

Our LifeLines verse for January 8, 2024 will be ?????? See you then!

LifeLines November 13, 2023

Today's Scripture: 2 Verses

Psalm 78:41-42

They tested God again & again, & provoked the Holy One of Israel. They did not keep in mind His power, or the day when He redeemed them from the foe.

We tested God again & again, & provoked Him, the Holy One of Israel! We didn't remember or acknowledge His power or times He redeemed & saved us from harm & destruction.

WHY WE'RE HERE

2 Timothy 3:16-17, All scripture is inspired by God & is useful for teaching, for reproof, for correction, & for training in righteousness, so that everyone who belongs to God may be proficient, equipped for every good work.

CONTEXT

(This a *maskil*, which we spoke of last week. Asaph was probably a worship leader assigned by David to the tabernacle choir. Asaph's 12 psalms tell the story of God's people from the beginning. Psalm 78 records the history of Israel from Egypt to the time of David. Asaph also appears in 1 Chronicles 6, 2 Chronicles 29:30.)

God was particularly addressing the first Passover when God killed the firstborn of Egypt as the price of redemption that purchased Israel's freedom from slavery. It seems the price that was paid meant little or nothing to them. Otherwise, they would have remembered.

When Israel's stubbornness provoked God, there was a real sense in which it *limited* Him. In one sense, it's impossible to limit our Creator, but God tied His work to man's faith & obedience in Him. God gave us free will to make choices that hurt Him just as children do things today to hurt their family & others. Our unbelief, distrust & even lack of hope can hinder God's work in our lives. We want to work in us.

DIFFERENT VERSIONS (Versions not listed are similar to the NRSV.)

AMP

Again & again they tempted God, & distressed the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember (the miracles worked by) His (powerful) hand, nor the day when He redeemed them from the enemy.

CEB

Time & time again they tested God, provoking the Holy One of Israel...

CEV (Contemporary English Version)

They kept testing Him & caused terrible pain...

ERV (Easy-to-Read Version)

Again & again they tested His patience. They really hurt the Holy One of Israel. They forgot about His power. They forgot the many times He saved them from the enemy.

GW

Again & again they tested God, & they pushed the Holy One of Israel to the limit. They did not remember His power – the day He freed them from their oppressor.

KJV

Yea, they turned back & tempted God, & limited the Holy One of Israel. They remembered not His hand, nor the day when He delivered them from the enemy.

MSG

Time & again they pushed Him to the limit, provoked Israel's Holy God. How quickly they forgot what He'd done, forgot their day of rescue from the enemy.

NCV

Again & again they tested God & brought pain to the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His power or the time He saved them from the enemy.

NET (New English Translation)

Again & again they limited God, preventing Him from blessing them. Continually they turned back from Him & provoked the Holy One of Israel! They forgot His great love, how He took them by His hand, & with redemption's kiss He delivered them from their enemies.

NirV

Again & again they tested God. They made the Holy One of Israel sad & angry. They didn't remember His power. They forgot the day He set them free from those who had treated them so badly.

NIV

Again & again they put God to the test; they vexed the Holy One of Israel. They did not remember His power – the day He redeemed them from the oppressor.

TLV

Again & again they limited God, preventing Him from blessing them. Continually they turned back from Him & provoked the Holy One of Israel. They forgot His great love, how He took them by His hand, & with redemption's kiss He delivered them from their enemies.

SELAH

BREAKING DOWN THE VERSE

They tested God again & again... Our LifeLine is speaking of the Israelites in Egypt. How often do we test God? Give examples. God's problem isn't always with the world. It's with *His own people, Christians!* We test Him with our disobedience, forgetfulness, unbelief, insincerity, ingratitude & worldliness. They denied & refused to accept His Direction.

& provoked the Holy One of Israel... The dictionary says to provoke is to give rise to a strong, unwelcome emotion. It's like a trigger that incites or sets off consequences. It's intentionally annoying someone. Can you imagine intentionally acting that way toward God?

That's what people have done off & on throughout the ages, isn't it? Remember expulsion from the Garden of Eden? Remember the flood? Sodom & Gomorrah?

They did not keep in mind His power... God has not been shy about demonstrating His power & might. The numerous examples begin with the entire creation story & continue through the delivery of the Israelites from Egypt & miracles in the New Testament & today. How foolish for any of us to doubt or forget what our God is capable of doing. Then, He placed all power & authority in Jesus who passed it along to us!

Unbelief is a sin that paralyzes us & limits God's blessings in & through us. We limit God by our worldliness & reliance on anything or anyone other than God.

or the day when He redeemed them from the foe... Who is your foe? What battles are you fighting? Are you trying to fight them alone? Have you enlisted the Lord's help? Have you reached out to your Savior? Are you allowing close, spirit-filled friends to lift you up in prayer & encourage you? Are you accessing the "power at work within us" which is a gift from God? Are you fighting your spiritual battles with the armor of God (Ephesians 6:10-17)? Are you educating yourself, spiritually, spending time in the Word, talking with God about it & meditating on it regularly?

SELAH

RELATED VERSES (Add other related verses as you think of them.)

Exodus 14:12, Is this not the very thing we told you in Egypt, 'Let us alone & let us serve the Egyptians?' For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.

Deuteronomy 6:16, Do not put the Lord your God to the test, as you tested Him at Massah.

Deuteronomy 8:18, But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you power to get wealth, so that He may confirm His covenant that He swore to your ancestors, as He is doing today.

Joshua 1:9, I hereby command you: Be strong & courageous; do not be frightened or dismayed, for the Lord your God is with you wherever you go.

Judges 8:34-35, The Israelites did not remember the Lord their God, who had rescued them from the hand of all their enemies on every side; & they did not exhibit loyalty to the house of Gideon in return for all the good that he had done to Israel.

2 Kings 19:22, Whom have you mocked & reviled? Against whom have you raised your voice & haughtily lifted your eyes? Against the Holy One of Israel!

1 Chronicles 29:18, O Lord, the God of Abraham, Isaac, & Israel, our ancestors, keep forever such purposes & thoughts in the hearts of Your people, & direct their hearts toward You.

Psalms 8:6, You have given them dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under their feet.

Psalms 42:5, Why are you cast down, O my soul, & why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise Him, my help & my God.

Psalms 69:30, I will praise the name of God with a song; I will magnify Him with thanksgiving.

Psalms 77:14-15, You are the God who works wonders; You have displayed Your might among the peoples. With Your strong arm You redeemed Your people, the descendants of Jacob & Joseph.

Psalms 78:11, They forgot what He had done, & the miracles that He had shown them.

Psalm 78:21-22, Therefore, when the Lord heard, He was full of rage; a fire was kindled against Jacob, His anger mounted against Israel, because they had no faith in God, & did not trust His saving power.

Psalm 86:15, But You, O Lord, are a God merciful & gracious, slow to anger & abounding in steadfast love & faithfulness.

Psalm 103:2, Bless the Lord, O my soul, & do not forget all His benefits -

Psalm 106:7-10, *Extra credit reading at home!*

Isaiah 59:1-2, See, the Lord's hand is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. Rather, your iniquities have been barriers between you & your God, & your sins have hidden His face from you so that He does not hear.

Psalm 139:23-24, Search me, O God, & know my heart; test me & know my thoughts. See if there is any wicked way in me, & lead me in the way everlasting.

Jeremiah 5:25, Your iniquities have turned these (blessings) away, & your sins have deprived you of good.

Matthew 13:58, And He did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

Matthew 28:18, And Jesus came & said to them, "All authority in heaven & on earth has been given to Me."

John 1:16, From His fullness we have received, grace upon grace.

John 14:12, "Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in Me will also do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father."

Acts 7:39, Our ancestors were unwilling to obey Him; instead, they pushed Him aside, & in their hearts they turned back to Egypt.

Romans 5:5, And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.

Romans 5:8, But God proves His love for us in this that while we still were sinners Christ died for us.

Romans 12:2, Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good & acceptable & perfect.

2 Corinthians 4:7, But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God & does not come from us.

2 Corinthians 10:4c-5, We destroy arguments & every proud obstacle raised up against the knowledge of God, & we take every thought captive to obey Christ.

Ephesians 1:3-4, Blessed be the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, just as He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy & blameless before Him in love.

Ephesians 1:18-19, So that with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which He has called you, what are the riches of His glorious inheritance among the saints, & what is the immeasurable greatness of His power for us who believe, according to the working of His great power.

Ephesians 1:20, God put this power to work in Christ when He raised Him from the dead & seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places.

Ephesians 2:4-5, But God, who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which He loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ – by grace you have been saved.

Ephesians 3:20, Now to Him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly more than we can ask or imagine, to Him be glory in the church & in Christ Jesus to all generations, forever & ever. Amen.

Ephesians 5:17, So do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.

Philippians 3:10, I want to know Christ & the power of His resurrection & the sharing of His sufferings by becoming like Him in His death.

Colossians 2:6-7, As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in Him, rooted & built up in Him & established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

Colossians 2:9-10, For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, & you have come to fullness in Him, who is the head of every ruler & authority.

1 Thessalonians 5:18, Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Timothy 4:10, For to this end we toil & struggle, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all people, especially of those who believe.

Philemon 1:6, I pray that the sharing of your faith may become effective when you perceive all the good that we may do for Christ.

Hebrews 3:7-8, Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, as on the day of testing in the wilderness.”

Hebrews 3:11, As in My anger I swore, ‘They will not enter My rest.’”

Hebrews 6:17, In the same way, when God desires to show even more clearly to the heirs of the promise the unchangeable character of His purpose, He guaranteed it by an oath.

Hebrews 6:19-20, We have this hope, a sure & steadfast anchor of the soul a hope that enters the inner shrine behind the curtain, where Jesus, a forerunner on our behalf, has entered, having become a high priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek.

1 Peter 1:9, For you are receiving the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

2 Peter 1:3, His divine power has given us everything for life & godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory & goodness.

2 Peter 1:4, Thus He has given us, through these things, His precious & very great promises, so that through them you may escape from the corruption that is in the world because of lust, & may become participants of the divine nature.

SUMMARY

It's easy to read early books of the Bible & wonder how the people could have been so hard-headed, unbelieving & selfish. It's easy to look back at history & believe solutions should have been obvious to those in peril. It's easy to see how some folks could be ignoring God in certain life situations. It's easy to identify people we think should open up to God to let Him do His marvelous work in their lives. How many people do you think could be looking at us with those same ideas? It's a sobering thought.

The Christian life is supposed to be one marked by delight in God's demands & promises, but we often follow the way of the Israelites by doubting, complaining, & not trusting Him. Many Christians live in a constant state of uncertainty. When we complain, we're out of His will. When we try to fight enemies on our own (health, finances, family discord, spiritual deficit), He may very well leave us on our own because we have insinuated that we can do without Him! Are we only doing what we think we can accomplish through our own efforts & power?

As we approach the seasons of Thanksgiving & Christmas, do we hold the birth, sacrifice, death & resurrection of Jesus freshly in our mind? Do we honor it each day? Do we trust our Heavenly Father's promises the way the Son did? Do we know we can count on God, His love & power to work in our lives? Are we hoping for it, expecting it, watching for it & telling others of the glorious hope we have? Hope is joyful expectation, not a wish. It's something that is fully expected. If we want to take the limits off of God's ability to work in our lives, we should pursue a life of thanksgiving & trust.

Forgetting what God has already done opens the door to unbelieving & wrong-believing. That leads to wrong mindsets about God & His place in our lives. It hinders our faith. The Lord wants to reveal His will to us, but in order to receive that understanding, we have to remove our limits. We mustn't limit what we *think* God can do through us.

Remembering all God has done for us & what we've seen Him do for others establishes a pattern of thinking that prepares us for challenges that may come. Right-believing leads the way to God's open hand, the very thing that allows us to believe He will be there for us in the future.

Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones, in a sermon titled, "Limiting God," said that when Christians forget the words of the Bible, God's promises, His ways & His warnings, they limit God's power, grace & glory in their lives rather than letting Him showcase His excellent nature & ways in our lives & in the world. Is this true of any of us? In what ways may our unbelief or lack of knowledge have limited the ways God *wanted* to work in our lives?

CONCLUSION

It is our responsibility & privilege to glorify God. When we are obedient children, we bring Him honor. When we are disobedient, it's like blasphemy. Our conduct is a witness to the value we place on God. When we go against God, we limit His ability to work in our lives. Even in the New Testament we see how lack of faith limits God. It limits the extent of God's work through us for the benefit of others. When was the last time you declared to someone what God has done in & for you? Let's not limit how He wants to use us.

Let us abound in faith, magnify God, become more aware of His presence, surrender to Him, take the limits off of Him, giving Him free reign to work in our lives. Jesus has born God's wrath for our sins, so we aren't alone. Today we may not anger or provoke God, but not remembering His mercy, grace, faithfulness, & all other benefits *still* limits what He's able to do in our lives. Let us keep our eyes on *God's* faithfulness in the past to give us the faith we need in our future. Let's give God the opportunity to do His *best* work in us!

Let Psalm 78:41-42 be a *LifeLine* for you!

SCRIPTURE IS OUR –

LifeLine!

Take a minute or two & write something you want to remember about this LifeLine:
