

Focus reading: Psalm 107:1–3, 17–22 (<http://bible.oremus.org/?ql=382688298>)

Other lectionary readings: Numbers 21:4–9; Ephesians 2:1–10; John 3:14–21

Theme: God's Love Is Steadfast

The question came up again at a Bible study I led this week: "Why do bad things happen to good people?" We want things to make sense. We want to get what we deserve, or perhaps we want what a good, loving God would want to give us. Isn't well-being a sign of God's pleasure and suffering a result of God's curse? They are questions that human beings have wrestled with in every age and culture. The literature of the Hebrew Scriptures reflects the dominant worldview of the day that good things come to good people, while bad things happen to bad people (or at least to misbehaving or unfaithful people). It is a worldview that is also evident in Jesus' day. Those who come to Jesus in need of healing are seen as being responsible for their condition. The ill (or their parents) must have committed some sin that caused the illness. We see similar beliefs today in the form of a health and wealth gospel or attempts to explain anything from AIDS to a tsunami as God's punishment upon sinful people. Clearly lifestyle choices have an impact upon our health and the health of our planet, but we must be careful about making those connections in ways that lead to judgment. Psalm 107, speaking from within a culture that sees sickness as God's judgment and seeks answers in sorcery and magic, focuses on God's gift of restoration, given in love. The psalmist offers thanksgiving to the God who restores and heals. No matter what the cause of the trouble is, God's desire is for health and wholeness.

HEALER GOD

This psalm gives thanks to God for bringing healing and wholeness to those who suffer. It is a prayer or hymn of praise. It does not deal with questions about the causes of suffering or concerns about those who are not visibly healed. It simply speaks of a good and loving God who brings healing. Pray for those who need healing. Bring healing to them by sending cards and notes.

GIVING THANKS FOR HEALTH

Thank God for good health! Healthy habits are ways of thanking God for our health and taking care of the gift God has given us. What healthy habit will you pay attention to this week?

PRAYER

O God,
Truly you are good all the time!
You offer us love and healing.
So may we bring your healing and love to
those who are troubled that all might praise you!
Amen.