

Angela Pound

Psalms of the Summer / Psalm 105

March 19th, 1821. A warranted and defended deed was given with the following description, “Sold by John Mayhew Bill for fifteen pounds to Asahel Bentley, Ahira Calkin, Randall Illsley, Stephen Mills and Elkana Morton Jr., all of Cornwallis, and their successors in office as a comittee forever, for the purpose of a burying place and for the accommodation of a meeting house. I, John Mayhew Bill, will defend the lot of land with bounds as follows: from the north-west corner of the school house on the east side of the highway leading from Daniel Parker’s to the North Mountain and thence east sixteen rods to a spruce tree, thence south to the main road leading westerly, thence by said road to the corner by the first mentioned highway, thence by said highway to the first mentioned boundary.” End deed. It was the next year that the church was built, being dedicated in 1823. Members met at the new meetinghouse but also in the homes of local members. Ingram Ebenizer Bill, one of the members of the church, tells of his conversion and his struggle before he yielded to the call of the Gospel Ministry. Mr. Bill said, “Though trained religiously by Christian parents and well instructed theoretically in the doctrines of the Gospel by a careful

study of the assembly catechism, I lived a stranger to vital Godliness until I was in my nineteenth year of my age. Then by the private ministrations of Father Manning, deepened by the preaching of Father T.S. Harding, I was led through the long months of severe mental conflict to experience the sweetness of redeeming love and to realize my personal interest in the great salvation. My new born faith, love and joy filled me with such earnest longing for the world's redemption that I was almost persuaded that it was my duty even then to devote my life to the ministry of the Word, but the fear of running before I was sent held me back. My beloved pastor Father Manning, spoke to me on the subject, but my reply was that I felt myself wholly unqualified for a work of such magnitude." End quote.

On June 6th, 1835 with 167 members present, the Billtown Baptist Church was organized with Elder Manning as pastor. It was on that day that members from the First Cornwallis Baptist Church met with the people of Billtown in the meeting house and, after prayer by Elder Manning, proceeded to take into consideration the expediency of setting off this part as a district church. This was the birth of Third Cornwallis Baptist Church, now known as Billtown United Baptist Church, which was admitted to the Association the same year. It was decided to celebrate the Lord's Supper monthly in the church that same year and for the trustees to take the necessary steps for securing the

property of the church by obtaining and recording the necessary deeds. A lot has happened in the history of Billtown United Baptist Church. The comings and goings of various pastors, deacons, changes to the constitution, and various new resolutions amongst other changes. A Women's Missionary Society was organized, a sewing circle which presented the first organ to the church and later financed the parsonage project was also founded. The first meetinghouse in Billtown did not have enough space for the increased membership and so in 1870 a new building was built to make room, suitable for Sunday school and church meetings. In 1871 a plan of systematic giving was instituted. The minutes state, "That we be guided by the Holy Scriptures in financing, that each member be asked to give as the Lord has prospered him." On April 14th, 1872 the new meeting house was opened and dedicated. It was then that the Ingram E. Bill who was now a reverend who I spoke of his conversion, preached in the morning. April 1902 Rev. D.H. Simpson became pastor and had an active role in building of a new church, which was dedicated on October 25, 1903. The church bell was a gift of Kinsman Sweet in memory of his parents.

We are at our third week of our Psalms of the Summer. The first week we looked at Psalm 8. In Psalm 8 we were reminded that as humans we're not just mere mortals but God made us "only slightly less than divine." Last week was

Psalm 19 which reminded us that God made us to live and make God's glory known in the world and to ascribe glory to him. God from the very beginning revealed Himself in two powerful ways. Through creation—like a rainbow, or a soaring bald eagle, declaring His glory and mercy in every corner of creation and through His Word—a covenant, showing us how to live in relationship with the Creator.

This week we are looking at Psalm 105. While we just read the beginning and end of the Psalm, skipping the middle, I invite you to read all of it. Psalm 105 is often considered an historical psalm. It begins like a song of praise. As it says at the beginning, “O give thanks to the Lord, call on his name, make known his deeds among the peoples. Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wonderful works.”

As Webster states, “Psalm 105 begins with a vigorous call to action. The servants of God are summoned to do the work of worship by a blitz of action verbs. All of the singing, glorying, telling, seeking, and rejoicing revolve around remembering God's wonderful works. The work of remembering recalls a history of the Lord's covenant promises beginning with Abraham and ending with Joshua. In this psalm, Israel's rebellious and wayward ways are forgotten for the moment and only the Lord's great faithfulness is remembered.”

As the psalm says, Make known his deeds among the peoples, tell of all his wonderful works. For me, this was

the theme of this psalm, and what I want to focus on today, hence the title, faithful through the years. The psalmist's first concern is for God-centered worship. The Lord's name is to be proclaimed, whose deeds are made known, and whose wonderful acts are celebrated. The Psalmist's second concern is for worship to "make known among the nations what he has done."

Psalm 105 covers the early chapters of our family history. For all those who are in Christ, this is our story too. We are servants of the Lord, descendants of Abraham, chosen by God, and children of Jacob. Everybody has a story, but only one story redeems our story. But when the psalmist told the story of salvation history in this psalm, only some of it could be told, for they didn't know fully of things to come.

The psalmist in this psalm speaks to God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, promising the land of Canaan. How, while few in number, they wandered from nation to nation, yet God didn't let anyone oppress them. God punished kings for them. He sent Joseph ahead of the famine, that was how Israel came to Egypt. God made his people very fruitful, he sent Moses and Aaron to Egypt with the plagues, bringing Israel now up out of Egypt. Then he spread out clouds as a covering, lightning at night, quail for food from heaven, water out of rocks because God remembered his promise to Abraham. The psalmist told this story of salvation history but much more was yet to

come as we now know. This psalm exclaimed so much of God's faithfulness throughout many years.

If we continue to speak of Billtown Baptist, it has had daughter churches such as The Lakeville Church from 1857 - 1973, then in September 1908 the Ross Corner Baptist Church, a little mountain church, was dedicated as a branch and the Woodville Church began in 1921. In 1945 the Jean Rushton Auxillary was organized with the support of Mrs. Vincent V. Rushton of which was instrumental in carrying out improvements on church properties, raised by the auxiliary and sewing circle. This auxiliary took the place of the group called "Busy Bees" the first auxiliary which ended in 1948. Over informal gatherings of fellowship and tea, congregants supported the church by raising funds to meet various needs around the parsonage and church property which became the local chapter of The Red Cross Society during the wartime of the 1940's. There has been Sunday School, vacation Bible School, many members baptized. In the late 60's youth work continued to be a major priority in the church with an active enrollment of 74 children in 1966 leveling off to 40 in 1967. In the 1980s the Kingswood Camp Committee requested that the church take on the maintenance of a cabin or one of the rooms in the lodge as a part of the church's commitment to their summer programs. The young people of the church initially took on the project,

which was later was left to the men's group (The Silver Lake Christian Brotherhood). Christian education flourished through the 1990s. Mid-week services and Bible studies were widely attended and Christian youth ministry was at an all time high, including heading to Spring Forth in 1992. The first hanging of the Greens was held in 1995.

As Harry Bill writes of his time at the Billtown Baptist Church, "Mom and dad always made sure that my brothers and I attended Sunday school and I recall making those weekly journeys up the narrow staircase, passing under the bell tower and proceeding into the classroom, which was located over the vestry. When our lessons were through we retraced our steps downstairs but not before passing by a man pulling on the bell rope which rendered a repetitive and deafening clanging which came from far up in the tower. It was now fifteen minutes before church time and he was calling friends and neighbours to come to church....I remember the warmth and brilliance of the sun streaming through the stained glass windows, on cold, windy winter mornings the building always creaked and groaned under the strain of the strong west winds. I remember the smells of the church. I recall the rich robust music. Overall a very special atmosphere prevailed in this huge old building on Sunday mornings. He continues, "It was a special feeling that seemed to surround all of us. It was a mixture of Christian love and happiness as

neighbours lingered awhile after the service to catch up on the news of the past week or to offer a hand to each other in the days ahead. It was a very safe time, a secure time for us kids as war raged in far off places.”

We not only see God’s faithfulness in the church but we can also see it in our lives. When we forget what God has done, fear and doubt creep in. But when we *remember*—really remember—our hearts grow strong again. Psalm 105 teaches us that remembrance is a spiritual discipline that fuels joy, deepens worship, and strengthens faith.

When I think how are we going to do this, or will we have enough people, supplies, whatever the case may be I think back to God’s promises and his faithfulness throughout the years and think it’s not us, it’s all God. It doesn’t mean it’s going to be easy, it doesn’t mean that there won’t be changes, that things we’ve done in the past won’t end for new things to begin, but God is faithful through the years and we are always to look to God.

As verse 4 says “Seek the Lord and his strength; seek his presence continually.” We are called to keep our attention on God rather than diverting our gaze to lesser things. Seeking the Lord requies the whole heart all the time, in seeking the Lord we can trust his power and treasure his presence.

When we look to God, we can see how He has been with us

through out it all. He has a plan bigger and better than we could ever imagine.

Verse 24 says “And the Lord made his people very fruitful, and made them stronger than their foes,” As one commentary writes of the Israelites, “The 430 years in Egypt were not wasted because the Lord used the time in Egypt to prepare the people of Israel to inherit Canaan. When things looked unpromising, the Lord was already making ready the next phase of his sovereign plan. While in Egypt the family of Jacob grew from about seventy people into a great company of over 600 000 men by the time of the exodus. For over four centuries, every ordinary birth was a step toward the fulfillment of the Lord’s extraordinary plan for Israel. The small clan multiplied into a force to be reckoned with, so that in time the Egyptians came to fear Israel.” There are times in the history of the church or your own history when things have not always looked promising, but remember what this psalm says, keep your eyes focused on the Lord, seek him, give thanks, make his deeds known.

Reading through so much of the history of Billtown, I can’t help but see how much God has been faithful to this community and continues to be to this day. We are told to tell others of all of God’s wondrous works - we see it in this church.

Verse 8 points out “He is mindful of his covenant forever, of

the word that he commanded, for a thousand generations.” The Lord’s promise will outlive all of human history, and he will not walk away from the obligation he initiated and made. God will never fail to keep his word. What a promise to rest on, knowing that God will never fail to keep his word.

I haven’t been at Billtown Baptist church for as long as others in this room and no one has been here since the very beginning, but it is written down and seen through our history how God has been so faithful to this church. As I was writing this message this week I went for a walk with Mark and met a guy by the name of Paul Dawson at the Kentville Fire department. Mark was commenting that I was the minister here at Billtown Baptist when Paul said, my dad was a pastor out at Billtown Baptist, Rick Dawson. Our family lived in the parsonage at the time. And then a friend of mine from ADC wrote me saying she met another lovely individual from my church, as she has commented in the past that as she travels to different places she has met people from Billtown Baptist. Tell others of God’s wondrous acts here at Billtown and beyond.

While we don’t have a newer history book than 2004 about the history of this church, I asked chatGPT to gather the information it could on the recent history of Billtown Baptist and here’s what it came up with.

In March 2025, the Nova Scotia Legislature passed Bill 48,

officially renaming the church to “Billtown United Baptist Church”, updating its governance structure and removing outdated restrictions around voting/trustee eligibility – This not only honors its history but empowers the congregation to operate more inclusively and effectively.

The church has flourished spiritually and socially with weekly coffee clubs, kids and teens growing food in a community garden at Northville Farm as a beautiful blend of nurturing creation and community partnership. They run a Summer Vacation Bible School scheduled for July 21–25, opening hearts and minds to the Gospel. And through ongoing benevolent-support offerings and monthly foodbank collections, the church is truly caring for those in need locally. It sponsors local Quilting efforts—donating handmade quilts to graduating divinity students—and previously hosted an emergency homeless shelter in December 2023.

As it summarized: God’s faithfulness is clear. From legal affirmation to spiritual growth and social love, Billtown United Baptist Church is flourishing—and through it all, God’s steady presence and provision remain at the heart.

Psalm 105 reminds us of God’s faithfulness to the Israelites and all that he did.....It tells us to remember, to proclaim, to praise. It is through generations in the past doing these three things that we have come to know who God is today. It is because they remembered His works, proclaimed His

deeds, and praised His name that the story of His faithfulness has reached us. Now, it is our turn to do the same—to remember, to proclaim, and to praise—so that generations to come will also know the goodness and greatness of our God for he has been faithful through the years.