

Transcription of 18TM829

Psalm 106:13-15 "Health Screening" August 5, 2018

Shall we open our Bibles this morning to Psalm 106, verse 13.

There are a couple of Psalms, three to be exact, that are summary chapters. They are written to go back and stop in kind of a spot and then look to see what God has done in the past tense in dealing with His people, the nation of Israel. The three most prominent Psalms are Psalm 78 and then these two, Psalm 105 and 106, that kind of go together that teach us God's dealing with us. Chapter 105 is the history of Israel with God from God's perspective. Psalm 106 is that same history from man's response. And so God's word to man about his response to his goodness to Him.

If you've been through the historical accounts early on in the book of Exodus, you know that there was a time when the Lord brought Israel out of the Egyptian captivity. They were there 430 years, about 11 generations. They suffered as slaves. They had their children thrown in the river. The Pharaoh was angry at their growth and terrified of their strength, sought to subjugate them. It was a horrible time. But God in His goodness came to deliver His people and brought them out with a phenomenal hand, power. Moses was sent. There were roughly nine months of 10 plagues that took place upon the land, and then God brought them out gloriously. Brought them through the Red Sea, took them into the wilderness, where they for six weeks traveled to Mt. Sinai, where they stayed for roughly a year getting the law and the sacrifices and all, and then they were taken by the Lord to what should have been an 11-day trip to the Land of Promise, and then they could have just went in. Instead you have this 40 years of history of the nation turning away from God's direction to go in, not trusting the Lord to go before them. And so they ended up dying, this generation, in the wilderness, and their kids would return and then with Joshua be led in.

I tell you all of that to say this: During all of those

years, you are given a report early on of God's deliverance of the people from Egypt, those nine months or so, of six weeks to Sinai, the one year that they spent before the Lord, and then a quick trip to the Land of Promise. And then for the next 37 years, you have no report at all. It's just a generation of people wandering in the wilderness, not really going anywhere. There's no report, because there's nothing to report. And it is only at the end of nearing that 40 years that God begins to again work in and amongst His people. The next generation have victory over the kings on that side of the Jordan as they prepare to go into the Land of Promise.

So in that big block of time, from the deliverance to the next generation going in, there's very little given to us, and because of that I think you know all of the stories. I can't imagine that you've forgotten them. But there's very little to go on. And what is given to us to go on is repeated in the history constantly. It's always the deliverance from Egypt, it's always the Red Sea, it's always the complaining. It's the manna. It's water from the rock. It's the refusal. It's the -- you know, it's the defiance of God. And then it's death that waited for a whole generation so their kids could go in.

Well, this morning in these three verses that we wanted to look at, verses 13, 14, and 15, this is the summation of these three chapters. This is the cause of their great problem. This is God's word to them regarding how they didn't ever grow and make it well, and do well going forward. Could almost call this a spiritual health screening. I don't know if you ever went to the doctor and the doctor actually said "Yeah, you're in good shape." Every time I've gone to the doctor he always has something to say. Eat more vegetables, lose some weight, get some more -- I think it just keeps him going. I don't know. But you find that same thing to be true in the scriptures. There are things that can make you ill spiritually, and certainly those coming out of Egypt should have been as healthy as anybody could have found them, but they weren't. And here's some of the causes why they were spiritually ill. And I want to point them out to you so that we can then maybe avoid them.

Beginning in verse 6, there is this reminiscing or looking forward to -- or looking back, I should say, to God's deliverance, how God brought them through the

Red Sea, how the water, verse 11, drowned the enemies. There wasn't one left. Verse 12 says that they then believed the Lord's words. They sang His praises. And then you would expect to hear whatever good things would happen next, but instead you read they soon forgot His work.

Here's the first cause of being spiritually ill: You are a forgetful believer. The nation had experienced the most amazing miracles in their liberation from Egyptian bondage. For months those plagues came from God's hand. Pharaoh was stubborn. The people were subjected. He was afraid of their numbers, but he didn't want to lose their workforce, so he was kind of in a dilemma. When they were brought out by Moses, the Lord told the people, miraculously so, to cough up everything they had to this nation that was leaving. Give them your jewels, give them your cash, give them your possessions. Who would do that? But they did, because God wanted to pay His people for all the years of labor. They came out. They headed for the Red Sea, where they saw God drown an entire army while they had gone through and would go through on dry land. They were a freed people. I mean, if you read those few chapters in the book of Exodus and you read about the deliverance, you have to think to yourself, this would have left a lifetime of memories for every one of those 2 to 3 million people. You would be telling stories around the campfire for the rest of your life. Remember what the Lord did? And you would imagine that they would have come out changed. I mean, these captive folks, for as long as they could remember, now found themselves free. And even the captivity is in a -- is almost a distant memory.

But if you go read the account, 48 hours out of Egyptian soil they stand before the Red Sea and they don't say, not one of them to one another, "I'll bet the Lord can handle this. We've known it for the last year what the Lord can do, remember what He did with the firstborn? Oh, man, I don't know what He's going to do, but this is going to be awesome. Get your cameras ready." You know? "We're going to see what God can do." That's not what you hear. What you hear is 48 hours after being delivered is the people, chapter 14 of Exodus, going to Moses and saying, "Well, I guess there weren't enough graves in Egypt to bury all of us there, so you've brought us out here to die in the wilderness. Why did you deal with us like that? Why didn't you just leave us

alone?" Really? This was Egypt, where they starved you to death or worked you to death and drowned your children in the river. This was a horrible place to be. I would think, if anything, you would just go, man, we're out of there. But all that God has done was forgotten and we read -- here's a cause of being spiritually ill. You soon forget God's work and what He's done in your life. Imagine that. Imagine that all that God has done left absolutely no permanent mark upon their hearts, left no lasting impression upon their outlooks, left no -- I just want to find one person who looks to the other and says, I'll bet God's going to handle this. Let's see what He's going to do. But then everyone would conclude, well, that was yesterday, this is today. What's He done for me lately? It's a great way to be spiritually weak.

God's power had certainly been set on display. No one could doubt His strength. Even the magicians of Egypt, all they could do when they copied God at all was to make life more miserable for the people, but at some point they had to just throw up their hands and say, this is the Lord we're dealing with. Unthinkable.

When God delivered them miraculously through the Red Sea and watched the Egyptians drown, they ended up on the other side of the river, and according to Exodus Chapter 15, Miriam, Moses' sister, wrote a worship song to thank God for His deliverance, and everyone sang it at the top of their lungs. We read about it here in verse 12. They sang praises. They believed God -- oh, man, He came through again. This is awesome. We're going to be just fine. And you expect that that would continue. It did, for three days. They extended their time of not complaining to 72 hours. 72 hours they get to a place called the Valley of Shur. I only remember the name because it Shur doesn't get any better. There was no water to drink. Now, I grant you, that's a big deal in the desert when it's hot and there's millions of you. But again, it's just what you've gone through should remind you of what God can do, what He's done. They begin to complain. God says to Moses, "There's a tree over there. Throw it into the water source and it will turn the bitter water into sweet." And he did, and God did. And the people drank and they were filled. But instead of seeing a people that had developed an understanding of God's goodness to respond with joy and faith, they developed a habit of quickly forgetting all that God had done, and rather than remembering the past,

they never applied it to the present. And so it led to them always having this severe kind of spiritual health issues.

How sad when singing comes only when all is well, when Thanksgiving comes only when you get something. And it only lasts a couple of days until the next crisis presents itself, and then you go back to what you do best: Gripe and complain, forgetting God, lodging your complaints.

You would think at that time healing of the water would -- maybe that would put the capstone on that God is really good, but these folks were hardly satisfied. They traveled for three more weeks, when they found themselves murmuring against God and against Moses again and against Aaron. And this is what they said to them in Chapter 16 of Exodus: "Oh, man, I wish we had died by the hand of the Lord in Egypt, when we used to sit next to our pots full of meat and eat bread to the full." I just want you to know, I went back and read it, that's not what happened to them at all. Right? "Did you just bring us out here to kill us, the whole assembly, with hunger?" Same people. The complaints rise again.

And I only mention to you -- I know you've heard this story a hundred times, but that's all we're given of those years that led to wandering, where we're not told of anything. They came out three weeks later and now they're complaining more bitterly than before. They forgot the goodness of God. They even replaced their memory of sorrow with ideas that somehow they left a place that was -- you know, had a great buffet every Saturday and Sunday. It didn't. When the Lord in Exodus Chapter 3 sent Moses to go help the people, He said, "I've seen the oppression of my people in Egypt. I heard their cries because of the wickedness of their taskmasters. I've come to deliver them." Deliver them from what? Pots of meat and full bread? No. From the slavery that they had faced for hundreds of years. "So Moses, come. I'll send you, that you can bring My people, the Children of Israel, out of Egypt." God sent them -- sent Moses because the people were suffering, yet in Chapter 16 they say when they run out of food, "Oh, yeah, thanks a lot for bringing us out here to die of hunger." Well, you didn't die of thirst. You didn't die at the Red Sea. You're not going to probably starve now either. But no one grabs hold of it. They forgot the

goodness of God. That's a great way to get yourself, you know, in a position where you just spiritually just barely hanging on to life. I didn't say you're not going to heaven, I'm just saying you're not enjoying this time. You're not useful here. You're struggling as you go.

So Egypt is a type in the Bible of our life in the world where your flesh beats you to death, you need deliverance, you can't get out of it yourself, and life is difficult, and you're driven by your fleshly desires. We're having a brother share again on Wednesday, and we meet with folks about giving their testimony. I'm glad that they always do so well, but I remember hearing testimonies from people who spent the -- almost the entire time that they had talking about their life in the world with great fondness. "Oh, yeah, and we used to go over here and we used to do that. Oh, it was great. Oh, and then I got saved." I'm thinking, well, that's backward. Oh, Egypt, full of meat and bread. No, no, no. It stunk there. I got saved because I hated where I was at. The world is no place to be. Better you have a short testimony of what you were and a long testimony of what you are now.

So the gratitude lasted for just a couple of days before again that forgetful heart and that murmuring spirit kicked in. It sounds a lot like the people in the world that don't know God at all. Cheap kind of thanksgiving. Oh, I'd like to thank God right away for averting this trouble or for having this unexpected blessing. It's a thanksgiving driven by the principle of self-love, and that's all you find here. And so you read through the children of Israel's experiences, at least the ones we have, and you find that they reacted to God's goodness much like the little kid who doesn't know any better. He's entertained for an hour and then he puts the toy away. He wants something else. And you find this same thing in these lives. No permanent mark.

And notice verse 15 says spiritual leanness. At least one of the causes is forgetting the work of God so we're not moved to what we should be moved to: Greater love and greater devotion to the Lord. It should move us. God's good to us. It should help you to stand, not lament at every turn. Oh, give me, give me, give me. It's that same pattern that we have to fight with.

So don't forget God, who brought you out of Egypt, who

parted the Red Sea, who brought water out of rock, and manna from heaven, who defeated your enemies who were armed and you were not. Remember His work. It will guarantee your spiritual health.

Secondly, verse 13, it says, "They waited not for His counsel." If there's another cause for you being spiritually weak this morning, it can be because you've decided you don't really need God's help in how to live life. John Calvin wrote in his Bible this passage, "The insatiable desire of our old nature is so astonishing that we won't give God even a single day to allow Him to gratify any of them." The translation, we're not very patient. Our flesh does not know patience. It's a gift of the Spirit. There's a reason for that: Your flesh isn't good at it. We want it now. In fact, when it comes to patience, we'd like it now.

The second cause of ill health spiritually that the Psalmist marks, and it follows the heels of the first one, if you forget God's goodness in the past, you're not prone to seek His direction or wisdom in the present. If you haven't gotten something to motivate you looking back, to look forward or look around, then you're liable to try to go it alone, so it kind of compounds the problem. In this spiritual health screening, leanness of soul proceeds from a decision to run ahead your life without God's counsel, and we find that the children of Israel did that always. They didn't look to God for deliverance. Oh, Moses may have for the sake of the people, but the people just looked around and complained. They never got down to say, "Lord, what are you going to do next?"

Now, the consequences of going the course without waiting on the Lord are the obvious ones. You don't have the benefit of His knowledge, of His wisdom, of His insight. Right? You got no light for your path. And you have a Heavenly Father who loves you, who wants very much to say go left, go right, go straight, wait, pause, turn. He'd love to guide your ways. He's for you and not against you. He's got plans for your life. But if you don't -- and aren't willing to seek His counsel, if you're impatient, then you give up that privileged access that you have, and you end up just like the world, on your own. The advantage that you have of knowing the Lord is not an advantage anymore, because you're not consulting with Him. You're on your own. You're just like the guy

who doesn't believe in God at all.

When you do that, you become God. There is no authority in your life. He's no longer your authority. You're not checking with Him. You're not living your life according to His word. You're just -- you're God. I'll decide what I want to do, I'll turn here, I'll wait over here. And I become the cause of great distress and spiritual malnourishments in my own life, because I'm not in church, I'm not in the Bible, I'm not seeking Him. I'm not seeking to live my life according to what He has said. I've got a better idea.

We find several million people in the desert presuming God wanted them to die in the desert of thirst. That was the accusation. When food was scarce, that God brought them out there just to have them die of hunger. And yet God's thoughts to us are good. I can't begin to tell you how many people will come in for counseling and complain and say, "Well, I know this is what the Bible says, but that's not working for me, so I was just hoping you had something else in mind." I don't have anything else in mind. It is usually an issue of waiting upon the Lord's timing.

In fact, if you read the account of the children of Israel coming out of Egypt, when the Lord gave them specific instructions, when it became available to them, they just treated it as if they didn't need it. And they ignored specific directions. When manna began to rain down from heaven, the Lord said through Moses to the people, "Make sure you go out every day and gather what you need for you and your family." And it wasn't but the next day there's guys loading up their garage with food for a month. Not listening at all. The next day it all rotted. It stunk. It bred worms. It fouled the houses. You know what their response was?

"Hey God, how come you did that to us?"

And the Lord said, "Well, I thought I told you just one day."

"Yeah, but I worked so hard."

"Yeah, and you didn't listen."

When it came to the day before the Sabbath, Moses said to the people, "Get two days' worth, so you don't have to work on the Sabbath." That next day on the Sabbath, people out there just gathering food, because they hadn't planned ahead. And then a few of them died and then everybody got mad at God. "How could You?" I'm sure in

heaven He probably wanted to yell back, how could you? He wanted to teach the people that every day He would provide for every day. That was the idea. And they didn't follow and they didn't respond.

When we are unwilling to wait upon the goodness of God to show itself, or we determine to disobey what we already know, then we're headed for the spiritual emergency room. We're going to be lean, man. We're not going to be very healthy. We're going to be on life support. First you forget what God has done, then you're impatiently not waiting upon what His direction would be, and then you disobey what you know. And then you wonder what happened. Well, it's been repeated time and time again.

But there's one more point, verse 14, and that is it says, "They lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tested God in the desert." Forgetting God, not counseling or seeking after God, and thirdly, being driven in their journey towards the Land of Promise by their lust. Or if you will, taking their spiritual position and trying to translate that into some gain for their fleshly life. And it angered God. They tempted God. Even after receiving deliverance and daily provision month after month after month, the children of Israel were far from satisfied in what God had done.

In fact, we read in Psalm 78, one of the three Psalms that we mentioned to you this morning as kind of an overview, we read this: "They sinned against Him all the more by rebelling the Most High in the wilderness. They tested God in their heart by asking for food of their fancy. And they spoke against God: They said, 'Can God really prepare a table in the wilderness? Well, He struck the rock, and water gushed out, the streams overflowed. Well, can He also bring us bread? And can He provide meat for the people?' And the Lord heard this, He was furious; a fire was kindled against Jacob, anger against the children of Israel, because they would not believe in God, nor trust in His salvation." They just never were satisfied, but the end-all was now they began to complain of God's provision, of God's help. Everything that God had used to miraculously meet their needs and yet their flesh was not satisfied, and they began to complain and they were anemic spiritually. They lusted exceedingly for a thing that God hadn't provided.

Paul used that same incident of the meat crying out for

meat in 1 Corinthians Chapter 12. Sometimes our prayers, like theirs, stem from fleshly desires driven by lust that then try to become godly in their hunger. We try to cover our lustfulness with spirituality.

I was saved amongst a group of people in the early '70s who were bound into the name-it-and-claim-it movement. That was what I grew up in. So I was taught that prayer was a blank check that God had signed, and if I could believe God, I could fill in on the list whatever I wanted. Right? I could be healthy and wealthy and wise. It just required me believing God. That was the big issue. I would quote Mark 11:24 to people, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you'd receive them. You'll have them. And I took them over to John Chapter 14, and Jesus said, "Whatever you ask in My name," I will give it to you, or "I will do that, because My Father wants to be glorified through His Son." If you ask anything in My name, I'll do it. And then I turned to John 16 and it says, "Until now you've asked nothing in My Name, so ask so that your joy could be filled." And those were my verses. I would tell everyone, "If you're in poverty, you just believe God. Man, if you're sick and you're not healed, it's your fault." That's what I grew up in. I was nuts, but this is what I believed. At some point God showed me who He made those promises to. And it wasn't a blank statement to everyone. It was made specifically to His disciples. And before He made those disciples promises, He defined who a disciple was. In fact, He said, "If you want to come after Me, you can deny yourself and you can pick up your cross and you can follow Me. And then you can pray." But you see, now I'm out of the equation. Now my desire is to know what He wants. Not what I want, what He wants. Because getting what you want is not always a good thing. You can read that here. And I get to 1 John and I read things like this: If God hears our petition, when we pray, and He hears our petition, if He hears it, we know that we have the things we desire of Him. So I pray according to His will. I think, 1 John, if we pray according to His will, He hears us, and if He hears us, then we have the things we desire. And I began to learn that prayer is a place for me to be brought to a place where I can want what God wants. And it wasn't a place to twist His arm to get what I want. In fact, the things that I want were oftentimes driven by my flesh. I really did want to buy a two-seater Mercedes just to bring people to church. It just wasn't practical.

So the Lord said of these folks, "They lusted exceedingly in the wilderness." In application, it was they wanted meat to eat. They wanted meat to eat. They were dissatisfied with God's provisions that He had miraculously provided. They were not standing in awe or in gratitude. They weren't satisfied. Everything contributed to their ill health spiritually. They wanted more. Now, everything I can get out of manna's description sounded like good tasting donuts to me. I could live on donuts for 40 years, I'm sure of it. But they had had, they'd had enough of it.

So as God led them through the wilderness -- by the way, not a place that was their home; not a place He wanted them to stay; a place He wanted to leave them and drive them through. In fact, it was only 11 days from Mt. Sinai to the Promised Land. No time for worrying about your diet at this point. Let's get to where a land of milk and honey awaited. He gave them all that they needed. They weren't happy because they had a want that was far greater. And in a place that they should have tempered their wants because they were passing through, they caught -- they were caught up in their flesh and they could not be satisfied with anything else.

I thought about Jesus being tempted in the wilderness by Satan at the end of those 40 days being hungry, and he suggesting that since He was the son of God, He could just turn some rocks into bread and eat, and Jesus refused. It was all about the will of the Father. "The Father loves Me. He'll feed Me when it's time. I don't need to use my spiritual power to serve Myself." For that matter, it applies the same to us. Notice that it brought sickness to their souls. Verse 15 says God would eventually give them what they requested of Him, but along with it came a leanness of soul.

Psalm 105, the one before this, tells us in verse 40 that the people had asked the Lord for meat. If there were 3 million people in the wilderness, imagine what it would take to drop off enough meat to feed 3 million. But the Lord did. In fact, it is described in Numbers Chapter 11 that the Lord brought a wind from two directions and He forced these quail into the camp. And it fell everywhere; feet high in places. And the people began to just be so excited they saw meat, and they couldn't get enough of it. In this harsh environment where God had

been so good to them, they made their stomachs heaven. Paradise. That's all we cared about. We want some meat. The report in Psalm 78 is this: "He caused an east wind to blow in the heavens; by His power a south wind as well. He rained meat upon them like dust, feathered fowl like the sand of the sea; He let them fall in the midst of the camp, around their dwellings. And they ate and they were well filled, for He gave them their own desires. They were not deprived of their craving; but while the food was still in their mouths, the wrath of God came against them, and the stoutest of them were slain, and He struck down the choicest men of Israel. And in spite of this sin, they did still not believe in His wondrous works."

The story is pretty clean and pretty straightforward. God brought them exactly what they wanted. These guys ran out and began to stuff it down their throats. They didn't cook it right. They didn't get the bones out. They hadn't been eating meat. Yeah, you hadn't been eating very much. You've been being sustained by this heavenly manna. And now these folks began to just shove it down their throats. And while they're chewing, they were dying. And no one around them would go, hey, maybe it's the quail. People are dying to their right, they need to go maybe it's the food. Don't eat the chicken, don't eat the fish. Don't order the fish. They were just eating, because they were blind to the things of God. God gave them exactly what they wanted, and for 30 days they just shoved this food down their throats. And eventually, while the food was still in their mouth, the name of the place got to be the graves of longing, or the graves of lust. And there is a lot of people still like that. They take their spiritual relationship with God and they undervalue it, only in the terms of overvaluing it, they want to use it for their own fleshly benefit. Let me pray and get one of these and get me one of them, and that's all that they care about. But the abundance of God didn't profit them at all. In fact, notice in verse 15 it says, "Though God gave them what they wanted, they ended up with spiritual diseases."

If you look only to your own life and forget God and don't seek His ways and don't live for Him and allow your flesh to kind of step in, you're going to be a spiritual lightweight. You're going to be unhealthy in every way. God has given us everything we need to be spiritually strong and healthy. It's a shame to be in a pasture that

is green and yet not grow. Shame on the man who is well fed, and yet he looks sickly.

But the explanation is here and it applies to all that God gives us about that experience for the children of Israel. They forgot quickly the past goodness of God and His works. They did not wait upon His counsel. They did not follow in His Word. They didn't listen to what He had to say. They always entertained their lustful ways rather than considering the old man or reckoning it dead or being alive in the Spirit. They demanded of God, give us what we want, and in the end, they got what they wanted and they lost what they needed. That's a bad equation.

I made a deal with the Lord many years ago when I came out of that health and welfare movement, and I said to the Lord in prayer one day, "Never give me what You don't want me to have, no matter how much I scream at You. No matter what I ask for, no matter how I demand it, if it's not good for me, just ignore me, no matter how much I moan and cry and lament and beg." I don't want to be a skinny guy in the Lord. I'd like to be a skinny guy in the flesh and a fat guy in the Lord. That's what I want.

But the warning's pretty clear and pretty direct, isn't it? Be careful when you forget all that God has done. Be careful when you try to go it alone. Be careful when disobedience comes with an excuse. Or when you take your spiritual advantage and just try to capitalize it into temporal gain. It's not good for you or -- and it won't be good for you ever. Even if you get what you want, you'll wind up losing everything that you need.