

## Psalm 103

As we continue our series on the Psalms we come to a song bursting with praise and thanksgiving to God. Psalm 103 is a psalm of pure worship. Unlike most of David's psalms there are no complaints or cries for deliverance. There is just delight, joy and gratitude for all that God is and all that He does. Let's take a look at the opening words.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;  
And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!  
<sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
And forget not all His benefits:  
(Psalm 103:1, 2)

In these sacred words David is rousing himself to bless God, to say good things about Him. And he doesn't want to praise God superficially; he wants to sing his praise with all his heart, soul, mind and strength. But think about this also, all that is within David and all that is within me includes my judgment and imagination, my affections and desires. So let your judgment bless God by making good, biblical decisions. Let your imagination bless God by pure and holy ideas. Let your affection bless God by loving what He loves. And let your desires bless God by seeking to bring Him glory in all that you do.<sup>1</sup>

When David sang, "Bless the LORD, O my soul" he was rousing himself to worship. It is a matter of choice to praise God, to worship or not to worship. We must decide to love God. Sometimes we honor God with our lips but our hearts are far from Him.<sup>2</sup> How do we change this attitude? How do we fix it? We fix this wrong attitude the way that David did. Talk to yourself!

Bless the LORD, O my soul;  
And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!

Tell yourself to bless God with all that is within you.<sup>3</sup> Refuse to become dull, listless and all but comatose in the midst of God's amazing grace. Stir yourself up and say, "Come on, soul, wake up and smell the coffee! Look at what God has done for us in Christ.<sup>4</sup> Look at what He is like. He is glorious in holiness, fearful in

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 12:1, 2; 2 Corinthians 10:4-6; Ephesians 4:17-32; Philippians 4:8, 9

<sup>2</sup> Isaiah 29:13; Matthew 15:8

<sup>3</sup> Since the Day of Pentecost, after Christ's resurrection, every believer has within them, not only their own personality, but the gift of the holy Spirit. The holy Spirit gives us the ability to speak in tongues to praise God and give thanks well (Acts 2:1-11; 1 Corinthians 14:13-17).

<sup>4</sup> Ephesians 1:3-23

praises, doing wonders!"<sup>5</sup> Give yourself a pep rally. Get those pom-poms shaking away the dust from your heart.

Bless the LORD, O my soul;  
And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!  
<sup>2</sup> Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
And forget not all His benefits:  
(Psalm 103:1, 2)

Well, what are His benefits to us?

Who forgives all your iniquities,  
Who heals all your diseases,  
<sup>4</sup> Who redeems your life from destruction,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,  
<sup>5</sup> Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*,  
*So that* your youth is renewed like the eagle's.  
(Psalm 103:3-5)

Bless God Almighty for He has forgiven all my iniquities, all of my sins, past, present and future.<sup>6</sup> Forgiveness of sins is the greatest gift of all that we could receive from God. Where would we be if we had everything the world had to offer, but we stood guilty before God? What if we had no hope of salvation and everlasting life? God forgives our sins!

He also heals our diseases. God is the healer of broken hearts and broken bodies. He heals our diseases now, sometimes with a miracle and sometimes through doctors and medicines. All healing ultimately comes from God. And as the New Testament tells us, we eagerly wait for the full and final redemption of our bodies when Christ returns.<sup>7</sup> With the return of Christ all disease will be eradicated. No more colds or cancer. The wages of sin is death. But the day will come when our mortal bodies will put on immortality.<sup>8</sup> A day is coming when sickness will be no more and God will wipe away every tear.<sup>9</sup>

Who redeems your life from destruction,  
Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

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<sup>5</sup> Exodus 15:11

<sup>6</sup> Ephesians 1:7; 1 John 1:9

<sup>7</sup> Romans 8:23

<sup>8</sup> 1 Corinthians 15:50-58

<sup>9</sup> Revelation 20:4

<sup>5</sup> Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*,  
So *that* your youth is renewed like the eagle's.  
(Psalm 103:4, 5)

God redeems our life from destruction. The word "destruction" in Hebrew literally refers to the pit or the grave. How many times during the course of a day does God keep me safe from danger? More than I'll ever know. As I was preparing this teaching there was a fierce storm outside my home. And lightening and thunder rattled my house and my bones. It was the grace of God that kept me safe.

He crowns me with lovingkindness and tender mercies. And He satisfies my life with good things. He does not necessarily give me rich things or everything. But God meets my needs and provides me with good things: family friends, peace, joy, wisdom and strength so that I am renewed like the eagle. The prophet Isaiah said,

Have you not known?  
Have you not heard?  
The everlasting God, the LORD,  
The Creator of the ends of the earth,  
Neither faints nor is weary.  
His understanding is unsearchable.  
<sup>29</sup> He gives power to the weak,  
And to *those who have* no might He increases strength.  
<sup>30</sup> Even the youths shall faint and be weary,  
And the young men shall utterly fall,  
<sup>31</sup> But those who wait on the LORD  
Shall renew *their* strength;  
They shall mount up with wings like eagles,  
They shall run and not be weary,  
They shall walk and not faint.  
(Isaiah 40:28-31)

What a tremendous promise this is! God renews our strength like the eagles.

The LORD executes righteousness  
And justice for all who are oppressed.  
<sup>7</sup> He made known His ways to Moses,  
His acts to the children of Israel.  
(Psalm 103:6, 7)

If you feel oppressed, if you need justice then call out to God. Cast all your care upon Him for He cares for you!<sup>10</sup> And verse 7 I interesting to think about. What does it mean? In Exodus 33:13 Moses asks God, "...if I have found grace in Your sight show me Your way, that I may know You." And in Exodus 34. 6, 7 we read,

And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, <sup>7</sup> keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, by no means clearing *the guilty*, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children to the third and the fourth generation."

God's way is to be merciful and kind, gracious and good. But what does it mean to visit the iniquity of the parents upon the children? In Deuteronomy 24 and Ezekiel 18 we are told clearly that God does not punish children for their parents sin. But there are consequences for in and unbelief and bad living that can last for generations. You can see it today in how some societies and cultures that reject or ignore the one true God suffer generation after generation. But the consequences of sin can be stopped as soon as one turns to God who is merciful and good and kind.

The LORD is merciful and gracious,  
Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy.  
<sup>9</sup> He will not always strive *with us*,  
Nor will He keep *His anger* forever.  
<sup>10</sup> He has not dealt with us according to our sins,  
Nor punished us according to our iniquities.  
<sup>11</sup> For as the heavens are high above the earth,  
So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;  
<sup>12</sup> As far as the east is from the west,  
So far has He removed our transgressions from us.  
<sup>13</sup> As a father pities *his children*,  
So the LORD pities those who fear Him.

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<sup>10</sup> 1 Peter 5:7

14 For He knows our frame;  
He remembers that we are dust.  
(Psalm 103:8-14)

Our Lord Jesus Christ told the story about the prodigal son.<sup>11</sup> The unthankful son ran out on his father. He ran away from true wealth both materially and spiritually. He ran so far away that he found himself in a pig pen. But he could never run away from his father's love. His father was always missing him, always longing for him, always watching for him to come to his senses and come home. And when the young man came back with his tail between his legs, his father smothered him with kisses and threw him a party.

That is the heart of our heavenly Father. He knows we are dust. He knows what we are made of and He has compassion on us. God told the prophet Jeremiah, "I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."<sup>12</sup> Isn't that wonderful? You know, Hebrews 6:10 says that,

God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love  
which you have shown toward His name, *in that* you  
have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

God never forgets your efforts to love Him and serve Him, no matter how big or small. And He will reward you for your loving service. But He will forget all your sins.

15 As for man, his days are like grass;  
As a flower of the field, so he flourishes.  
16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone,  
And its place remembers it no more.  
17 But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting  
On those who fear Him,  
And His righteousness to children's children,  
18 To such as keep His covenant,  
And to those who remember His commandments to do them.  
19 The LORD has established His throne in heaven,  
And His kingdom rules over all.  
(Psalm 103:15-19)

Even if we live to be 100 life is all too short, but God's mercy and tenderness are everlasting. He has forgiven our sins. He gives us wisdom.<sup>13</sup> He

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<sup>11</sup> Luke 15:11-32

<sup>12</sup> Jeremiah 31:34

<sup>13</sup> James 1:5

pours His love into our hearts through the gift of the holy Spirit.<sup>14</sup> He gives us power and strength. He meets our every need.<sup>15</sup> And He has promised us everlasting life in His coming kingdom.<sup>16</sup>

God is righteous. He will do the right things to our children and grandchildren. They will not be without hope. He will reveal Himself and the Lord Jesus Christ to them. God's kingdom rules over all. Nations come and go. Stars burn out. But God is from everlasting to everlasting.

"Bless the LORD, O my soul!" Oh, how could I not praise God for all that He is and all that He does? But it is not good enough for just me to praise God. I must, like David, call upon everyone and everything to bless Him.

Bless the LORD, you His angels,  
Who excel in strength, who do His word,  
Heeding the voice of His word.  
<sup>21</sup> Bless the LORD, all you His hosts,  
You ministers of His, who do His pleasure.  
<sup>22</sup> Bless the LORD, all His works,  
In all places of His dominion.  
Bless the LORD, O my soul!  
(Psalm 103:20-22)

The heart of worship is to find delight in God. God is the most glorified when we are the most satisfied in Him. And when I am satisfied in Him, I am inspired to tell others about God. I want to proclaim God's greatness and goodness to us in Jesus Christ. I want to declare His tender mercies. I want to sing of His righteousness. I want to tell others about everlasting life in the kingdom of God.

And I want to do all of this for the great glory of my God and for the good of His people. Don't you want to do this too? I'm sure that you do. So stir yourself up to bless the LORD with all your soul and forget not all His benefits.

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<sup>14</sup> Romans 5:5

<sup>15</sup> Philippians 4:19

<sup>16</sup> John 3:16

