

Bless the LORD

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 February 2019

Preacher: Ray Park

[0 : 00] Psalm 103. I was super excited when I saw that this is the psalm. That's Psalm 103. It's one of my faves. Alright, Psalm 103, verse 1.

Praise the Lord, my soul. Hey, Jan. I'll switch to ESV. Sorry, that's going to be. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me.

Bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits, who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagles. The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the people of Israel. Psalm 103. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.

He will not always chide, nor will He keep His anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is His steadfast love toward those who fear Him.

[1 : 14] As far as the east is from the west, so far does He remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear Him. For He knows our frame, He remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass, He flourishes like a flower at the field, for the wind passes over it and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. But the steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, to those who keep His covenant and remember to do His commandments.

The Lord has established His throne in the heavens, and His kingdom rules over all. Bless the Lord, O you angels, His angels, you mighty ones who do His word, obeying the voice of His word.

Bless the Lord, all His hosts, His ministers who do His will. Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul. So I think Psalm 103 is an amazing psalm. It covers wide breadth and lots of depth in just a few verses. It talks about faith and forgiveness, it talks about sickness, health, human mortality, and God's immortality.

[2 : 25] And the key theme of the psalm is God's steadfast love experience through His benefits toward us. First to ourselves as the individual, and then to the community around us, and then to finally to all of creation.

So let's look at the first five verses first. First, it starts off saying in verse one, Bless the Lord, O my soul. So thanks for choosing that song, Brian.

That's a good one. Yeah. The English word bless carries the sense of giving a gift or giving something of benefit to someone. But the Hebrew word doesn't have that sense.

So I made the mistake of reading from NIV because we usually go from ESV, and they translate it praise. So it's more this idea of praising or worshiping. So it's not like we're giving something to God, but we're saying let's praise or worship God.

Soul refers to one's total being. We're made of multiple parts, so it's praising God with our physical part, our hands, our feet, our mouths, our minds, our mental part, our reason and our thoughts.

[3 : 31] And then third, our emotions, our loves, our desires, our passions and pursuits. So this is a self-exhortation. The psalmist, it's listed as David is speaking to himself, and he's saying forget not all his benefits to me, for he who forgives my iniquities and my diseases.

And of course, praise doesn't come out of anywhere, but as David says, we need to not forget what God has done for us. That's the negative way of saying remember, remember what God has done for us.

So yeah, David talks about forgiveness, healing, redemption, being satisfied, and there are all kinds of ways that God blesses us.

So I think a good thing for us to remember is how has God blessed us, right? It could be some very small ways, like being healed of an illness. We had a cold or a flu recently.

I know we've had something go through our house in the past couple weeks. Maybe there's some financial need that God has provided, right? You can thank him for that. The forgiveness that God has given.

[4 : 42] Is there a time recently where you've disregarded God, chosen not to follow him, and you've turned away from your sin and come to him and confessed it, and you've experienced that forgiveness, that weight being dropped, and the joy of restored fellowship with God, right?

So lots of things to remember that God has done to us personally, and we can thank him for. The second section, verses 6 through 14, talks about God's steadfast love to his community, right?

So God's steadfast love to the individual extends out to the people. Verse 8 says, The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding, and steadfast love. This repeats Exodus 34, where God reveals himself to Moses.

Exodus 34, chapter 34, verses 5 through 6. Hey guys. It says, The Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord.

The Lord passed before him and proclaimed, The Lord, the Lord, God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding, and steadfast love and faithfulness. We're doing that in Psalm 103. So, just to repeat, the key theme of Psalm 103 is God's steadfast love to us.

[5 : 55] And so, what does that mean? What is God's steadfast love? It can be translated in different ways, steadfast love, loving kindness, mercy, things like that. The Hebrew word is hesed, and here's an excerpt from a Bible dictionary that I have at home.

It is how the Lord feels and acts toward his people. Hesed holds together the ideas of love and loyalty with a strong emphasis on the practical more than the emotional sides of these ideas.

It is the loyal love that is displayed when there is no other motive to action except love and loyalty.

So, in short, it's God's loyal love to his people simply because God is faithful and he's loving.

And we see that in how he deals with us. We aren't loyal towards him, but he is loyal towards us.

He has every right to end his relationship with us, but he doesn't. And, you know, sometimes we have the opportunity to be unfaithful to him, to choose other things above him, to say other things are more important than him, and we take that opportunity.

[7 : 04] But when we are unfaithful, God is faithful towards us. And so, you know, with that question of how can God be loyal in his relationship toward us when we are unfaithful, he has to forgive, right?

He has to forgive. There's the image of God separating us from our sins as far as the east is from the west, right? From one side of the earth to the other because his love for us is as high above the earth as the heavens are.

So it's, I think practically speaking, God doesn't ruminate on our sins. He doesn't dwell on them, right? He separates it.

It's on this side of the earth and on that side of the earth. It's over here. We're over here, right? So a question for us is, like, what do we do, right? What do we do when we say we forgive people?

I think it's, sometimes we can say, I forgive you, but, like, in the next argument, I can think of, like, oh, but you did that last time, right? Or, as much as I want to forgive, there's a part of me that still thinks, you need to pay a little bit.

[8 : 14] You need to feel, like, a little pain, right? You've got to pay for this. But God's amazing. He makes forgiveness possible through Christ. 2 Corinthians 5.21 says, For our sake, He made Him to be sin, who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Although Jesus was righteous and without sin, God thought of our sins as belonging to Him, and God treats Him. He treated Him as if He were sinful. And He does the opposite for us, right?

He thinks of Christ's righteousness as belonging to us. So even though He sees everything about us and our sin, our dirt, our uncleanness, He treats us as if we're perfect.

We're clothed in our nakedness with Christ's righteousness. And so when God looks upon you and looks upon me, those who believe in Christ, we're beautiful, we're perfect.

And that's how we should forgive, too. Right? When we really forgive, we should not hold things against people, bring them back. This is impossible to do apart from God's power.

[9 : 23] But as we're studying in community group, when Jesus commands the man with the withered hand to extend his hand, He's actually commanding the man to do something that's impossible at that moment, right?

But Jesus empowers him to stretch out His hand and be healed, right? So we can trust God that we can truly forgive with His help, with His power. So, verse 15 and 16, it's a bit of an interlude about the brevity of human life.

I don't listen to many podcasts. I only listen to one, really. But it's something called Hardcore History by Dan Carlin that my brother told me about. And it just talks about various periods of time, like the World Wars or Julius Caesar and Genghis Khan and all this stuff.

But all these great people, like Julius Caesar, Napoleon, Alexander the Great, the Pharaohs, presidents, CEOs, athletes, all these guys, like time and the grave have claimed them, right? They're gone. The best that they have are memorials, memories, names and buildings named after them, right? I walk by all these great universities and they're named with all these fancy names.

[10 : 29] It's like, I have no idea who these people are. Paid a lot of money for this, right? But that's like the best the world can give you. So don't be fooled. Life is fleeting. It says we're like grass.

His days are like grass. It's here today and called tomorrow. The ground's not even going to remember the grass. But the last part, verses 17 through 22, God's steadfast love is different. Life is fleeting but his steadfast love is everlasting. And this third part, it's not just to you and me as individuals, not just to us as Trinity, God's people, but it's to the world, right?

The steadfast love of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear him. It's verse 17. His love is for all who fear him and it's for, it's really available to all of creation because verse 19, God's kingdom rules over all.

And we see that the blessing or the praising of God extends out to angels all his works. but it's clear that this world is full of people who don't know God.

[11 : 35] They're running in the opposite direction. They don't know him. They don't acknowledge him. They don't trust or care about him. But God is love as we've been reading here.

God is steadfast love and we have the mission and privilege of sharing Christ with other people, others who are in desperate need of their loving creator. And we're just beggars, telling other beggars where to find bread.

That's who we are and that's our privilege. So application is to whom can you speak of God's benefits to you, of Christ's death to them?

Who can you talk to about God's loyal love for them in Christ? And so we can go forward with faith and boldness. It says in Joshua 1.9, Be strong and courageous.

Do not be frightened and do not be dismayed. For the Lord your God is with you wherever you go. So we can hold on to that as we go forward. And God bless you, God bless you.

[12 : 38] and everybody will have you as an a as you need to do to you and will be as a anna