Psalm 116:1-19 (NIV)

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!” 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. 10 I believed; therefore I said, “I am greatly afflicted.” 11 And in my dismay I said, “All men are liars.” 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. 14 I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. 15 Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. 16 O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my chains. 17 I will sacrifice a thank offering to you and call on the name of the LORD. 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.
remember. That’s because new problems facing us may distract us from the ones He just resolved. OR we may get so caught up enjoying the blessings received that we forget Who sent them. But, this psalmist was grateful, and his gratitude to God became an emotional expression: “I love the LORD” as well as a behavioral commitment: “I will call on him as long as I live.” Gratitude reveals our relationship with God; thanksgiving seals it. Part of the expressed gratitude is displayed by...

II. Recounting His Goodness to Us—v.5-11. The LORD is gracious and righteous; our God is full of compassion. The LORD protects the simplehearted; when I was in great need, he saved me. Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you. For you, O LORD, have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling, that I may walk before the LORD in the land of the living. I believed; therefore I said, “I am greatly afflicted.” And in my dismay I said, “All men are liars.”

A. Several modern translations offer a better rendering of those last two verses—v.10-11 (NLT), I believed in you, so I said, “I am deeply troubled, LORD.” In my anxiety I cried out to you, “These people are all liars!” (In this sense, those verses continue to state trust in the midst of challenging circumstances. The focus is on: “I believed in you...”)

B. What happens when we recount God’s blessings, His gracious and compassionate protection, the deliverance of our “soul from death,” our “eyes from tears,” our “feet from stumbling”? 2 wonderful things:

1. Our journey takes on an inner peace: “Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you.” (Inner turmoil is “the stuff dreams are made of” when they become nightmares! Jesus is our Healer not just of our spirit and body: He heals the human soul.)

2. Our journey comes under new management, as we begin to “walk before the LORD in the land of the living.” (What does this mean?)

   a. To walk before the LORD means living our lives with a conscious sense of His presence, wherever we are, whatever we’re doing.

   b. To walk before the LORD means letting His will direct our steps by submitting our will to the authority of His Word.

   c. To walk before the LORD means adopting God’s viewpoint so that our life “in the land of the living” becomes Kingdom living.

TRANS: Counting our blessings and recounting God’s goodness turn the attitude of gratitude into an expression of thanksgiving. When the grateful feelings of our heart reach the joyful proclamations of our lips, we confirm our relationship with God before others. This is a way of...

III. Sealing Our Dedication with Thanksgiving—v.12-17. How can I repay the LORD for all his goodness to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people. Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints. O LORD, truly I am your servant; I am your servant, the son of your maidservant; you have freed me from my chains. I will sacrifice a thankoffering to you and call on the name of the LORD. As freed prisoners, we serve Him with loving gratitude as we—*

1. *“lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.” (At each prayerful celebration of the Eucharist [lit: “thanksgiving”], we lift up Christ’s cup of salvation, and “proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”)

2. *fulfill our “vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.” (Why v.15 ?—“Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of his saints.”

   a. Jesus asks His Bride, “Take up your cross and follow Me.” (Our “I will” pledges a death to self-life and our marriage to His life.)

   b. As a Husband who openly pledged His troth to us on the Cross, He calls His Bride to live out our vows as publicly as He did.

CONCLUSION:

The attitude of gratitude is fulfilled by open expression—v.18-19. I will fulfill my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people, in the courts of the house of the LORD—in your midst, O Jerusalem. Praise the LORD. That public expression sets a seal on our relationship with God, letting all around us know what Christ means us. And people who know us should be very familiar with those last 3 words of this psalm being often on our lips. When they’re in a conversation with us, they should never be surprised to hear us saying, “Praise the LORD.”