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Delivered and Preserved by Grace

A Gospel Reflection on Psalm 116

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Psalm 116 reads like a testimony shared after a long and painful journey. It begins in distress and ends in praise. Along the way, we hear the voice of a believer who has cried out to God, been heard, and now stands with renewed love and gratitude. It is not merely his story. It becomes an invitation for us to remember what God has done for our own souls.

“I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice and my pleas for mercy” (Psalm 116:1). That opening line is both simple and weighty. Love for God does not rise from human effort. It is awakened by mercy received. The psalmist looks back and sees that the Lord listened, that He inclined His ear, that He responded with compassion. This is where true devotion begins.

There was a time when that mercy was urgently needed. “The snares of death encompassed me; the pangs of Sheol laid hold on me” (Psalm 116:3). The language is vivid. Death closed in. Fear took hold. Distress and anguish were not distant ideas but present realities. In that moment, the psalmist did not rely on himself. He called out. “O Lord, I pray, deliver my soul!” (Psalm 116:4).

That cry was not eloquent, yet it was full of faith. It rose from need, and God answered.

“Gracious is the Lord, and righteous; our God is merciful” (Psalm 116:5). With these words, the psalmist anchors everything in who God is. The Lord gives what is undeserved. He acts in perfect righteousness. He shows compassion to the lowly. When the psalmist was brought low, the Lord saved him. This is the pattern of sovereign grace. God moves toward those who cannot lift themselves.

Then comes a quiet moment of reflection. “Return, O my soul, to your rest; for the Lord has dealt bountifully with you” (Psalm 116:7). It is as though the psalmist pauses and speaks to his own heart. Remember what God has done. Be still. Rest. The Lord has been good.

And what a deliverance it was. “You have delivered my soul from death, my eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling” (Psalm 116:8). Every part of life has been touched by grace. The soul rescued. The sorrow comforted. The path steadied. This is not partial help. It is full and personal care.

Because of this, the psalmist makes a resolution. “I will walk before the Lord in the land of the living” (Psalm 116:9). Grace leads somewhere. It reshapes how we live. The one who has been delivered now desires to live in the presence of God, aware of Him, dependent on Him, and directed by Him.

Still, the journey of faith includes seasons of hardship. “I believed, even when I spoke: ‘I am greatly afflicted’” (Psalm 116:10). Faith does not silence the reality of pain. It speaks through it. There are moments when words come out of alarm and confusion, yet beneath them remains a settled trust in God. That kind of faith is sustained by grace, not by human strength.

As the psalmist considers all that the Lord has done, a question rises naturally. “What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits to me?” (Psalm 116:12). It is a question many of us have asked. How do we respond to such kindness? Not with repayment, because grace cannot be repaid, but with worship.

“I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord” (Psalm 116:13). The response is to receive with gratitude and to honor God openly. The psalmist speaks of vows made and fulfilled in the presence of others. Grace leads to public praise.

Then comes a statement that steadies the heart in the face of life’s final moment. “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints” (Psalm 116:15). Even here, the Lord is near. The lives of His people are never outside His care, and neither is their death. He holds them from beginning to end.

The psalm draws to a close with a renewed sense of identity. “O Lord, I am your servant... You have loosed my bonds” (Psalm 116:16). Freedom has led to joyful belonging. The one who was bound is now free to serve. There is no reluctance here. Only gratitude.

That gratitude finds expression in worship. “I will offer to you the sacrifice of thanksgiving” (Psalm 116:17). Not just in private moments, but among the gathered people of God. In the courts of the Lord, in the fellowship of His people, the psalmist lifts his voice. “Praise the Lord!” (Psalm 116:19).

Psalm 116 ultimately directs our eyes to Jesus Christ. He is the greater Deliverer who entered into death and overcame it. Through Him, our cries are heard, our sins are forgiven, and our souls are given rest.

So we respond as the psalmist did. We call upon the Lord. We walk before Him. We give thanks. And with full hearts, we say, “I love the Lord,” because He has first loved us and has dealt bountifully with our souls.



*At the heart of Redeemer's ministry is the pastoral leadership of **Jason K. Boothe**, who serves as pastor of Redeemer Church in Piketon, Ohio. Known for his warm, Gospel-centered preaching and careful exposition of Scripture, Pastor Boothe consistently points listeners to the finished work of Jesus Christ as the foundation of the Christian life. His ministry emphasizes the sufficiency of Christ, the comfort of God's promises, and the assurance believers have through faith alone. Through preaching, teaching, and pastoral care, he seeks to help ordinary people see the extraordinary grace of God at work in His Word and in their daily lives.*

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