

**DAVID AND HIS GOD**

## Psalm 63

**Intro:** Graham Scroggie, in his book entitled simply, *The Psalms*, mentioned that the early Church Fathers decreed that no day should pass without the public singing of this Psalm. It surely has to be considered as one of David's greatest Psalms in his expression of his devotion to the Lord. And, like many other passages of Scripture, the Psalm is even more amazing when we look at its background. The heading of the Psalm tells us that he wrote this "when he was in the wilderness of Judah." Some expositors have tried to link this with David's flight from Saul, but his mention of himself as "the king" in the last verse would move this Psalm to a later period of David's life when he again had to flee to the wilderness, or desert, and that would place this Psalm exactly where Psalm 55 belonged. And that was to David's flight from Absalom.

Consistent with the heading of this Psalm, we have several references to "the wilderness" in the Biblical account of the time of Absalom's revolt. For example, 2 Sam. 15:23 says this about David's departure from Jerusalem:

And all the country wept with a loud voice, and all the people passed over: the king also himself passed over the brook Kidron, and all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness. And then when David sent Zadok back to Jerusalem with the ark of the covenant which he had brought to David, David said this to him:

See, I will tarry in the plain of the wilderness, until there come word from you to certify me (2 Sam. 15:28).

We have another reference to the wilderness when Ziba, the servant of Mephibosheth, brought all kinds of food and even a couple of donkeys to David, this conversation between Ziba and David is recorded in 2 Sam. 16:2:

And the king said unto Ziba, What meanest thou by these? And Ziba said, The asses be for the king's household to ride on; and the bread and summer fruit for the young men to eat; and the wine, that such as be faint in the wilderness may drink.

And even later when Absalom was going to follow Hushai's counsel instead of Ahithophel's, Hushai told two priests to send David this message which is recorded in 2 Sam. 17:16:

Now therefore send quickly, and tell David, saying, Lodge not this night in the plains of the wilderness, but speedily pass over; lest

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the king be swallowed up, and all the people that are with him. So these verses all show that David had gone down to the desert in the vicinity of Jericho in his escape from Absalom, confirming the time when this Psalm was written.

The two Psalms, 55 and 63, would teach us that there were two main lessons that David learned, or learned in a deeper way, during the time of Absalom's rebellion against him. In Psalm 55 we saw that he was aware that he could not trust even Ahithophel, his dear friend with whom he had enjoyed fellowship, or that which he thought was fellowship, and this made him turn to the Lord to trust the Lord even more than he had before. And his message to every reader of the Psalm, to all who used to sing it, was:

Cast thy burden upon the LORD, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved (Psa. 55:22).

At the same time he was learning that lesson in a deeper way, his heart was turned with even greater love to the Lord Himself. For years David had been known as a man after God's heart. This was what Samuel told Saul after revealing to him that God had rejected him from being the King of Israel. Samuel's words are found in 1 Sam 13:14:

But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart, and the LORD hath commanded him to be captain over his people, because thou hast not kept that which the LORD commanded thee.

And when Paul was preaching in Antioch of Pisidia, briefly reviewing the history of Israel, he referred to what the Lord had told Samuel in these words:

And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will (Acts 13:22).

So it meant that David would do the will of God, which Saul had not done, but it also spoke of the great love which David had in his heart for the Lord. And, as strange as it might seem to us, the Lord used that time of Absalom's rebellion against his father, David, to cause David to love the Lord like he had never loved the Lord before.

You all will remember how, when our Lord Jesus Christ was asked which was the greatest commandment in the Law, He responded by saying,

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Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind (Matt. 22:37).

Now the Lord God would never have said that to Moses if this had not been what the Lord wanted primarily from all of us, His people. And for the Lord Jesus to repeat the commandment, meant that it was still what the Lord desires from us even today. And what the Lord does with us is designed to cause us to love Him more.

We know that when we love anyone, we love to be with him or her as the case may be. And we want to please those we love. And we not only love to talk to them, but it is easy for us to talk about that person we love to others. So, if the Lord has our love, He has everything else. We are motivated in all that we do by our love for the Lord. That is what this Psalm teaches us about David.

I almost gave my message today the subject, “A Day in the Life of King David.” You will notice that he said in verse 1, “early will I seek Thee,” and then in verse 6 he spoke about remembering the Lord on his bed, or beds, and meditating on the Lord in the night watches. “Early will I seek Thee” is one word in the Hebrew text, and it means *to be up early seeking the Lord*, actually at the dawning of the day. So even as he fled from Absalom, he was up early seeking the Lord, and his thoughts on his bed at night turned to the Lord. What an example David is for us to follow!

But now let us look at the Psalm more in detail.

In the first five verses we see:

### **I. DAVID’S PASSION FOR GOD AT THE BEGINNING OF THE DAY (Psa. 63:1-5).**

I believe we are to take this Psalm, not just describing how David lives in one particular day, but this was the way he lived each day.

Only three times does David mention “God” by name. Twice in verse 1, and once in verse 11. The first and third times are the word Elohim; the second time when David said, “Thou art my God,” he used the shorter form, El. But it all three the emphasis is not only upon the power of God, but upon His supreme power, His sovereign power. This was the God

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Who created the heavens and the earth, the God Who was sovereignly working all things out, as Paul said later, according to the counsel of His will. David felt great strength in his soul and great peace in his heart in turning away at the beginning of each day from the troubles that he faced, to let his soul drink in the glory of God, *his God! And there is in that name Elohim, the suggestion of more than one Person Who is deserving of the name, God!*

But not only did he feel this longing for God in his soul, but his whole body was consumed for this longing for God Himself.

And we could say that David's reference to "a dry and thirsty land, where no water is," was a reference to the desert where he was, but it was much more than that. It was descriptive of the world in which he lived. This world had nothing to offer him that could satisfy his soul. David had money. And he had power. Humanly speaking he had everything material that anyone could want, but he had learned that none of that could satisfy his heart. What he wanted to see the power and glory of God as he had experienced the presence of the Lord in the Holy Place. But we must be sure to notice that David was only longing for the Sanctuary because there he had met with the Lord, but what he really was seeking was the Lord.

As I read these verses I am reminded of a hymn written by Mr. A. B. Simpson who is credited with starting the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church. These are the words of the first stanza:

Once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord;  
Once it was the feeling, now it is His Word;  
Once His gift I wanted, now, the Giver own;  
Once I sought for healing, now Himself alone.

And the fourth verse has this message:

Once it was my working, His it hence shall be;  
Once I tried to use Him, now He uses me;  
Once the power I wanted, now the Mighty One;  
Once for self I labored, now for Him alone.

And then the chorus goes like this:

All in all forever, Jesus will I sing;  
Everything in Jesus, and Jesus every thing.

And why did David hunger so for the Lord? Verse 3 gives us his answer.

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(Read verse 3.) What did he mean by this verse, and especially by “His lovingkindness”? This is the word some of you have heard about, the Hebrew word *chesed*. He meant by this that the favor of God, His kindness and His mercy, were what give meaning to life, that life without God was empty and meaningless. And as long as he could have God’s blessing, he would be satisfied whatever his circumstances might be.

And then notice that the rest of verse 3, all of verse 4, and all of verse 5, are given over to David’s expressions of praise and worship for God Himself. All he wanted was the assurance that God’s blessing was upon him, and that he was pleasing to God.

Speaking of “marrow and fatness,” we have some words in Isaiah’s prophecy which will help us to understand what David meant. In Isa. 25:1 we read words very similar to what we have in this Psalm:

O LORD, thou art my God; I will exalt thee, I will praise thy name; for thou hast done wonderful things; thy counsels of old are faithfulness and truth.

But then in verse 6 of that same chapter we read:

And in this mountain shall the LORD of hosts make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined (Isa. 25:6).

“Marrow” speaks of the choicest of food, that which makes it tasty and delicious. And so David used that expression to express the complete satisfaction of his soul which thirsted for God.

But then we go on from the morning time to the night watches. Really we can say that this Psalm covers twenty-four hours of every day.

## II. DAVID’S DELIGHT IN GOD IN THE NIGHT WATCHES (Psa. 63:6-8).

As far as David’s relationship with the Lord was concerned, his nights were like his days. This does not mean that he did not have his trials. When he wrote this Psalm he was in one of the worst trials of his life. And it was especially severe because his son Absalom was involved, as well as Ahithophel whom he had trusted as a true friend, a supposed friend who became a traitor.

The Hebrew for “bed” is actually *beds* (plural) because he probably did

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not sleep in the same place two nights in a row, such was the danger that he faced. But wherever his bed was, he found God and had fellowship with Him through meditating upon Him. He had experienced the Lord's help many times before, and so he said, "In the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."

Doesn't this remind you of what the Lord said about Jerusalem in His lamentation over the city? He said,

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!

38 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

39 For I say unto you, Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord (Matt. 23: 37-39).

In Psalm 91, verses 1 and 4 we read these words:

1 He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

4 He shall cover thee with his feathers, and under his wings shalt thou trust: his truth shall be thy shield and buckler.

David wisely took every precaution to save his life, but above and below and through it all, he was trusting in the Lord to keep him in safety. But even there, according to verse 8, he continued in the night watches to do as he had done at the beginning of the day. (Read verse 8.)

Finally, in the last three verses we see:

### **III. DAVID'S HOPE CONCERNING THE OUTCOME (Psa. 63: 9-11).**

He was certain that what Absalom and Ahithophel were doing would ultimately be defeated. Notice that he did not say in these verses that he would necessarily be spared, but that his enemies would be defeated. As for himself, he would continue to rejoice in the Lord, and he knew that "swearth by him" which can mean either by the king or by God, taking an oath of allegiance to be faithful, would glory in the ultimate victory which God would give to those who were faithful to Him.

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Often it seems that wrong will prevail. We often feel that way ourselves, don't we? But ultimately God will give the victory. He is the supreme God of heaven and earth. Solomon wrote later that "there is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the LORD" (Prov. 21:30). And so David was on sure ground when he said, "But the King shall rejoice in God."

**Concl:** What an encouragement this Psalm should be to us, and perhaps what a rebuke as well because we don't seek the Lord as David did. I am reminded of the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Philippi as I read Psalm 63. Both of these men of God were in trouble: David fleeing for his life from Absalom, and Paul a prisoner of Rome. Neither really knew what the outcome would be. But both were trusting the Lord, both were seeking the Lord, and both were rejoicing in the Lord.

Matthew Henry said about this Psalm:

This Psalm has in it as much of warmth and lively devotion as any of David's Psalms in so little a compass. As the sweetest of Paul's epistles were those that bore date out of a prison, so some of the sweetest of David's psalms were those that were penned, as this was, in a wilderness (Vol. III, p. 467).

David said – (Repeat Psa. 63:1 and 2.) Paul said – (Repeat Phil. 3:20 and 21.)

May the Lord give each of us a true hunger to know our God and our Lord Jesus Christ, and to walk in daily fellowship with Them.

**JOYFUL PRAISE AND SERVICE**

## Psalm 100

**Intro:** This is a Psalm which lives up to the title that has been given to it.

It is, as it claims to be, “a Psalm of praise.” It is one of the shorter Psalms in the book of Psalms, but perhaps it is even more powerful because it is short. In verses 1, 2, and 4 we have no less than seven exhortations which tell us in one way or another that we are to praise the Lord. Verses 3 and 5, on the other hand, give us at least six reasons as to why we should praise Him.

The Psalm is addressed to “all ye lands,” meaning, of course, *all of the earth*. The singers are the people of God in Israel, and the purpose seems to be that all nations should recognize that there is only One Who can truly be called “God.” The Psalm was written by someone, possibly David. You will notice that the Psalm following Psalm 100 is a Psalm of David. So this may be another of David’s Psalms. But regardless who the human writer might be, the Holy Spirit is the Author of the Psalm. So this is not only the message of the people of Israel to the whole world, but it is God’s message to the whole world. Jew and Gentile are to be united in offering praise and thanksgiving to the Lord. And we know that such a day is coming.

It does not seem that the time of the writing is particularly important because its message is timeless! When verse 4 speaks of entering the Lord’s gates, and then moving into His courts, this Psalm must have been written for one of Israel’s special feast days. But the emphasis in the Psalm seems to be that this was the way the people were to live, always with the praise of God in their hearts, and on their lips. So we won’t try to pin this Psalm down to a particular time. It is good for all times.

But for now, let us look closely into the details of the Psalm for our own blessing and edification.

Note first:

**I. THE EMPHASIS ON THANKSGIVING (Psalm 100:1-2, 4).**

We see one exhortation in verse 1, two in verse 2 and four in verse 4. (Read them.)



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Whether we are reading the OT or the NT, we will find that probably the outstanding characteristic of those of us who claim to know the Lord is that *we are a thankful people*. And we are to offer our thanks *to the Lord*. And it is not to be just because we are supposed to be thankful, but we are to do it making “a joyful noise,” or shout! We are to do it “with gladness” and “with singing.”

And will you note that among these words, “make a joyful noise,” and that we are to come before the Lord “with singing,” and to “enter his gates with thanksgiving” and “into His courts with praise,” that we are to “be thankful unto Him, and bless His Name” – have you notice that we have the statement which seems to be different from the others, “Serve the Lord with gladness”?

Well, I doubt very much if it is different. Isn't it possible that the Holy Spirit and the Psalmist were telling us that one of the best and most important ways that we serve the Lord, is by praising Him? We are inclined to save that word “serve” for pastors, or elders and deacons, or Sunday School teachers, or Bible college and seminary teachers, or missionaries who have gone to some foreign country, but the truth is that we are all to serve the Lord. And one way we can serve the Lord whatever our age, whatever our circumstances might be, whatever time of life we might be in, wherever we are – one way in which we can all serve the Lord every day of our lives, is by praising Him! You can be flat on your back in a hospital room, and yet serve the Lord by praising Him. And that is just where I have heard some of the greatest expressions of praise that I have ever heard. More than once I have walked in on a patient in a hospital room to be told, “I was just lying here thanking the Lord for His goodness to me.” So when we are praising the Lord, we are serving the Lord, and let us always do it with gladness.

But notice another thing in verses 1, 2, and 4.

Our praise and thanksgiving and gratitude is always to be directed *to the Lord!* We need always to keep the Lord in mind, to set Him before us, as the OT saints did. He is to be the Object of our praise. All of our blessings come from Him, and they come day by day in big loads. If you and I were to spend the rest of our lives faithfully praising the Lord for all that He is, and for all that He has done, and for all that He will do in the coming days, we could not possibly catch up with all of the thanksgiving that

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we owe Him. Let's not focus so much on the human instruments that the Lord may use in our lives, that we lose sight of Him. (Read verses 1, 2, and 4 emphasizing "unto the Lord," etc.)

Right along this line look with me at the last of these exhortations, the one at the end of verse 4: "And bless His Name."

I am going to be pointing out in verses 3 and 5 in a few minutes what the Lord is to all of us, but His Name primarily is spelled out LORD in our Bibles – L-O-R-D, all in capital letters. It is His Name used hundreds of times in the OT, the Name ***Jehovah!*** In Isaiah 42:8 we read that the Lord said this:

I am the LORD [Jehovah]: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images.

As I have reminded you many times, this name is formed from the Hebrew verb *to be*, and it tells us that the Lord is a living God, He is without beginning and without end. He was never born, and He will never die. And through all of the years of time, in eternity before there was time, and in eternity after time no longer exists, the Lord is the unchanging God, ever the same that He always has been. You and I are changing constantly, but the Lord never changes. "Bless His Name!"

One of the Psalms we are learning is Psalm 103, and it begins like this:

Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name (Psa. 103:1).

Oh, how thankful we can be that the Lord is Who He is, and that He will never, never change! And the more we realize that, the more we will "bless" Him, which means to praise Him for all that He is. Let us adore Him, and magnify Him day after day, and many times each day.

But before we go on to see some of the reasons that we should praise Him, let me go back to a point I mentioned earlier. And it is this: The Psalm in verse 1 is addressed to all of the people of the earth: "All ye lands."

If we could make a trip and visit all of the nations of the earth, we would find people worshiping many different gods. None of them can talk. None of them can see. None of them can hear. None of them can walk. None of them is alive. And even in those religions where they worship someone who has lived in the past, all of them are dead now. What a dis-

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cordant sound our Lord hears arising from the earth today. And many people worship no god at all. Their gods are gold and silver, and the things which money will buy. Today as we meet to worship the Lord, and as others all over the earth meet to worship the Lord, we are greatly outnumbered by those who worship the god of pleasure. The angels of heaven worship the Lord unceasingly, but it is different on the earth. And yet as we have been learning in our Tuesday Class, the day is coming when the scene on earth is going to be drastically changed. Listen to what the Apostle Paul wrote as he was directed by the Holy Spirit:

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11).

It may be that even today, and I am sure that it is, that people in different places of the earth are hearing God as He speaks through His Word to their hearts, showing them that they are sinners in need of a Savior, and calling them to Christ. So the sound of praise for our Lord reaching heaven after today may be just a little louder than it has been up to now. The word “noise” in verse 1 actually means *a shout*. And yet the Lord’s hearing is so acute that He even hears our praises when they are only whispered to Him.

So far, all of this that we have seen in this Psalm has been wonderful, hasn’t it? But there are more good things to come from verses 3 and 5 where we have at least **seven major reasons why we should continually offer the Lord our praise.**

And all of this is preceded by the verb, “Know.” I doubt if there is a truth about the Lord in verses 3 and 5 that most of you don’t already “know.” But we need to know all of these truths better, and we need to profit from them more and more in practical ways. We can never exhaust what there is, and what has been revealed, about our Lord.

So I come to my second and final point:

## II. SEVEN REASON WHY WE SHOULD CONTINUALLY BE PRAISING THE LORD (Psa. 100:3, 5).

**A. Reason #1: Because “He is God” (v. 3).**

There are many who are called *gods*, but there is only One to Whom that Name rightfully belongs. There is only one God. To praise others who are called “god” is blasphemy. The world doesn’t like for us to talk this way, but it is the truth! And how we need to meditate on those three words, “He is God.” And to think that He is *our* God, not because we have chosen Him, but because He has chosen us, and brought us to Himself. This is His Name which speaks of His power, His all-power, the Sovereign of the whole universe. And what a difference this will make in the way we live, when we remember that our God is the true God, and the only One to Whom that Name belongs. All others are impostors.

Every single blessing that we have ever experience, or will ever experience, has come to us from God. And so He alone is deserving of our praise.

**B. Reason #2: He is our Creator (v. 3).**

“It is He that hath made us,” and then as some MSS read, “and we are His.” And yet practically no attention is given to this fact today. As you know in so many of our schools today honor is given to the ridiculous theory of evolution in preference to the total truth that the Lord is the Creator of heaven and earth. And the very fact that so many people do not believe that we are creatures of an almighty, sovereign God, explains why they live the way they do. Thinking that they have no God to Whom they are accountable, they do whatever they want to do. What a terribly sad and tragic awakening they are going to have when suddenly they find themselves standing before a holy God.

How thankful we should be that we know the God Who is not only our Creator, but the Creator of the heaven and the earth! And for this we need to praise Him.

**C. Reason #3: Because “we are His people,” and He is our King (v. 3).**

We are subject to His authority. He rules over us. He is our Protector. And it is also true that He delights in us. What He told the people of Judah through Isaiah, applies just as much to us today. I am referring to Isa.

43:1-2 where we read:

1 But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.

2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.

God delights in us. He orders our very steps, and He works all things together for our good. How blessed we are, and how thankful we should be.

**D. Reason #4: Because we are “the sheep of His pasture” (v. 3).**

This makes Him our Shepherd, to feed us, to protect us, to guide us, and to shelter us. We feed in “His pasture.” David said, “He maketh me to lie down in green pasture.” So the pasture is not only where we feed, but where we find rest.

The Lord Jesus said referring to us as His sheep and to Himself as our Shepherd:

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture (John 10:9).

How the Lord delights to feed us. His pasture is always green. Through His provision we are strengthened and find that our every need is met by our wonderful Shepherd.

But now we move on to verse 5 for the last three reasons that we should praise the Lord, and continually with great joy give Him our thanks.

**E. Reason #5: “For the Lord is good” (v. 5).**

This great truth is mentioned over and over again in the OT, isn't it? And because “He is good,” He does good. He works all things together for good. Cf. Nahum 1:7, “The Lord is good, a strong hold in the day of trouble; and He knoweth them that trust in Him.” It is God's goodness that brought us to repent of our sins. Cf. Rom. 2:4. And we have David's words concerning God's goodness in Psa. 27:13: “I had fainted unless I

had believed to see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living.”

And once again quoting David from his words in Psa. 31:19:

Oh how great is thy goodness, which thou hast laid up for them  
that fear thee; which thou hast wrought for them that trust in thee  
before the sons of men!

In Psalm 33:5 David said that “the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.”

There is no limit to the goodness of God, nor is it possible to measure His goodness.

**F. Reason #6: “His mercy is everlasting” (v. 5).**

Remember that God’s mercy has to do with relieving our miseries that we experience living in a fallen and depraved world. After Paul had described our miserable condition before we were saved, he said,

4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,

5 Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6 And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:

7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:4-7).

In Lamentations 3:22-24 we have what Jeremiah said about God’s mercy:

22 It is of the LORD’s mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not.

23 They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness.

24 The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him.

What a strong reason this is for us to be faithful in praising the Lord for His mercies! We may have our trials, but they are nothing like they could be and would be if we did not have God’s mercies upon us every day.

**G. Reason #7: “His truth endureth to all generations” (v. 5).**

This can mean that God’s Word endures to all generations, but since

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*goodness* and *mercy* are attributes of God, it is probably best to take “truth” as an attribute of God. In that case it means *faithfulness* which is often the meaning in the OT, and particularly in the Psalms.

In Psalm 89 the Lord was speaking about David, the King, and his children who would come after him. And the Lord said this:

30 If his children forsake my law, and walk not in my judgments;

31 If they break my statutes, and keep not my commandments;

32 Then will I visit their transgression with the rod, and their iniquity with stripes.

33 Nevertheless my lovingkindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail.

34 My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips (Psa. 89:30-34).

This is what the Psalmist meant when he wrote of God, “His truth [faithfulness] endureth to all generations.” As long as time goes on, man will be unfaithful, but the Lord will always be faithful. Cf. 2 Tim. 2:13.

And who has not relied on the truth of 1 Cor. 10:13, “There hath no temptation taketh you . . .”

In Psa. 92:1-2 we read this:

1 It is a good thing to give thanks unto the LORD, and to sing praises unto thy name, O most High:

2 To shew forth thy lovingkindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night,

**Concl:** Surely none of us can say, after seeing all of the evidence in this Psalm for praising the Lord, that we should not make thanksgiving one of our main habits and chief joys every day that we live. It ought to grieve us daily that the Lord receives so little praise for all the blessings that He is continually pouring out upon believers and unbelievers alike. But those of us who know the Lord have the most reasons for praising the Lord because in addition to all of the physical and material blessings that everyone has, we have all of the spiritual blessings which God has poured out upon us so abundantly in Christ. So let us live to praise the Lord. God has said,

Whoso offereth praise glorifieth me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God (Psa. 50:23).

**THE BENEFITS OF SALVATION**

Psalm 103 - Part 1

Psalm 103:1-5

**Intro:** In our study on Tuesdays of the Apostle Paul's letter to the church at Philippi, I had the opportunity this past week to comment on why the Apostle would say in chapter 3, verse 1, "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord," and then in chapter 4, verse 4, repeat himself, and intensify what he had said in chapter 3, verse 1. Most of you know what Phil. 4:4 is, but just in case there is anyone here who does not know that verse, this is what it says: "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice." One commentator in particular (and I am sure that there are more) raised the question, Why did the Apostle say, "Rejoice in the Lord" in 3:1, and then just a few verses later repeat himself saying that this should be done "always," and then say very emphatically, "And again I say rejoice"? He gave two reasons for what the Apostle Paul did.

He said, in the first place, that Paul repeated himself because it was so needed by believers, and secondly, because it was so hard to get them to do this.

As we come to Psalm 103 today we are immediately confronted with the same situation. Three times in verses 1 and 2 David said, "Bless." Then four times in the last three verses he did the same thing. And the fourth time he said the same thing that he did at the very beginning of the Psalm. He spoke to himself first and last. In fact, all three of the first three times David was talking to himself. (Read verses 1 and 2.)

So applying what the commentator said about Paul repeating himself in Philippians, we can say that here in Psalm 103 even David needed to be reminded of this. The angels needed to be reminded of this. All the hosts of God and all of His ministers needed to be reminded of this. And finally David spoke to himself again. Wherever you look in the whole universe, among all of God's creature, it is necessary to say again and again and again, "Bless the Lord." And when you have done it, you still find that it is extremely difficult, usually impossible, to get God's creatures to bless the Lord the way He deserves to be blessed.

And can't we all say that if David needed this exhortation, this "sweet singer of Israel," this "man after God's heart," this one who has given us



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so many wonderful psalms of praise, what can you and I say about ourselves? David would tell us that one of the greatest of all sins is man's failure to bless the Lord as the Lord deserves to be blessed.

But what was David talking about when he said, "Bless the Lord"? In answering this question we are dealing with:

### **I. THE THEME OF PSALM 103 (Psa. 103:1-2).**

But we should also include the last three verses of the Psalm.

The only "bless" that is not in the best Hebrew texts is the second one in verse 1, but our translators were certainly justified in putting it there because when David said at the beginning of the Psalm, "Bless the Lord," he obviously meant that we are to "bless His holy Name."

Every time David used this word "bless" in this Psalm he was using the Hebrew verb, *barak*. The Hebrew word for *knee* is formed from this verb. In fact, this verb is used in Psalm 95:6 where it is translated *kneel*.

O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker (Psa. 95:6).

So this word "bless" means that we are to humble ourselves before the Lord, and to worship Him, to praise Him, to adore Him. In a way, what He has done for us is secondary and almost incidental. We need to worship Him because of the altogether glorious God that He is! We would need to worship Him if He had never done anything for us. There is not a blessing He has given us that we are worthy of. So great is He that we can understand why the Jews were hesitant even to speak His Name. Moses was blessing the Lord when he led the children of Israel to sing after they had safely passed through the Red Sea,

Who is like unto thee, O LORD, among the gods? who is like thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? (Ex. 15:11).

And yet in spite of all that we know about the Lord, and then in addition to all that He has done for us, wouldn't you say with me today that *we need this?!!! How many times this week have we bent our knees before the Lord to worship Him, to adore Him, to praise Him?*

But the test will be this: How long will it be after we have looked into this

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Psalm together today before we do what David was telling himself to do as he wrote this Psalm? When you read this Psalm, and when I read it, are we really saying this to ourselves, like David was doing? One thing is sure, and that is that when we learn to bless the Lord, the last thing that we are going to want to do is to disobey Him and to displease Him. We all suffer from a lack of worshipping God. You are here today because you love the teaching of the Word, but we all need to be constantly asking ourselves, “What good is it doing me? Am I living the same way day after day in spite of all of the Bible reading I do, and in spite of all of the Bible teaching I hear? What good is all of this doing me? Is my life better this year than it was at this time last year, or the year before that? Do I really love the Lord just for what He is?” David felt rebuked by his own words, and we should feel rebuked too. And yet how hard it is to get ourselves to do it! We know that we should, but we just don’t do it.

Tonight I am going to be speaking on worship again, “The Church Worshipping.” I didn’t intentionally plan these two messages to go together, but maybe it is because the Lord is speaking to us. If we only could know how it pleases our Lord for us to spend time in His presence just worshipping Him, I am sure that we would be more inclined to respond positively to David’s words when we listen as he tells himself,

1 Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name.

2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits (Psa. 103:1-2).

There is a wonderful illustration of what it means to “bless the Lord” which has been given to us from the life of our Lord Jesus Christ when He was here on earth. I am thinking of the time that the Lord healed *ten lepers*. Let me read the story to you. It is found in Luke 17:12-19:

12 And as he entered into a certain village, there met him ten men that were lepers, which stood afar off:

13 And they lifted up their voices, and said, Jesus, Master, have mercy on us.

14 And when he saw them, he said unto them, Go shew yourselves unto the priests. And it came to pass, that, as they went, they were cleansed.

15 And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, and with a loud voice glorified God,

16 And fell down on his face at his feet, giving him thanks: and

he was a Samaritan.

17 And Jesus answering said, Were there not ten cleansed? but where are the nine?

18 There are not found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger.

19 And he said unto him, Arise, go thy way: thy faith hath made thee whole

Only one came back. “But where are the nine?”, the Lord asked. That one not only bent his knees, but he fell on his face before the Lord blessing the Lord for what the Lord had done for him.

David was another one who came back. And here he was calling upon everything in him to “bless the Lord,” to bless His holy Name. His holy Name helps us to understand Who our Lord really is. First that He is the Lord! And secondly that He is holy! And thirdly that He is the Source of every blessing that we have ever received. David called them “His benefits.” What did he mean by this word? The word actually means *a reward*. David spoke of this again in verse 10 when he said that the Lord had not “rewarded us according to our iniquities.” *In using this word David was speaking of the grace of God in His own life.* It was as though he said, “Don’t forget that when He should have judged us and left us to suffer the consequences of our sins, He redeemed us. This is how the leper felt when the Lord healed me. He knew that if the Lord had not healed him he would still be a leper facing death in the near future. But now all of that was changed.

David was saying to himself, “Don’t forget, David, how the Lord rewarded you with salvation, when he should have forever condemned you to the punishment you deserved because you are a sinner.” Think where you might be this very day if the Lord had not saved you. You didn’t work for the salvation that you have, and so it is not a reward in that sense. But it is God’s special gift to you and to me. Everything in us should be crying out for us to “bless the Lord,” and telling us that we should never, never forget His marvelous gift of salvation.

Having said all of that, David then mentioned *five special “benefits,”* or *rewards*, that God has in His marvelous grace, bestowed upon us. Let us see what they are.

## II. THE BENEFITS OF HIS SALVATION (Psa. 103:3-5).

Five times we have the word “who” here, but we could replace every one of them with “the Lord” which is given in verse 2 because each “who” refers to “the Lord.”

What did David list first?

**A. “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities” (v. 3a).**

This is what the Lord does, and He is the only One who can do it. He pardons us. He alone knows the offense of our sins, our depravity, our perversity. It is all pardoned. No charges will stand against us. They are all dropped. But not dropped because God has decided to excuse us, but because David knew that there was One Who was coming Who would take the penalty of our sins upon Himself, so the debt we owed would have been paid, and we could then righteously be forgiven by God.

This alone should keep us on our knees blessing God for His love and mercy and grace which has been showered upon us in Christ.

**B. “Who healeth all thy diseases” (v. 3b).**

We all know, don’t we, that physical diseases which lead to death, are the result of sin. We all know what it is to be sick. And here again we see the grace of God because it is amazing that we are not sick all of the time, and that our lives are not shorter than they are. And every time we get well, it is because of the goodness and grace of God.

But I think that David was looking forward to something else. Do you remember what Matthew had to say about the healing ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, quoting from Isaiah’s prophecy? Listen to these words:

16 When the even was come, they brought unto him many that were possessed with devils: and he cast out the spirits with his word, and healed all that were sick:

17 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses (Matt. 8:16-17).

This was probably a reference to Isaiah 53:4. It not only speaks of the healing ministry of our Lord while He was here on earth, but was a prophecy that the time was coming when there would be no more sickness,

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and no more death. When our Lord died on the Cross, He not only died to deliver us from sin and its penalty, but from the effects of sin. In Rev. 21:3-4 we read these words:

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

And then in Rev 22:1-3 we read these words:

1 And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb.

2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him:

And so it would seem that David was enabled by the Holy Spirit to look far, far ahead to the end times, and see that sickness and death would be no more when the full effects of the benefits of our salvation would be realized.

But there is more.

### C. “Who redeemeth thy life from destruction” (v. 4a).

The word “destruction” means *the pit*. There were many times that David had been spared from physical death as he fought many wars and faced his enemies on numerous occasions. And the Lord had spared him from death. But I wonder if again David were not given the understanding to be able to say that there was a glorious resurrection for each of us in the future. Or, as Paul would explain later, for living mortals there would be immortality, and for those who die before the Lord comes there will be a resurrection to incorruption. David was given the ability to see the whole picture as far as salvation is concerned. And so I believe that he was speaking of resurrection here. And didn't the Lord say,

25 Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that

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believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

26 And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.

Believest thou this? (John 11:25-26).

And we can add to those words what the Lord said on another occasion, “Because I live, ye shall live also” (John 14:19).

We have two more blessings to go.

**D. “Who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies” (v. 4b).**

Here, too, the Lord could have been speaking of the many ways in which he had seen the “lovingkindness and tender mercies” of the Lord in his life, but does the word “crowneth” suggest something even greater to come? The word “crowneth” can mean *to surround a person with “lovingkindness and tender mercies,”* but it can also mean *to give these as a crown,* an actual crown!

Perhaps David had in mind what Paul wrote about the future of our salvation when he said what he did in Ephesians 2:7:

That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

We have yet to see the fulness of all that is involved in our salvation, these benefits which God has so graciously lavished upon us in Christ.

And so we come to the fifth benefit which David mentioned. He could have gone on like Paul did in Ephesians 1, but these are enough to keep us blessing the Lord for the rest of our lives.

**E. “Who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle’s” (v. 5).**

The Hebrew word that is used here for “mouth” would probably be better translated, *outer adornment*. And “renewed” means *to be made new,* or *to be repaired,* even *to be rebuilt*. The idea is that of getting a fresh start.

Doesn’t this sound to you like David was even saying here that a part of our salvation, a very important part, will be that our bodies will be made new, as Paul told the Philippians, the Lord “shall change our vile body,

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that it may be fashioned like unto His glorious body, according to the working whereby He is able even to subdue all things to Himself" (Phil. 3:21).

Then Isaiah 40:31 will be more of a reality to us than ever before.

**Concl:** I confess to you that as I began to dig into the meaning of these verses, I never had the faintest idea that the Lord through David had here given us all of the glorious truth that is revealed in these statements, as David traced the blessings of his salvation from the forgiveness of his sins to the time when he would have a body like the body of the Lord. Perhaps you will remember what David wrote in Psalm 17, verse 15:

As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.

Oh, when we think of all of the blessings that are ours in salvation, the same blessings that David enjoyed and anticipated as he looked ahead, how can we keep ourselves from blessing the Lord daily for the marvelous gift of salvation?

One of the Psalmist, probably David, said in Psa. 116:12-13:

12 What shall I render unto the LORD for all his benefits toward me?

13 I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the LORD.

And then he added four verses later:

I will offer to thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the LORD (Psa. 116:17).

May all of us do the same.

Closing verse: Heb. 13:15:

By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

## SOME OF THE LORD'S WAYS

Psalm 103 - Part 2

Psalm 103:6-10

**Intro:** There are not many things, if any, that are more important for us as the children of God than that we learn what we can about *the ways of the Lord*. I say this because, as the Lord said in Isaiah 55:8 and 9,

8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the LORD.

9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

And so, for example, we find in the Psalms that David prayed, “Shew me thy ways, O LORD; teach me thy paths” (Psa. 25:4).

Recently we read in our Bible reading how Joshua charged the Reubenites, the Gadites, and the men from half of the tribe of Manasseh as he was sending them back to their families after they had assisted the other nine and a half tribes in conquering the land of Canaan. And this is what he said to them:

But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul (Joshua 22:5).

Quoting David again, this is what we read in Psa. 18:20-22:

20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands hath he recompensed me.

21 For I have kept the ways of the LORD, and have not wickedly departed from my God.

22 For all his judgments were before me, and I did not put away his statutes from me.

In these verses, as in what Joshua told the men of the two and a half tribes, we learn that the ways of the Lord are carefully laid out for us in His Word. And so it is very, very important that we know the Word of God.

And yet even with the Word, there are times when we are mystified, and perhaps confused and disappointed, when we have to confess that we do not understand what God is doing in our lives. The Apostle Paul



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expressed that when he how in Rom. 11:33,

O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!

And yet we read in Psalm 128:1, “Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways.” Here we see that a part of what it means to fear the Lord is the we walk in His ways.

One thing we can always be sure of, and this is brought out in Psalm 103, verse 6, and stated in Ps 145:17, is that “the LORD is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.”

It seems to me that while Psalm 103 is obviously a psalm of praise to the Lord with a strong emphasis upon His mercy, yet we see much in this Psalm which has to do with the ways of the Lord. In fact, what we can learn about the ways of the Lord in Psalm 103 is not confined to the verses I have chosen as my text for this service. But it certainly is the emphasis in verses 6 through 10..

It is set clearly before us in verse 7 of Psalm 103 where we are taken back to the life of Moses and to the time of the Exodus. The expression, “His ways” lit. speaks of the road that the Lord takes, the course of action which He follows, to accomplish His will. And we certainly realize as we read through Exodus and the rest of the book of Moses, that there were many, many times that Moses did not understand what the Lord was doing in His life. You will remember how Moses argued with the Lord when the Lord appeared to him in the burning bush to tell him that he was to go back to Egypt to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. But we also see in those books of Moses how Moses was gradually learning more and more about the ways of the Lord. That is a study all of its own, and we could easily digress from our study of Psalm 103 at this point to follow the teaching that is suggested to us by the words, “He made known His ways unto Moses.”

What David probably was referring to in particular was Moses’ prayer in Exodus 33. You will remember that Moses came down from Mount Sinai where the Lord had given him the Law, only to find the children of Israel worshipping the golden calf. Through Moses intercession the Lord spared the nation, but all of this brought to Moses the realization that he needed to know more about the Lord and His ways. And so this was his prayer

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which is recorded for us in Ex. 33:12-15. Let me read it to you.

12 And Moses said unto the LORD, See, thou sayest unto me, Bring up this people: and thou hast not let me know whom thou wilt send with me. Yet thou hast said, I know thee by name, and thou hast also found grace in my sight.

13 Now therefore, I pray thee, if I have found grace in thy sight, shew me now thy way, that I may know thee, that I may find grace in thy sight: and consider that this nation is thy people.

14 And he said, My presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest.

15 And he said unto him, If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence (Ex. 33:12-15).

And then Moses followed this request with another, “Show me thy glory” (Ex. 33:18).

To be learning the ways of the Lord, is to be learning more about the Lord. “That I may know Thee” from Moses is the equivalent of “that I may know Him,” from Paul in Phil. 3:10. Both men at the time they made these statements, were in trouble. But it was in their need that the Lord was teaching them His “ways,” and consequently they were growing spiritually, and growing in their fellowship with the Lord.

On the other hand, what does it mean that “the Lord made known . . . his acts unto the children of Israel”? Are we to understand that there is a difference between learning the Lord’s ways and seeing His acts? I believe that there is. Moses was learning how the Lord works; the children of Israel were only aware of God’s might power, *but they were not learning very much, if anything, about the ways of the Lord.*

That same difference is always to be seen among those of us who are the Lord’s people. Some learn, and learn a great deal, from the ways of the Lord with them. They are brought to know the Lord in a greater way because of what God is doing in their lives. Others aren’t learning anything, or at least they are not learning what they are supposed to be learning. They know that God is at work, but what it means probably has never occurred to them.

It is up to us to determine where we are with respect to learning the ways of the Lord. This is what Peter had in mind when he wrote at the conclu-

sion of his second epistle,

But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen (2 Pet. 3:18).

But now let us turn to Psalm 103, verses 6, and 8 through 10, to see what David had to say in these verses about the ways of the Lord. This is a subject which actually covers the whole Bible. The ways of the Lord are revealed in His commandments. And we can learn much about the ways of the Lord from His dealings with the people whose story is told on the pages of Scripture. But let us see what David had to say.

Because of the limited way in which David dealt with this subject, I have given my message the subject, “Some of the Lord’s Ways.”

And the first point that David made in verse 6 was that:

### **I. THE LORD EXECUTES RIGHTEOUSNESS AND JUDGMENT IN ALL OF HIS WAYS (Psa. 103:6).**

I would think that David was reverting back to the days of Moses.

To say that the Lord executed “righteousness” means that He always did the right thing, and never the wrong thing. Never, under any circumstances, can we charge God with sin. It doesn’t always look right to us, but it always is right. To charge God with unrighteousness would be to make Him less than God. There is always a reason, a good reason, a holy reason, behind what God does.

To say that He executes “judgment” means that He always does what He does at the right time, and in the right way. He is a God whose discretion is perfect. He never acts sooner than He should, nor does He act later than He should. For Him to execute “judgment” means He always is right on time with what He does.

The word “executeth” is an interesting word too. It means what we have seen about God’s righteousness and His judgment can be applied “in the broadest sense and widest application” (Strong). And it means that He always is effective in what He does. David was not saying that the Lord that the Lord *tries* to be righteous and discerning in what He does, but

that these words describe exactly what He does.

If you are reading your Bible through on our church Bible reading schedule, you have just finished reading Joshua in the OT. And do you remember some of Joshua's parting words to the people shortly before he died. He said this:

And, behold, this day I am going the way of all the earth: and ye know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof (Joshua 23:14).

And the Lord remained faithful in spite of the unbelief, the rebellion, the repeated disobedience of the people.

What does it mean to be "oppressed"? It can mean a number of things, but in the context of the exodus it means that regardless of what the nations that they faced might do to them, or how it might seem that their circumstances were a hindrance to them – like coming up to the Red Sea with no way to escape from Pharaoh and his army, or the lack of food, or the lack of water (things that plagued the people throughout their time in the desert). What a mighty, all-sufficient God we have! And let us remember that in spite of the approximately 3500 years from Moses' day to ours, God is exactly the same today that He was then – just as wise, just as powerful, just as able to do whatever He needs to do to take care of His people.

But let us go on to a second way of the Lord. This has to do with:

## **II. THE EXERCISE OF HIS MERCY (Psa. 103:8).**

This Psalm is all about the mercy of the Lord. See verses 4, 11, "pity" in verse 13, and verse 17.

You see this always in the ways of the Lord. "Merciful" means compassionate. "Gracious" is benevolent, "disposed to promote the prosperity and happiness of others. "Slow to anger" means longsuffering and patient before resorting to judgment. "Plenteous in mercy" means that He abounds in mercy, both as to quantity and quality.

All of this added up means that *the Lord is good*. In spite of the way He

may be provoked, His goodness and desire to bless far outweighs the judgment which people so often deserve.

I am sure that we have been impressed with these qualities in the Lord as we have experienced God's goodness in our lives from day to day. And we see evidence of this every day in our country when people go on defying God and living as though God does not even exist. These qualities in God have been supremely demonstrated since He "spared not His own Son," but laid upon Him the judgment which we should have had. In Israel's exodus from Egypt, their journey through the desert, and then even after they were in the land, provides illustration after illustration of the amazing goodness of God, His desire to bless rather than to judge.

But we also see the ways of the Lord:

### III. IN JUDGMENT (Psa. 103:9).

This verse has been translated many ways. One explanation is that God will not always put up with our disobedience and our sins, but the time always comes when the fury of His wrath is directed toward those who persist in rebelling against the Lord. That certainly is true, but it is doubtful if that is what David was saying here. Instead it seems, as Delitzsch has explained it:

He is not only long . . . in anger, *i.e.*, waiting a long time before He lets His anger loose, but when He contends, *i.e.*, interposes judicially, this too is not carried to the full extent, . . . He is not angry for ever (*The Psalms*, Vol. III, p. 122).

Notice that the verbs in verse 9 are future, indicating "what He continually will not do" (*Ibid.*)

There are four verses in Isaiah 54 which illustrate what this verse means.

5 For thy Maker is thine husband; the LORD of hosts is his name; and thy Redeemer the Holy One of Israel; The God of the whole earth shall he be called.

6 For the LORD hath called thee as a woman forsaken and grieved in spirit, and a wife of youth, when thou wast refused, saith thy God.

7 For a small moment have I forsaken thee; but with great mercies will I gather thee.

8 In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment; but with

everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the LORD thy Redeemer (Isa. 54:5-8).

— And so in confirmation of what verse 9 says, we have the truth expressed in verse 10.

#### **IV. THE LORD NEVER HAS DEALT WITH HIS PEOPLE AS THEY JUSTLY DESERVE (Psa. 103:10).**

In Psalm 130:3 there is a question which we all would do well to consider. This is it: “If thou, LORD, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?”

— Where would any of us be today if the Lord should match our sins with the full extent of the punishment we deserve? None of us would be able to stand before Him. And yet the Lord cannot overlook sin, and merely excuse it. He caused the full penalty of our sins to fall upon the Lord Jesus Christ. And so we are forgiven, not because we deserve it, but for Christ’s sake, and for His own Name’s sake, that His Name might be glorified, and that our hearts would be moved continually to thank and praise the Lord for what Delitzsch called, “the plenitude of absolutely free grace” (III, 303).

When Ezra learned after the people of the exile had returned to Jerusalem, that they were again mingling with the people of the land, intermarrying with them, and doing their abominable and idolatrous things, he tore his clothes, pulled the hair from his head and his beard, and sat down astonished until the time of the evening sacrifice. He had called together those who trembled at the word of the Lord. And then he began to pray.

As he fell on his knees, and spread his hands out toward the Lord, he said in prayer,

O my God, I am ashamed and blush to lift up my face to thee, my God: for our iniquities are increased over our head, and our trespass is grown up unto the heavens (Ezra 9:6).

And then after confessing the sins of the people he concluded his prayer with these words:

— 13 And after all that is come upon us for our evil deeds, and for our great trespass, seeing that thou our God hast punished us less than our iniquities deserve, and hast given us such deliverance as

this;

14 Should we again break thy commandments, and join in affinity with the people of these abominations? wouldest not thou be angry with us till thou hadst consumed us, so that there should be no remnant nor escaping?

15 O LORD God of Israel, thou art righteous: for we remain yet escaped, as it is this day: behold, we are before thee in our trespasses: for we cannot stand before thee because of this (Ezra 9:13-15).

Ezra confessed that the Lord had not only punished them less than they deserved, but He had graciously given them the deliverance that they were enjoying. Ezra could not understand why the people would go back to their sins after receiving such totally undeserved blessings from God.

This is what David was saying. God does judge sin, and often judges it severely, even to death. But with none of us, His people, has God ever punished us as we deserve to be punished because of our sins. If He did, all of us would be consigned to eternal separation from God. No one knew this better than David.

**Concl:** All of the truths in these verses are designed to create such an attitude of thanksgiving to the Lord, and love because of His grace, that instead of continuing in sin, our lips would cry out that the Lord would keep us from ever displeasing Him again in any way by sinning against His will. May it have that effect upon us. And may we exalt the Lord for His ways and His thoughts toward us.

**THE MEASUREMENTS OF GOD'S MERCY**

Psalm 103:10-14

**Intro:** Psalm 103 is a Psalm exalting the mercy of the Lord. Mercy is evident even when the word is not used. For example, when David said in verse 3, “Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,” that is mercy, the mercy of God. When he said in verse 7 that the Lord “made known His ways unto Moses, His acts unto the children of Israel, that is mercy. And it is certainly evidence of God’s mercy that, according to verse 10, “He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities,” that is mercy far beyond anything that you and I could possibly deserve. But then when we add to these, and many other of the verses, the times that David mentioned the mercy of God, as in verse 4, for example, the evidence of God’s mercy in this Psalm is overwhelming.

Sometimes the Hebrew word for mercy is not translated mercy, but the translators have used “lovingkindness” in verse 4. But there in the Hebrew text the word is *hesed*, the common word for mercy.

And then there are other words which fall into the family of words which are characterized by God’s mercy and His love for us, His people. I am thinking of “tender mercies” in verse 4, and “gracious” in verse 8. Or we have the word “pitieth” two times in vers 13.

All of this speaks most powerfully of God’s love for us, and we ought to be able to understand why David said over and over, to himself, and to all who would read this Psalm, that we need to bless the Lord with everything in us, and never should we forget what He had done for us. And in those times when we are inclined to feel “down” and discouraged, we need to feast our souls upon God’s mercy, His love, His grace, His kindness, and the pity that He had showered upon us. This will bring us up from the depths and fill our hearts with <sup>the</sup> praise and worship for the Lord which David was promoting.

Now in the Psalm David has mentioned several ways in which we can measure the mercy of the Lord. But you and I will soon realize that we are trying to measure what is unmeasurable. Man prides himself in being able to measure so many things, but measuring the mercy of God, or His love, or His grace, or His kindness, so far surpasses our ability to measure, that we are forced to admit that it cannot be done.



But let us see what David had to say about it.

I realize that I included verse 10 in my message last Sunday morning, but nevertheless I want to begin with it today. It is a verse which really ties together the verses which come before, as well as the verses which come after it.

And measure this, if you will.

### **I. THE WAY GOD HAS DEALT WITH OUR SINS (Psa. 103:10).**

Most of you have read the Psalms well enough to know that in many of the Psalms, many of David's Psalms, the writers cry out to God to take vengeance on others for the sins that they have committed. And we do this when someone else's sins have a bad effect upon us. And there is no doubt but there have been many times throughout history when the patience of God has been exhausted, and severe judgment follows.

But then we stop to think about "our sins"! And we, too, have to say what David said here. (Repeat v. 10.)

Back in 1826 a man by the name of William Plumer graduated from Princeton Seminary. He became a well known southern Presbyterian pastor and preacher, and spent the last thirteen years of his life teaching at Columbia Theological Seminary in South Carolina. In 1867 he published a book on the Psalms. It was over 1200 pages long, and it has taken its place among other commentaries on the Psalms as one of the greatest ever written.

This is what Dr. Plumer had to say about verse 10 in Psalm 103:

Our sins have been *many*; His judgments have been *few*. Our sins have been *heavy* as the sand of the sea; His corrections have been so *light* that, weak as we are, they have not crushed, but only humbled us. Our sins have been long continued and persistent; His strokes have been but occasional and of short duration. Our sins have been daily and very provoking; His patience has been every way amazing (p. 916).

And then concerning the last part of this verse where David said that the Lord has "not rewarded us according to our iniquities," Dr. Plumer said, "We have requited evil for good; He had returned good for evil" (*Ibid.*).

And then he quoted Calvin who said about the last statement of this verse, “He [the Lord] not only forbears to punish us, but bountifully maintains those whom He might justly destroy” (*Ibid.*).

How could you and I measure a mercy which would stand between us and what we justly deserve, and then bring with it blessings which go beyond anything that we would ever expect that we might receive? How could this be? There is only one answer, and that answer takes us to the Cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. You see, if we are going to measure the mercy of God concerning our sins, we have to measure the work that our Lord Jesus Christ did on the Cross, where He took the full punishment of our sins. His death reached back to the beginning of time, and extended to the end of time, and covered every person who ever has, or who ever will, turn to Christ for salvation.

Oh, the love that drew salvation’s plan;  
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man;  
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span  
At Calvary.

We need to bless the Lord, not only for what He has given us, but for what in His infinite mercy He has not given us.

But let us go on to verse 11 and see how we do in measuring what we find there.

## **II. THE DISTANCE FROM HEAVEN TO EARTH (Psa. 103:11).**

If we can measure the distance from to the earth, then we can measure the expanse of the mercy of God.

So far as I know, our scientists make no claim to be able to know how far it is from the farthest point of heaven to earth – and they probably never will be able to do that! God keeps some secrets to Himself. When we get to where the Lord is, we are probably going to be surprised by how little we know about the universe which God created – the heaven and the earth. But however “great” that is, that gives us some idea of how “great” the mercy of God is. Hengstenberg, an OT scholar, said, “The point of comparison is infinity” (quoted by Plumer, p. 916). Spurgeon quoted a David Dickson who said, “Our mind cannot find a comparison too large

for expressing the superabundant mercy of the Lord toward His people (Vol. II, p. 292).

In Psa. 36:5 we read, “Thy mercy, O LORD, is in the heavens; and thy faithfulness reacheth unto the clouds.” In Psa. 108:4 David wrote, “For Thy mercy is great above the heavens, and thy truth reacheth unto the clouds.”

In Psa. 57:9-11 we have these words:

9 I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people: I will sing unto thee among the nations.

10 For thy mercy is great unto the heavens, and thy truth unto the clouds.

11 Be thou exalted, O God, above the heavens: let thy glory be above all the earth.

And in that wonderful 55<sup>th</sup> chapter of Isaiah which we all love to refer to, you will remember that there we have Isaiah recording the words of the Lord Himself in verse 9 where He said,

For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts (Isa. 55:9).

So this was a favorite way the Scriptures have of showing how immeasurable the mercy of God is. And we can say that if God’s mercy is “so great,” then God Himself is even greater! Any idea that the mercy of God can be exhausted is ridiculous to say the least. God loves that word “so.” Our Lord said, “For God so loved the world . . .” And here we have a mercy that is “so great.” And it is reserved for those who fear the Lord, that is, who stand in awe of Him, worshiping Him, loving Him, trusting Him, because of His *so great mercy*.

### **III. THE DISTANCE BETWEEN THE EAST AND THE WEST (Psa. 103:12).**

Another way to measure, or to try to measure the mercy of God, is by calculating how far in His mercy He has removed our sins from us. And this verse says that it is “as far as the east is from the west.”

How far east do you and I have to go in order to reach “the west”? You

can go east forever, and always have more of the east before you. Turn around and go in the opposite direction, headed west, and the same is true. We never come to the end of west.

Many have remarked how thankful they are that David did not say, "As far as the north is from the south, so far . . ." "You reach a point going north where north and south meet. You pass the north pole, and you are headed south. You pass the south pole, and you are headed north. But there is no such meeting between east and west. Lucille tells me that it was Rudyard Kipling who said very correctly, "East is east, and west is west, and never the twain shall meet.

So there is no way to calculate how far our sins have been removed. The only thing we can say is that the distance is infinite, and that our sins are gone forever.

Spurgeon has a great comment on this verse which I want to read to you. He said,

What a load to move [speaking of our sins], and yet it is removed so far that the distance is incalculable. Fly as far as the wing of imagination can bear you, and if you journey through space eastward, you are father from the west at every beat of your wing. If sin be removed so far, then we may be sure that the scent, the trace, the very memory of it must be entirely gone. If this be the distance of its removal, there is no shade of fear of its ever being brought back again; even Satan himself could not achieve such a task. Our sins are gone, Jesus has borne them away (II, 280).

Now let us attempt to take the last measurement.

#### IV. THE PITY THAT A FATHER HAS FOR HIS CHILDREN

(Psa. 103:13-14).

DAVID'S GRIEF OVER  
ABSALOM - 2 SAM. 18:5,  
23.

One of the possible translations of this word "pity," is *to have mercy*. It means *to love, to have compassion*. This is the verb form of the noun in verse 4 which is translated "tender mercies."

Unfortunately we live in a day when many fathers are not true fathers. We as a nation have turned our backs upon God, and we have scorned His Word as being meaningless for us today, and so we are seeing the rapid

Psalm 103:10-14 (6)

disappearance of all that is holy and good and right. I was teaching at Multnomah years ago, and dealing with a passage which spoke of God as our heavenly Father. And I was seeking to get some truth out of that relationship that would be a blessing to the students in my class. But afterwards a young lady, a freshman, one who had recently been saved, came up to me and said something like this: "I hope God is not like my father." Many young people have to say that today. Their fathers may be cruel, or neglectful, unsupportive, and so their children are left with a lot of bad memories of their growing up years. How thankful we can be if we had a good father from which we can learn to understand what it means that God is our Father. There is always a limit to what we human fathers can do, but I am sure that I speak for all of you who are fathers when I say that we would do anything that we can do to meet the needs of our children.

You will probably remember what our Lord said to fathers during His Sermon on the Mount. Here are His words:

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

10 Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

11 If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him? (Matt. 7:9-11).

Annie Johnson Flint who is known for her Christian poetry, wrote a poem which afterwards was set to music. Of all of the songs my brother-in-law, Don Rutledge, sings, I don't know of any that I would rather hear him sing than this one. Here are the words:

He giveth more grace when the burdens grow greater;  
He sendeth more strength when the labors increase.  
To added affliction He added His mercy;  
To multiplied trials, His multiplied peace.

When we have exhausted our store of endurance,  
When our strength has failed ere the day is half done,  
When we reach the end of our hoarded resources,  
Our Father's full giving has only begun.

His love has no limit; His grace has no measure;

Psalm 103:10-14 (7)

His pow'r has no boundary known unto men.  
For out of His infinite riches in Jesus,  
He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again.

Why do we have such a heavenly Father? Verse 14 gives us the answer.  
(Read v. 14.)

Our God is the most wonderful Father we could possibly have. Why?  
And why is He always giving His mercy, His grace, His peace, to us?  
Because He knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.”

Again quoting Plumer:

This knowledge of God [*i.e.*, the knowledge that He has of us] embraces our constitutional temperament, the feebleness of our understanding, the strength of our fears, the shattered state of our nerves, the violence of temptations, our readiness to sink into melancholy, and everything calling for tender compassions (p. 916).

**Concl:** Have you ever talked to a genuine Christian who has told you of some blessing the Lord has forgotten to give us? No, you haven't because He hasn't forgotten a thing!

Remember how our Lord encouraged us to trust our heavenly Father with the words we find in Matt. 6:31-33:

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

**“AS FOR MAN”**

Psalm 103:15-18

**Intro:** There are many interesting details found in Psalm 103, but undoubtedly the most prominent is the contrast which David drew between the Lord and man. And that contrast is the greatest between verses 16 and 17. Man is mortal and quickly forgotten, according to verse 16, but the Lord is as eternal as His mercy.

But in addition, man is a sinner, according to verses 3 and 10 and 12. Man is also, according to verse 3, subject to sickness and death. In verses 4 and 5 we see man's dependency upon the Lord. Man's undeserving character is seen throughout the Psalm by David's emphasis upon the mercy of God. Man is a created being, according to verse 14, but the Lord is the Creator. The Lord is sovereign in heaven and earth, according to verse 19, while man, according to verse 6 is often oppressed, and can do nothing about it. And so it is no wonder that David called upon his soul, *i.e.*, himself, to bless the Lord with all that was within him.

*David learned from Micah and from the Lord*  
 Many feel that David had Psalm 90 in mind as he wrote this part of Psalm 103 which has to do especially with man. Please turn with me to that Psalm, and follow in your Bibles as I read the first ten verses. (Read Psa. 90:1-10.)

Another similar passage is found in Isa.40, verses 6-8, where we read:

- 6 The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry? All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field:  
 7 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: because the spirit of the LORD bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass.  
 8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

In the NT we have this same emphasis upon man in the epistle of James, chapter 4, beginning with verse 13:

- 13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:  
 14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away. (Cont'd on p. 2)

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin (James 4:13-17).

And Peter does the same, contrasting the transitory character of man with the eternal Word of the Lord:

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you (1 Peter 1:24-25).

Probably one reason the Bible is not more popular with people in the world is because it pictures man as he is, finite, corrupt, sinful, and as fragile as a blade of grass, or as the flowers in Spring which come out in their splendor, but in just a few days are gone – and those same flowers don't come back. Man likes to feel he is important, that he is self-sufficient, and practically immortal. Man is inclined to deify man, and to relegate God to even less than the flowers of the field. Those things which man is inclined to glory in are nothing.

Verse 14 was the final verse of my text for last Sunday in which David speaking of himself and every other human being, said that the Lord “knoweth our frame; He remembereth that we are dust.” One reason that a lot of men are inclined to put man on a pedestal, is because they don't know where man came from. He did not evolve; he was created. And the account of his origin is given in Genesis 2:7:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.

And when the Lord pronounced judgment on Adam after he had sinned, the Lord said this: “For dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return” (Gen.3:19b). So, as attractive as some people might be, they are only a temporary bi-product of dirt! And as I once heard a pastor say, “God doesn't expect anything out of dirt!”

Even when we consider men and women in their youth, where their powers are at their peak, again Isaiah reminded us that

Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall (Isa. 40:30).



So if you want to know the truth about us human beings, don't read the psychological journals, nor the sports magazines, but read the Bible. That is where you will find the truth. We are actually a very pitiful lot. – all of us!

And so this morning we come to those words in verse 15, and I have taken them not only as the subject of my message, but now as the first point:

### I. "AS FOR MAN" (Psa. 103:15-16).

Since the Lord knows "our frame," meaning that *He knows how He made us*. We may fool ourselves, but we never fool the Lord. We may adorn ourselves with all kinds of ornaments and fine clothing, but the Lord knows that we are just dressed up dust! The Lord has a good memory about things that some men never have known, and others have forgotten.

And so he went on in verse 16 to say very abruptly, "Man, his days, as grass." The first eight words in our English text are the translation of just three words in Hebrew. It doesn't take the Spirit of God long to describe what man is like. And the word that David used here for "man" is the Hebrew word, *enosh*, the name which Seth gave to his son. Fausset said in his commentary that it is from a verb which mean *to be desperately diseased*, a reference as Fausset said, to "the humanly incurable misery into which man had fallen by sin" (III, 322).

Man "flourisheth." He can sparkle and shine, but it is over and gone as quickly as the flowers of the field. David is probably speaking here of man's glory in the light of eternity.

GO TO P. 5

Perhaps you remember that the Apostle Paul, in speaking of athletic competition said, "Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible" (1 Cor. 9:25). And then in his last epistle, written shortly before his death, he told Timothy:

6 For I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand.

7 I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith:

8 Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and

not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing  
(2 Tim. 4:6-8).

And to Paul's words let me add what the Apostle Peter said about that which does not fade away. He referred to this twice in his first epistle. First, 1 Peter 1:3-5:

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

And second, 1 Peter 5:1-4:

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3 Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away

One of the dangers that we all face, living in this world, is seeking the things of the world instead of the things above. Remember Paul's words to the church at Colosse:

1 If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

2 Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth.

3 For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

4 When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory (Col. 3:1-4).

The best that the world has to offer is so far inferior to what we have in the Lord, that it is impossible to compare them. And as far as the earth is concerned, nothing is more temporary than we are. Isaiah has given us the word,

Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils: for wherein is

he to be accounted of? (Isa. 2:22).

Verse 16 of our text describes how quickly even the greatest of men are gone, gone, never to come back. Others may come in his place, but he is forever removed from the earth. It makes no difference whether “the wind” is a gentle breeze, or a blast of the hot desert wind, the result is the same.

That is all that can be said of man. But now we come to the glorious contrast. It is to be seen in:

## **II. THE MERCY OF THE LORD (Psa. 103:17-18).**

If it were not for the mercy of the Lord, life would be an unbearable burden, and a hopeless tragedy. What devastation sin has brought into any existence upon the earth! The only way a difference can be made is by “the mercy of the Lord.” The Lord’s mercy is His answer to the misery that sin has brought into our lives, and into the whole world. His mercy is seen in the forgiveness of our sins, in the healing of our diseases, in the deliverance the Lord provides from the power of death, and in the outpouring of His blessings. We learned from verse 11 that it is impossible to measure the quantity of mercy available from God. Jeremiah in his Lamentations tells us that God’s mercies and His compassion “are new every morning” (Lam. 3:22, 23). And David said that they were “from everlasting to everlasting,” *from eternity to eternity, and all through time*. It is impossible to use up the mercy of God. And never was that mercy displayed in any greater way than in the coming of God’s Son to offer Himself as a sacrifice for the sins of His people! And even when we as believers sin, God in His mercy forgives us, and keeps us, and restores us to fellowship with Himself. But it is only expressed in its fulness “upon them that fear Him,” those who are trusting Him and respect Him and His Word by watching their lives ever so carefully lest they grieve Him in any way.

When we see how things are going in our country in these days, our thoughts are continually on our children, and their children, and their children, as so on until the Lord comes. What about them? The Lord’s mercy is still available to them. Salvation for them will be exactly what it has been, and still is, for us. The fulness of God’s mercy will continue on for ever and for ever! The mention of “righteousness” in verse 17 speaks

of justification. It will come to our children and grandchildren just as it has to us, by the everlasting mercy of our great and faithful God.

But how will the redeemed be identified? Are children saved just because their parents are saved, and does that salvation pass on to succeeding generations handed down from the parents? No, the faith of the children and grandchildren is expressed just like the faith of the parents has been expressed, “to such as keep His covenant, and to those that remember His commandments to do them.” The evidence that anyone is saved, is by obedience to the Word of God. We don’t obey God in order to be saved, or in order to keep our salvation in effect. We obey God because we are saved, and because we love Him and want to spend our lives doing His “good, and acceptable, and perfect will”(Rom. 12:2).

On fearing the Lord, see verses 11 and 13, and then 17. To fear the Lord is to reverence Him as the holy God that He is. It is to trust Him. It is seen in the desire to please Him, and to glorify Him. Spurgeon believed that this term, the fear of the Lord, described the sum total of what it means to know the Lord, to love Him, and to live for Him. It is to trust Him.

So by God’s mercy a life that would otherwise be without meaning, is full of the blessing of the Lord and joyful fellowship with Him.

**Concl:** And so we see that there is hope in the midst of what Delitzsch calls “this plant-like, frail destiny” which offers us no hope at all. It is to be found in the mercy of God. None of us deserves what God in His mercy has provided for us – salvation by faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible makes it very clear that the person without Christ has nothing to look forward to but death, and then judgment. Hebrews 9:27 tells us that “it is appointed unto men once to die, and after this the judgment.” And this judgment will be eternal and terrible beyond anything that we can imagine. But on the other hand, by the mercy of God, although we deserve judgment too, yet God has been pleased to change the destiny of all who are trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ. This is how the Apostle Paul expressed this glorious prospect in his letter to Titus:

3 For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another.

4 But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward

man appeared,

5 Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost;

6 Which he shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour;

7 That being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life (Titus 3:3-7).

How merciful it is of God to give us a Psalm like this so that we will understand truth which we can only find in the Word of God – that our days are like grass, and like wild flowers in the field.. Our lives here on earth are like nothing in comparison with eternity. What every person needs, and needs desperately, is the mercy of the Lord! And how thankful we can be that it is available, inexhaustible mercy, mercy sufficient to save even the chief of sinners.

However, there is no other way to God except by His mercy. We can't earn it. We can't buy it. And we certainly do not deserve it. It can only be ours through the Lord Jesus Christ. Most of you are enjoying that mercy today. You have come to Christ. You are trusting in Him. Your eternal salvation is secure.

But perhaps there is someone here, or several someones, who have not come to Christ. You are still in your sins. Don't put off until tomorrow what you know you should do today. Remember God's portrait of all of us, like grass, or like a flower, which is here now, but soon gone, and gone forever. Where will you go when you die? It will either be heaven, or hell. And if you do nothing about your relationship to Christ, you will certainly be in hell eternally. After you die, it will be too late to change. The Word says, "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation" (2 Cor. 6:2). So come to Christ now. "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

## THE LORD'S THRONE

### Psalm 103:19-22 – Part 5 (Final)

**Intro:** All through this Psalm we have been told many wonderful things about “the Lord.” Eleven times in the Psalm we find Him referred to as “the Lord.” See verses 1, 2, 6, 8, 13, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22 (2x). But in addition to His Name, we have pronoun after pronoun which David has used to refer to this same “Lord.”

We have “His holy Name” in verse 1. We read of “His benefits” in verse 2. And then “Who...who...Who...who...Who in verses 3, 4 and 5 – all of them referring to “the Lord.”

Then look at verse 7: “He...His ways...His acts...” In verse 9: “He...he... His anger. It is “He” again in verse 10, speaking again of the Lord. In verse 11 it is “His mercy toward them that fear Him.” “He” is spoken of again in verse 12. In addition to “the Lord” in verse 13 we have “them that fear Him.” Verse 14 uses “He” twice, speaking of the Lord.

Only verses 15 and 16 have nothing about the Lord, and that is because there David was speaking about men.

But we get back to the Lord in verse 17, and to “His righteousness.” In verse 18 we have “His covenant,” and “His commandments.” In addition to “the Lord” in verse 20 we have “His angels” and “His commandments” and “His Word.” In verse 21, “the Lord,” and then “His hosts...ye ministers of His...His pleasure.” And in verse 22 “the Lord” twice, and “His works” and “His dominion.”

Psalm 103 is full of “the Lord.” Take the Lord out of this Psalm, and you would have only two verses left: verses 15 and 16. That is like our lives, isn't it? If you take the Lord out, there isn't anything left. We are here today, and gone tomorrow, and soon forgotten. But it is the Lord Who was here yesterday, and today, and He will be here for all of the tomorrows that are yet to come.

But it is not just that the Lord is mentioned over and over again in the Psalm, but it also has to do with the wonderful things that David had to say about Him, things that you could not say about anyone else! I would

like to challenge you to go through the Psalm asking yourself as you go along, where would you find a person who could do for you what the Lord has done, is doing, or will do. And then ask yourself what you would do if any of these blessings and promises were taken away from you. Is it possible that we could possibly “forget all His benefits”? And the answer to that question is, “Yes, amazingly, it is possible!” Plumer, in his commentary, quoted a man by the name of Stevenson who said that “ingratitude is Satanic” (p. 917). And it really is! We can understand why David began this Psalm by calling upon himself *first* and *last* to bless that Lord with his whole soul – and then asked all of creation to join with him in blessing the Lord. Obviously He must bless us before we will bless Him, but even with all of the blessings we are continually receiving from Him, none of us praises the Lord the way we should. If we were more conscious of His blessings, we probably would devote all of our prayers to thanking Him for what He has done for us, and remembering His blessings would probably make us feel ashamed that we even ask Him for more!

But how do we know that His blessings may not stop, or that He might start to take away what He has given us. Or what if either nations or fallen angels would try to set up obstacles to keep the blessing of the Lord from getting through to us? Man by his repeated involvement in things that are abominable in the sight of God, is seeking to close the door to any further blessing from God. Will he be able to do it?

**This is where our text for today ought to bring great peace to our hearts, and great praise to the Lord from everything that is in us. And I am referring to the marvelous truth that is stated in Psalm 103, verse 19. (Read.) This is why we know that for those of us who know and love the Lord, the blessings will never stop. And I am not talking about fiscal prosperity, but I am talking about the blessings that are mentioned one by one throughout this outstanding Psalm.**

Let me remind you of those inspired words in the epistle of James where he reminded us about the source of our blessings. I am referring to James 1:17:

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning

What this verse means in addition to the fact that our blessings come from

the Father in heaven, is that He is not subject to change, and there is not even the slightest shadow of any evidence that He is turning from what He always has been into someone else.

Now this is confirmed in our text. Let us think about the title, or Name that David gave to God here eleven times in this Psalm.

### **I. OUR GOD IS “THE LORD” (Psa. 103:19a).**

I want to repeat what I have said many times from this pulpit because it is so important to see this emphasis on “the Lord” all through this Psalm. It is *Jehovah*. And the translators of the KJV have emphasized this by printing “LORD” all in capital letters. It is a Name which indicates that our LORD is ever-living and never-changing. He never had a beginning, and He will never die. And from eternity to eternity He is ever the same loving, holy, mighty, infinitely wise, ever-present, and ever-merciful God. We learned that in verse 17, didn’t we?

Henry Lyte, back in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, wrote the words to that wonderful old hymn, “Abide with Me.” In many ways it expresses the truth of Psalm 103. The second verse goes like this:

Swift to its close ebbs out life’s little day;  
Earth’s joys grow dim, its glories pass away;  
*Change and decay in all around I see;*  
*O Thou Who changest not, abide with me.*

Verse 3 gives us these words:

I need Thy presence every passing hour;  
What but Thy grace can foil the tempter’s power?  
Who like Thyself my Guide and Stay can be?  
Through cloud and sunshine, O abide with me.

And then these are the words of verse 4:

I fear no foe, with Thee at hand to bless:  
Ills have no weight, and tears no bitterness.  
Where is death’s sting? Where, grave, Thy victory?  
I triumph still, if Thou abide with me.

There isn’t an area of our lives that is not affected in a most blessed way by the fact that “the Lord” is *our Lord* – your Lord, and my Lord!

But now let us move on in verse 19 to notice what the Lord has done.



## II. HE HAS PREPARED HIS THRONE IN THE HEAVENS (Psa. 103:19b).

If He has a throne, then He must be a King. And if His throne is in the heavens, then it has to be higher and greater than any other throne. “Prepared” means that He has *set it up, it stands, it is secure*. These meanings show that His throne is consistent with His Name.

But notice the last part of the verse: “And His kingdom ruleth over all.”

David was not speaking of the reign of Christ on the earth. His throne then will be on the earth where He will rule with a rod of iron. No, this in Psalm 103:9 is a majestic statement of the absolutely sovereignty of our Lord, Jehovah. Governmental leaders all over the world in every generation think that they are in control, that they are in charge. And they think that in the pride of their hearts because they haven’t read the Word of God. As the Apostle Paul said in Eph. 1:11, God is “working all things after the counsel of His own will.” And Psalm 2, verses 2 through 5 tells us this:

- 2 The kings of the earth set themselves, and the rulers take counsel together, against the LORD, and against his anointed, saying,
- 3 Let us break their bands asunder, and cast away their cords from us.
- 4 He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision.
- 5 Then shall he speak unto them in his wrath, and vex them in his sore displeasure.

Nebuchadnezzar, the great king of Babylon, had to learn this truth the hard way. While he was glorying in His great power and all that he had accomplished, this is what happened:

- 31 While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.
- 32 And they shall drive thee from men, and thy dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field: they shall make thee to eat grass as oxen, and seven times shall pass over thee, until thou know that the most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will.

33 The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.

34 And at the end of the days I Nebuchadnezzar lifted up mine eyes unto heaven, and mine understanding returned unto me, and I blessed the most High, and I praised and honoured him that liveth for ever, whose dominion is an everlasting dominion, and his kingdom is from generation to generation:

35 And all the inhabitants of the earth are reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou? (Dan. 4:31-35).

So what does this mean for us, the people of God? It means that the Lord is still on the throne, that He has not changed and will not change, that He stands by His promises, and that He will never withdraw from us any of the many blessings that He has given us. And what is just as glorious, it means that no man, no nation, or group of nations, can stand in the way of our Sovereign Lord as He moves to fulfill all of His purposes.

This is truth which most of our governmental leaders around the world today are totally ignorant of. They all have their plans, not knowing what the Psalmist said in Psa. 33:10-11:

10 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

And in Prov. 19:21 we have these words from Solomon:

There are many devices in a man's heart; nevertheless the counsel of the LORD, that shall stand.

It is no wonder that the Psalm ends as it began, only even more extensive as David calls upon all creation to praise, to bless, the Lord.

And so we have:

### **III. THE CALL TO PRAISE (Psa. 103: 20-22).**

#### **A. First, to the angels (v. 20).**

They “excel in strength,” as the strongest of all of God’s creatures, but they use their strength, not against the will of God, but doing the Lord’s commandments, and they always are responsive and obedient to the Word of God.. They have been greatly blessed, and so they owe the Lord the praise of their hearts.

**B. Second, the hosts of the Lord (v. 21).**

Probably what David had in mind as he wrote of “the hosts of the Lord,” is explained for us in Psa.. 148:2-6:

- 2 Praise ye him, all his angels: praise ye him, all his hosts.
- 3 Praise ye him, sun and moon: praise him, all ye stars of light.
- 4 Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens.
- 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD: for he commanded, and they were created.
- 6 He hath also stablished them for ever and ever: he hath made a decree which shall not pass.

The sun and moon and stars glorify God by their very existence, and by the place that they fulfill in the universe which God has created. A parallel passage is in Psa. 19:1-3:

- 1 The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork.
- 2 Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge.
- 3 There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard.

Psa. 98:7-9 gives us the same theme:

- 7 Let the sea roar, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein.
- 8 Let the floods clap their hands: let the hills be joyful together
- 9 Before the LORD; for he cometh to judge the earth: with righteousness shall he judge the world, and the people with equity.

You have this theme even in the prophets. Cf. Isa. 44:23:

Sing, O ye heavens; for the LORD hath done it: shout, ye lower parts of the earth: break forth into singing, ye mountains, O forest, and every tree therein: for the LORD hath redeemed Jacob, and glorified himself in Israel.

Our ears are not tuned to hear such praise, but it is very clear to the Lord in heaven, that all of creation sings His praise.

And next, so as not for any part of creation to be overlooked in blessing the Lord, David called upon:

**C. Third, all the works of the Lord (v. 22a).**

What is left? The birds of the air, the animals on the land, and the fish in the waters of the earth – the seas, the rivers, the lakes and streams. But here it would seem that David was calling upon all of creation in a mighty chorus of praise to the Lord. The Lord’s “dominion” would be every part of His realm, His kingdom – from the heavens, on the earth, and in the waters which cover the earth. That praise is being offered even now, even as men ignore the Lord and give the glory for all of the wonders of the whole universe to a “big bang” which no one can really explain, nor tell how it brought into existence the marvels of our God-created universe.

And then David concluded with himself.

**D. David’s praise (v. 22b).**

Thus, as many have point out, *the Psalm ends as it began*.

Fausset’s comment on this last statement of the Psalm, is this:

Thou who hast received so many and so great proofs of God’s favor canst not be silent when all the rest of God’s creatures praise Him (III, 323).

**Concl:** And neither can we!

Matthew Henry said,

Blessing God and giving Him glory must be the alpha and the omega of all our services. . . . When we have done ever so much in the service of God, yet still we must stir up ourselves to do more. God’s praise is a subject that will never be exhausted, and therefore we must never think this work done till we come to heaven, where it will be for ever in the doing (III, 626).

Let each of us go back over the Psalm, not just once, but over and over again, making David’s praise our praise, as we seek never to forget the blessings God has so richly and constantly poured out upon us.