

**HOW SHALL I REPAY THE LORD  
PSALM 116:12-19**

**NEED: A GRATEFUL RESPONSE TO THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD.**

**PROPOSITION: THE GOODNESS OF THE LORD DEMANDS A RESPONSE FROM US.**

**OBJECTIVE: TO LEAD GOD’S PEOPLE TO MAKE AN APPROPRIATE RESPONSE TO THE LORD FOR HIS GOODNESS.**

**INTRODUCTION:**

God does answer prayers. He does hear the cry for help. The unnamed author of Psalm 116 had experienced such an answer to prayer. We are not given all the details of his situation but we are told that God did rescue him from death.

The danger of death may have been created by a severe illness – like that of King Hezekiah. He may have been brought to the point of death by an incurable illness only to experience God’s healing grace.

He may have been in danger of death at the hand of an enemy as David was when chased by King Saul. Just when it looked like the enemy would prevail; God came to his rescue and delivered him.

The Lord Jesus and those that sought to interpret his life used this Psalm. He experienced the deliverance of God when he was brought down to the depths of death only to be resurrected from the dead.

The language of this Psalm becomes a fitting expression of our own experience of salvation. Just when it seemed there was no hope of deliverance from the condemnation of our sins God came to our rescue. We were lifted out of the depths of sin into the loving grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is always a gracious thing when God hears the cry of a human soul.

Since we have experienced so many good things from the Lord, what can we do to repay Him? Is there any way that we can repay the Lord for the gifts of grace and kindness that He has bestowed upon us? This is the question that the Psalmist struggled with in his own heart. It is a question for us as we stand this morning before the Lord's table remembering the sacrifice that he made for our sins. We, too, must ask, "How Can I Repay the Lord?" The Psalmist concluded that even though he could never repay the Lord for what he had done there was a response that he could make to the goodness of the Lord. We can learn from him. His response to the goodness of the Lord is appropriate for my own heart.

### **I. I WILL TRUST HIM FOR MORE.**

The first answer that the Psalmist gives to his question is "I will lift up the cup of salvation." This particular statement has intrigued the students of the Bible. Some have seen in this statement an offering of thanksgiving. It is true that in the Old Testament the worshipper often poured a cup of wine out before the Lord as an expression of gratitude and thanksgiving. A sacrifice would be anointed with wine before it was placed on the altar. This could be what the Psalmist had in mind.

However, the word translated “salvation” is actually a plural word. He literally said, “I will take up the cup of salvations or deliverances.” I prefer to give to this statement the emphasis that Dr. Alexander Maclaren gave to it. He saw in this statement that the Psalmist was saying, “I will show my gratitude to the Lord for what He has done by coming back to Him for Him to do more. Is not coming back to the one who has helped us for further help a genuine expression of gratitude?”

Even though the Lord has lifted the burden of sin from my life through the Lord Jesus Christ, this did not exhaust my need of His help. I stand in need daily for His deliverance. I need His continued saving work in my life. I will show Him how grateful I am for what He did in the past by coming to Him for the help I need in the present. I will say to the Lord as I stand at His table this morning, “Lord, you have saved me. I am grateful that you have saved me as a sign of our gratitude to you. I will come to you day by day for the continued expression of your saving grace in my life.” With the Psalmist I will take up the cup of His salvation. I will turn to Him and to Him alone in my time of need.

## **II. I WILL OFFER PRAISE AND PRAYER TO THE LORD.**

In his second statement of response the Psalmist said, “And call on the name of the Lord.” The translators have rendered this in different ways. Moffatt translates it, “and proclaim the Eternal aloud.” There seems to be the idea of both praise and prayer in the statement. The Psalmist is committing himself to publicly acknowledge the goodness of

the Lord through expressions of prayer and thanksgiving. Later in this same Psalm he says, “I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the Lord.” It is one thing that I can do. This is one way I can repay the Lord.

Then the word also includes the idea of prayer. Since God has answered prayer in the past I will continue to call upon the Lord in my time of need. I will not be content with what the Lord has already done. I will ask Him for more.

Obviously, my response of praise and prayer seem real inadequate to repay the Lord for what He has done. The Lord does not expect me to repay Him. What He has done He has done freely and gladly. However, He does expect gratitude, thanksgiving and praise to be in our heart to Him.

### **III. I WILL KEEP MY PROMISE TO HIM.**

“I will fulfill my vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people.” Evidently the Psalmist had made a sacred promise to the Lord when he had cried out to Him for help. He had said to the Lord, “If you will hear my cry, then I will do thus and so.” It may have been a vow to offer a certain sacrifice to the Lord. It could have been a vow to do some special service to the Lord. What ever was involved in the vow, he promised the Lord that he would do it so he will repay the Lord by keeping his promise.

Have you ever made such a vow to the Lord? Have you ever promised Him something? Then it is important that you pay that vow, do that deed, in the eyes of the people. Allow

the people to see just how deeply devoted you are to the Lord and how seriously you take your promises to the Lord.

Some of you may have made a financial vow to the Lord. Several of us have made sacred vows as they related to our marriages. Some of you may have made a vow that you would do some special deed to the Lord. It is important that we be as faithful to keeping our promises to Him as He has been in keeping His promises to us.

#### **IV. I WILL SERVE HIM.**

The Psalmist said, “Oh, Lord, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my chains.” This is another way that he repays the Lord for his goodness. The Lord has set him free from the chains that bound him so he will be the servant of the Lord. He is making life available to do whatever the Lord God might choose for him to do.

I can do this. I may not be able to pay the Lord for what He has done for me but I can serve him. I can gladly, joyfully, freely give myself in service to the Lord.

I leave you with a question this morning as we come to the Lord’s table? How can I repay the Lord for all His goodness to me?

When the body of Abraham Lincoln was lying in state in Cleveland, Ohio, during the course of the sad funeral journey back to his home in Illinois, an elderly Black woman

stood in line with a little child in her arms. After gazing a long time in the face of the great emancipator of her people, the woman whispered to the child; “Take a long, long look, honey, that man died for you.” That is what I want us to do this morning. We need to take a long, long look at the elements on this table, and remember that this Man died for us. Then we need to ask the question of our text, “How shall I repay Him?”

### **FINISHING WITHOUT DEBT**

**FCF: The goodness and the mercy that the Lord bestows upon us creates a debt of gratitude for us.**

**Proposition: We should carefully attempt to pay our debt of gratitude to the Lord before we finish the journey.**

**Objective: To motive Christians to pay their debt of gratitude the Psalmist.**

#### **Introduction:**

**The Psalm was written by someone who has had a fresh experience of the mercy of the Lord. Evidently it involved a close brush with death—either through some serious illness, or at the hands of some enemy. In the midst of the crisis he cried out to the Lord for mercy, and the Lord heard him. It was such an evidence of the goodness of the Lord that he felt himself personally indebted to the Lord. As he considered his situation he asked, “How can I repay the Lord all the good he has done for me?”**

**It would be interesting to know what happened to the inspired poet who wrote these beautiful words. But have we not experienced the mercies of the Lord? When was the last time you knew that God had answered a prayer? When was the last time**

**you were aware that the hand of the Lord had been opened to supply your need?**

**When was the last time you cried out to the Lord, and He heard?**

**Let me help you refresh your memory! Are you aware of how merciful it was of the Lord that He saved you from death before He saved you from sin? Some of you became Christians later any life, what if the Lord had not spared you from death before you turned to Him for salvation?**

**Have you kept a record of answered prayers in your life? I must confess that I haven't, but I know they have been many. I have benefited from the prayers of family and friends who cared enough about me to pray for me. How many of you had a praying mother and grandmother? How many of you had a praying father and grandfather? I did. Why did I have praying parents and others didn't? Mercy! O what mercy!**

**Do we dare to start counting our blessings?**

**Obviously we are deeply in debt to the Lord! How shall we pay this debt? Finishing well means that we have paid this debt down, though it is questionable about whether we can ever fully pay it.**

**The Psalmist helps us. He recounts his personal commitment to pay his debt, and the assets that he chose to use.**

#### **I. WE PAY WITH TRUST.**

**This involves lifting up the cup of His salvations, or coming back to Him again for help. He invites our coming to Him for deliverance and salvation. He is always ready to help.**

#### **II. WE PAY WITH PRAYER.**

**III. WE PAY WITH PROMISE-KEEPING.**

**IV. WE PAY WITH PRAISE.**

**V. WE PAY WITH SURRENDER FOR SERVICE.**

