

LESSON 36

GOD'S SIGNATURE: DOING GREAT THINGS

Psalm 126

A song of ascents.

¹When the Lord restored the fortunes of Zion,
we were like those who dream.

²Then our mouth was filled with laughter,
and our tongue with shouts of joy;
then they said among the nations,
“The Lord has done great things for them.”

³The Lord has done great things for us;
we are glad.

⁴Restore our fortunes, O Lord,
like streams in the Negeb!

⁵Those who sow in tears
shall reap with shouts of joy!

⁶He who goes out weeping,
bearing the seed for sowing,
shall come home with shouts of joy,
bringing his sheaves with him.

WELCOME: *Fixing Our Focus*

Have you longed for something for so many years and then when God gave it to you, it felt like a dream? Share your experience to the group.

WORSHIP: *Adoring Our God*

Suggested songs:

(Our God is an) Awesome God by Richard Mullins (*Our God is an*)
God is Able by Ben Fielding and Reuben Morgan
He is Able by Rory Noland and Gregory Ferguson (*Maranatha*)
To God Be the Glory by Fanny J. Crosby

WORD: *Understanding the Word*

Lesson Aim: Members will claim God’s greatness and his power on behalf of his people.

Introduction

“There is an appointed time for everything,” as written in Ecclesiastes 3. Included in the “appointed time” are healing, laughter, and dancing. For the Israelites, there was a lull of 70 years before they could be reunited, laugh, and dance again in their own land. The God of Israel thought it best to scatter his people to refine them from extreme disobedience (see Deuteronomy 28 and Jeremiah 29), and so return to him. Psalm 126 was possibly written to celebrate the return of exiles from Babylonian captivity during Ezra’s time (*Ezra 1*).

Even if it is not because of disobedience, Christians can expect difficult seasons in life where they have to go through pain, separation, loss. Whatever season comes, one can keep their life in tune with God by taking comfort in the fact that he is sovereign in those seasons and is intentional in redeeming those who are his.

Leader: Lead in reading Psalm 126 aloud together. Then read the paragraph on the “Key Verse.”

Key Verse: The psalm centers upon the theme: God does great things. “The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad.” God had done great things for Israel in the past, and the psalmist looked forward to him doing more great things for them in the future.

Psalm 126:1-3. Theme: _____

1. The returning exiles sang “we were like those who dreamed” when the Lord brought them back to their land—Jerusalem (Zion). What did they mean (*v. 1*)?

2. How did they celebrate the incredible work of God on their behalf (*vv. 2-3*)?

3. How did other nations react (v. 3)?

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 1-3.

Psalm 126:4-6. Theme: _____

4. In verse 4, the returnees asked the Lord to “restore our fortunes.” What were they praying for? If you were one of them, what would be the things you want the Lord to give you?

5. Knowing the characteristics of the Negeb, explain further what these singers were asking from God. How did they view their condition prior to their return to Jerusalem?

6. Verses 5-6 show the cycle of sowing and reaping. What promise are these returnees claiming? How different is this sowing-reaping cycle different from the sudden “streams of the Negeb”?

The Negeb (or Negev) was a dry and barren area south of Judah. It had zero rainfall during summer. The “streams of the Negeb” are like “flash floods” that come from the mountains during the rainy season. What is a desert one day could suddenly turn into a place of green grass after that.

In the space above, write what you think is the theme of verses 4-6.

Questions for Adults

1. What great thing has God done for you, your family, or church recently? How did you celebrate it?
2. Do you still get amazed by the great things that God is doing for you, your family, or church? Why or why not?
3. Are you still longing for a request to be granted by God, or simply longing for the return of a loved one? Share to your group for prayer and accountability.
4. Individually and as a group, pray back this psalm to God. You could start by saying something like:

Father, I know you have done wonderful things for me in the past, and that even now, you are capable of doing great things. I ask that you...

5. Pray for GCF (Prayer requests supplied by the Leader).

Questions for the Youth

1. Share with the group a major prayer request that you have been praying for which God finally answered. How did God fulfill your request?
2. How were you able to share with others how God answered your prayer? How else can you glorify God to others?
3. Do you have other items that you are praying to God for? How confident are you that God will answer your prayer?

Questions for Children

1. What is one thing that God has done for you which you are grateful for and will never forget?
2. How can you show your gratefulness to God for the things he has done for you? Make it a habit to share with others how God has been good to you.
3. What are some of your prayer requests to God? Share this with the group and after all have shared, pray for each other's requests.