by crying out to the Lord.
 - a. Only God can save us from this sorrow and struggle.
 - b. The Hebrew here is something that we may recognize. HOSHANNA!
 - 1) The same thing the crowd called out to Jesus on Palm Sunday. It means, "SAVE US!"
 - 2) To be truly saved in death means calling out to the Lord for help.
 - c. No matter how self-sufficient you are, YOU CAN'T SAVE YOURSELF.
 - d. You need God. You need Jesus.

VERSES 5-9

5 The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. 6 The LORD protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. 7 Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. 8 For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, 9 that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living.

1. The poet is reminiscing of a near-death experience with praise
 - a. Also quoting Scripture— from Exodus 34:6.

- b. "The LORD! The LORD! The compassionate and gracious God"
 - c. Irony: this is a description that God gave to Himself: this is true.
2. Verse 6, the Lord protects the simplehearted
 3. In Verses 6, the second Hebrew word for save is "yasha" — Yeshua — Jesus
 - a. From where does God's protection come? From Jesus who saves.
 4. The phrase "the land of the living" widely used in popular culture
 - a. It's a Hebrew idiom which meant graveyard
 - b. Walking in the graveyard means that you're still alive [and this is good]
 - c. The 23rd Psalm — "though I walk . . ."

VERSES 12,13

12 How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? 13 I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.

1. This is a question that pushes us two ways: towards gratitude or rejection of God
2. About the cup of salvation, known as libation cup = the drink offering for Jews.
 - a. This libation is later integrated into Mosaic Law as well as the Passover cup
 - b. Later, the cup of Communion in **1 Corinthians 10:16**, "Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ?"
3. I like this verse for this message because Grandma would always prepare communion
4. The goal for our lives: CALL ON GOD.

VERSES 15

Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.

1. Verse 15 is clearly the most problematic in all of Psalm 116.
 - a. IS GOD HAPPY WHEN HIS PEOPLE DIE?
 - b. This is how we instinctively react when people die:
 - c. There are those who erroneously say, "God needed to take them home . . ."
2. The problem: we're trying to comprehend the incomprehensible
 - a. Death was not God's original intention (Genesis 3)
 - b. Better understanding: there is a joy in God's heart when the faithful perish
 - c. That said, if he chooses to prolong our lives, there must be a good reason.

VERSES 18,19

18 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, 19 in the courts of the house of the LORD— in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD.

1. Hallelujah — it's how we get along in life.
2. The city of Jerusalem projects towards heaven.

CONCLUSION TEXT | Revelation 19:1-6

1After this I heard what sounded like the roar of a great multitude in heaven shouting: "Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, 2for true and just are his judgments. He has condemned the great prostitute who corrupted the earth by her adulteries. He has avenged on her the blood of his servants." 3And again they shouted: "Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes up for ever and ever." 4The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, who was seated on the throne. And they cried: "Amen, Hallelujah!" 5Then a voice came from the throne, saying: "Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, both small and great!" 6Then I heard what sounded like a great multitude, like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder, shouting: "Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns.