

Psalm 105:1-7

Goodbye Church Sermon Series: Praise the Storyteller

Rev. Jonathan M. Romig / June 19th, 2022

Two weeks ago, Terry Shanahan preached on Psalm 8 a message called “Praise the Creator,” which was really encouraging. I thought it would be good to continue our time in the Psalms with a Psalm of celebration, thanksgiving, and praise that I’ve entitled “Praise the Storyteller.” My hope is that we will look back and see the story God has been writing, and it will draw our hearts to praise and glorify him. Today is not just a day to commemorate, but to praise God and celebrate what he has done.

God is writing the story. (Psalm 105:1-4)

Scripture, and the books of the Old Testament, are a bunch of stories that together tell the meta-story of God and his people. Psalm 105 opens by calling God’s people to praise him for all he has done for them (v1-4).

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Psalm 105:5-15; Genesis 12-36)

Psalm 105:5-6 (NIV)

5 Remember the wonders he has done,
his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,
6 you his servants, the descendants of Abraham,
his chosen ones, the children of Jacob.

Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? Remember how God took Abram out of the land of the Chaldeans, Babylon, and brought him to Canaan, the land of promise? Remember how he renamed him, Abraham? Remember how Abraham and Sarah didn’t have any children, but God gave them Isaac? And Sarah was at least 90 years of age, and Abraham at least 100 years of age (Genesis 17:17)? Isn’t God amazing to take an expired womb and an expired seed and create not just a small baby boy but an entire people, the people of Israel and the church who also counts Abraham as our spiritual forefather? Let’s thank God that his same covenant of love that extended to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob extends to us today through Jesus Christ.

Westford Bible Church & Immanuel Church

God loves to bring life out of death. A couple of you were a part of Westford Bible Church. Bernie was a part of this church three decades ago as well. But over time, that church lost numbers and wasn’t able to turn around. And then the roof collapsed. What could possibly grow here? Is God going to bring life out of loss, an expired church? Why yes, yes he does. First insurance rebuilt what we have today. But the church didn’t grow. And then God moved in the hearts of Pastor Bruce White and those left to give their building to Immanuel Church in Chelmsford to replant a new church. At Pastor Bruce’s last sermon, he presented me with this candle and the reminder to keep the gospel burning. Today I want to give this candle to Andy and John, our elders, and remind them to keep the gospel, the good news of resurrection hope, burning. *God is writing the story, and he will continue to do so.*

Joseph, a slave in Egypt (Psalm 105:16-22; Genesis 37-50)

Psalm 105:17-19 (NIV)

¹⁷ and he sent a man before them—

Joseph, sold as a slave.

¹⁸ They bruised his feet with shackles,

his neck was put in irons,
19 till what he foretold came to pass,
till the word of the Lord proved him true.

If we were to read all of Psalm 105, we would read about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph too. The story doesn't go as expected as God writes a narrative full of kidnapping, suffering, trial, and yet hope. Joseph, the most favorite of Jacob's sons, angers his brothers, who sell him into captivity in Egypt at seventeen years of age (Genesis 37:2). God doesn't deliver him from slavery then prison until he is thirty years of age (Genesis 41:46). Sometimes we don't understand why the story goes the way it goes. Sometimes there's hardship, and we don't know why—not till sometime later. But there was a famine in the land, and God used Joseph's supernatural gift to interpret dreams to save not only Egypt but his family and all of Israel. What his brothers intended for evil, God intended for good (See Genesis 5:19-20). *God writes good stories.*

Jonathan & Monica Romig

Did you know Karyn Tang prayed for this building as she drove past it every week? She prayed that God would do his work here. Now, I'm not comparing myself to Joseph, but allow me to use him as a transition for us to give thanks for the way God brought Monica and me to be a part of Cornerstone. In 2012, we could either take an evangelism and discipleship class or church planting. In church planting, we had to study a real community. We asked Monica's mentor Pastor Dana Smith if he had a suggestion since we wanted to make a real-world impact, and he suggested Westford. Talk about real-world impact. That summer, we presented our results to Pastor Dana and his elders, including Anthony Courtemanche, who helped plant us. The next summer, on July 1st, 2013, Immanuel Church called me to be their Associate Pastor. So about six months later, when Westford Bible Church came to them to plant, after much prayer and deliberation that next year, God connected the pieces, and Immanuel asked me to pastor the plant. *God is writing the story, and it can be quite surprising.* Let's give thanks to God for the story he is telling.

God delivers Israel out of captivity. (Psalm 105:23-38; Exodus 1-12)

Psalm 105:23-27 (NIV)

23 Then Israel entered Egypt;
Jacob resided as a foreigner in the land of Ham.
24 The Lord made his people very fruitful;
he made them too numerous for their foes,
25 whose hearts he turned to hate his people,
to conspire against his servants.
26 He sent Moses his servant,
and Aaron, whom he had chosen.
27 They performed his signs among them,
his wonders in the land of Ham.

The twelve tribes of Jacob, the nation of Israel, have been in Egypt for 400-430 years (Genesis 15:13; Exodus 12:40-41). They grow and multiply and become exceedingly abundant, but Egypt sees them as a threat and puts them into forced captivity (Exodus 1:6-14). They suffer under the yoke of slavery, but God has not abandoned them. *God is writing the story.* God raises up Moses to lead his people out of captivity. He goes before Pharaoh and tells him the Lord God says, "Let my people go." (Exodus 5:1) But Pharaoh resists, and won't let Israel go, so God sends plagues on Egypt. He turns the water to blood and sends frogs and hail and locusts, sores, and darkness. Ultimately, he takes the lives of the firstborn of Egypt and passes over the lives of those who have slain a lamb and put its blood over the doorposts of their home, the Israelites. Finally, Pharaoh lets the people go. The people of Israel praise God. Likewise, so do we.

The people of Cornerstone

Looking back, I'm so grateful for that group of people who came to our first CCCC Quest Training in November 2014. This was the nucleus that became our Core Team which helped launch Cornerstone. We started training and planning and dreaming, and on Saturday, October 3, 2015, we launched our weekly church service. God brought us through a period of incubation, our own kind of Exodus, to starting and sustaining Cornerstone. We did our first Trunk or Treat that fall, the first of many years. We did our first Apple Blossom Parade and won the next spring. We got to celebrate our first two baptisms the following March, Derrick Jenkins and Heathyr Gavlik. In April, I baptized Jason Gavlik, two generations. *God is writing the story*. Let's give thanks to God for the story he is telling.

God provides for Israel in the wilderness. (Psalm 105:39-45; Exodus 13-17)

Psalm 105:39-41 (NIV)

- ³⁹ He spread out a cloud as a covering,
and a fire to give light at night.
⁴⁰ They asked, and he brought them quail;
he fed them well with the bread of heaven.
⁴¹ He opened the rock, and water gushed out;
it flowed like a river in the desert.

⁴⁵ ...Praise the Lord.

The final verses of Psalm 105 celebrate God's presence as a cloud of smoke by day and a column of fire by night to guide Israel and God's provision of food and water in the desert. God provided his presence and his provision. God didn't forget Israel because God was with Israel in their exodus journey, and he satisfied even their most basic needs. He brought Israel out with rejoicing and shouts of joy. And the Psalm ends with a single exhortation, "Praise the LORD!" And we do the same.

Praise the Lord for being with us and taking care of all our needs.

As we look back at the many years since our launch year, God has continued to be with us in incredible ways and provide for us. He has met all our financial needs. He's put a roof over our heads and a very nice. He's provided for us through Covid. But most of all, he has brought new wonderful people through our doors, Ben, the Pelletiers, the Crawfords, Mackenna, Ran and Mingyan, the Gloucowskis, the Martinezes, Amanda and Chris, the Harwoods, the Iles, the Bouchers, Vaishali, Melanie, the Keums, the Penders, Aneesh, the Falcones, and recently the Days, the Donaldsons, the Armstrongs. I know I'm forgetting others. But God has brought so many, and we are so blessed. Thank you for being a part of Cornerstone. I praise God for you! *God is writing the story*. Let's give thanks to God for the story he is telling.

Praise Jesus for his storytelling love for us.

Finally, I want to close with this final praise. Because what connects Israel's story 3,400 years ago to our story today is Jesus. Their story points forwards to Jesus, how one day a Savior would come and lead us out of the captivity of sin. He does it by bearing our plagues, not punishing us with them, by going into captivity and death so that we will have eternal life. Does your story point to Jesus? His story points to us, his people. One day soon, Jesus will come and deliver us all to that eternal and beautiful promised land. *God is writing the story*. Let's give thanks to God for the story he is telling.

Pastor Jonathan Romig preached this sermon at Cornerstone Congregational Church in Westford, MA. You can listen to his other sermons at CornerstoneWestford.com.

Service & Sermon

You can watch the full service on Facebook or only the sermon on YouTube.

Discussion Time

Dear Church,

I am preaching on Psalm 105 this Sunday. Could you be praying for our time together and the goodbye celebration afterward? Let's turn this into a time of thanksgiving and praise for everything God has done.

In Christ, Pastor Jonathan

Ice-Breaker – What's something you're thankful for?

Prayer – Do you have a prayer or praise you'd like to share?

Bible – Read Psalm 105:1-45. What is the story it is telling? What type of response is the Psalmist looking for? What does Israel's story tell us about the character of God?

Story – How might Psalm 105 help our church re-envision our story and what God is doing?

Praise – What about Cornerstone's story would you like to thank God for?

Recap – What's your one-sentence takeaway from today?

Follow-Up

Dear Church,

What are you thankful for? Let's take time this week to thank God for how he has moved in our lives and in our church. Let's count our blessings! If you'd like to read about our church's story, [you can find that here](#). And if you'd like to listen to another sermon on the Psalms, you could listen to our [five-year celebration here](#) (Oct 4, 2020). Thank you so much! See you on Sunday for my last Cornerstone sermon.

In Christ, Pastor Jonathan