

“A Recital of Praise – Part 2”
Psalm 103
(Preached at Trinity, May 22, 2012)

I’m supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord’s Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I’ll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. Last week we began to look at this glorious psalm. While most of the psalms are directed to other people, David is directing this psalm to himself. “Bless the LORD, O my soul.”
2. He is reminding himself of the multitude of God’s blessings so that his life would be a continual expression of gratitude and praise.
3. While David is speaking to himself, God has been pleased allow us to listen in; we are being allowed to hear him speak. It is a wonderful exercise of looking into the heart of a believer.

This must be our own heart; a heart preoccupied with the consideration of our great God; to be captivated with Him. There is no greater activity, no higher consideration.

4. As I pointed out last time, we can divide Psalm 103 into three points

- I. The Recitation of Praise – **Verses 1-2**
- II. The Reasons for Praise – **Verses 3-19**
- III. The Realm of Praise – **Verses 20-22**

5. David began by imploring his soul to bless God; to praise God.

In David’s recitation of praise he focuses on two elements:

To “Bless His holy name” – to worship God in the beauty of His holiness.

To “forget not His benefits”

- A. The word for “benefits” refers to a reward or recompense. Of course, our reward is in Christ. Every blessing comes through Christ by His wondrous grace. Every grace comes through the merits of Christ.
- B. Forget not. Do not allow the rich blessings of God to be forgotten. It is said that when God blesses men they are excited to bless Him.
- C. As I pointed out last time, there is another aspect of this.

The word is **גְּמוּלָה** which refers to a recompense. It can be understood to refer to the blessings that come through Christ—the recompense of Christ. Or it can refer to the curse and condemnation of God upon the wicked – their just recompense.

Psalm 28:4 KJV - "Give them according to their deeds, and according to the wickedness of their endeavours: give them after the work of their hands; render to them their desert." - **גְּמוּלָה**

Psalm 94:2 NAS - "Rise up, O Judge of the earth; Render recompense to the proud." - **גְּמוּלָה**

Isaiah 3:11 KJV - "Woe unto the wicked! *it shall be ill with him*: for the reward of his hands shall be given him." - **גְּמוּלָה**

1. We should not forget the danger of sin. Lost person, do not hide your eyes from the recompense of God.

Matthew 5:25-26 NAU - "Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison. ²⁶ "Truly I say to you, you will not come out of there until you have paid up the last cent."

2. For the believer, our hearts overflow in praise as we consider the wondrous mercies of God in Christ. God has not given us the recompense we deserve but rather recompense in Christ. We enjoy the merits of Christ.
3. The chief focus of this psalm is all about praise – do not forget the rich blessings of God.
In the next stanza the psalmist begins to list some of the blessings that must not be forgotten; blessings that must bring forth praise.
6. In the second part of this psalm David directs our attention to God's recompense. "The Reason's for Praise." "and forget not all His benefits."
7. Divisions of Psalm 103
 - I. The Recitation of Praise – **Verses 1-2**
 - II. The Reasons for Praise – **Verses 3-19**
 - III. The Realm of Praise – **Verses 20-22**

The Reasons for Praise – **Verses 3-19**

- I. **Verses 3-5** – We find a list of personal blessings received – These are blessings enjoyed by the redeemed.
 - A. The forgiveness of sin – **Verse 3** - "Who forgiveth all thine iniquities"
 1. What is the basis for forgiveness? Do we fail to consider the wonder and awe of this?
 - a. Could God simply forgive? Could He simply overlook our sins?
 - b. God is infinitely holy.
"Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, *ble*ss his holy name."
 - c. God is perfectly just. He is a righteous Judge. He must judge righteously.
 2. What could be done in order to save God's people from their sins without conflicting with His perfect holiness and compromising His perfect justice? Since we are justly and legally condemned our deliverance demands that God's justice be fully satisfied. God determined to provide a substitute, one to stand on our behalf and suffer God's penalty in our stead.
 3. God sent forth His Son – John 3:16.
At the crucifixion Jesus shed His own blood as a sacrifice for our sin. God's perfect justice was satisfied.
 4. In order to provide our forgiveness God gave an infinite gift—
"Bless the LORD O my soul."
 5. This is the chief of all graces. Notice the word "all"
"Who forgiveth all thine iniquities"
He'll speak of it again in **Verse 12** – the glory of justification
"As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us."

6. Do you consider the infinite blessing of your salvation
- B. Healing from disease – **Verse 3**
1. All of us can testify that God continually and habitually heals us from sickness. He is worthy of all praise for this grace. We should praise Him for our good health.
 2. But the context here seems to link the diseases with the iniquities. The Bible often maintains this connection:
Isaiah 53:5 KJV - " But he *was* wounded for our transgressions, *he* was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace *was* upon him; and with his stripes we are healed."
James 5:14-16 KJV - " Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord: ¹⁵ And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him. ¹⁶ Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. "
1 Corinthians 11:29-31 KJV - " For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. ³⁰ For this cause many *are* weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. ³¹ For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged."
 3. George Horn wrote: "What is pride, but lunacy; what is anger, but a fever; what is avarice, but a dropsy; what is lust, but a leprosy; what is sloth, but a dead palsy?"
- C. Protection in life– **Verse 4** - "Who redeemeth thy life from destruction"
The word for "destruction" refers to the grave
1. How many times has God saved you from death?
David's own testimony demonstrated God's mighty hand of protection over and over. From the jaw of the lion or the bear's paw, the sword of Goliath, or the javelin of Saul, or from Absalom or the multitude of other enemies.
 2. But again, the context would direct our attention to the issue of sin.
 - a. Death is ultimately God's judgment upon our sin.
1 Corinthians 15:55-56 KJV - "O death, where *is* thy sting? O grave, where *is* thy victory? ⁵⁶ The sting of death *is* sin; and the strength of sin *is* the law."
 - b. He has delivered us from our spiritual death, awakening us to our sin and condemnation.
 - c. He has delivered us from the second death
Revelation 21:8 KJV - "But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death."
- D. For His love and mercy – **Verse 4** – "who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies" - רַחֲמִים
- E. For the riches of His blessings – **Verse 5** – "Who satisfieth thy mouth with good *things*"

1. He gives us the blessings of the joys of life.
1 Timothy 6:17 KJV - "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy;"
2. The monks thought God was honored by the denial of all pleasures. The truth is God grants us good things to enjoy
3. For maintaining the vigor of our youth – **Verse 5** – "*so that thy youth is renewed like the eagle's.*"
 - a. God often blesses with strength and vigor into old age. Moses could testify of this.
Deuteronomy 34:7 KJV - "And Moses *was* an hundred and twenty years old when he died: his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated."
 - b. But it is gloriously true that God continues to increase our spiritual vigor as we age.
4. David is implying that the “good things” God grants to us include renewed strength even unto our old age—especially ever increasing newness of our relationship with Christ.
Isaiah 40:31 KJV - "But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; *and* they shall walk, and not faint."

- II. **Verses 6-19** – We read of God’s love and compassion towards His people
- A. **Verse 6** – God executes righteousness & justice on behalf of His people. The presupposition is we live our lives in the midst of oppressors but God will vindicate us in the face of our enemies.
 - B. **Verse 7** – Just as God led Moses through the wilderness He will lead us through this life—our current wilderness as we journey towards our eternal home.
 - C. **Verses 8-10** – God’s wonderful mercy & grace in Christ – He is patient with us, slow to anger, plenteous in love. He doesn’t give us what we deserve.
Verse 10 - "He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities."
This is the ultimate description of mercy.
 - D. **Verse 12** – He is infinite in forgiveness. This is one of the most precious verses in the whole Bible. It reflects the glory of justification.
 1. To consider East from West in a linear fashion it becomes an infinite distance
 2. It is particular – “From us.”
But it is available to all.
 - a. This is the glory of election from our perspective
It is always “whosoever”
Revelation 22:17 KJV - "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."
 - b. Most consider this a small thing and forfeit it.

- E. **Verses 13-18** – He is infinite in His condescending compassion towards our weakness
 - 1. He is full of pity
Psalm 103:14 KJV - "For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we *are* dust."
 - 2. **Verses 11; 16-18** – He is infinite in His love
- F. **Verse 19** – His sovereign reign over all – He is worthy of all praise – “Bless the Lord, O my soul”

III. The Realm of Praise – **Verses 20-22**

The final stanza raises God’s praise into the heavens – their praise serves to encourage us

- A. He raises it to the angelic realm
Psalm 103:20 KJV - "Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word."
 - 1. The angels are mightier in strength than human beings, yet they are always faithful, always praising God
 - 2. **Verse 21** – They continually do God’s will
Psalm 103:21 NAS - "Bless the LORD, all you His hosts, You who serve Him, doing His will."
 - 3. If two angels were sent to earth, one to a slum and another to a castle, it would make no difference to them. Neither would be at home.
- B. Should we not also be fully committed to God?
 - 1. Should we not be consumed in doing His will?
 - 2. Should we not be consumed in His praises?
- C. Finally, the psalmist presents the universality of the praises of God. God’s praises are all inclusive, all comprehensive. His realm is infinite and His praises are infinite.
Psalm 103:22 KJV - "Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion:"
 - 1. His dominion is throughout all of creation – to the ends of the universe.
 - 2. God is to be praised “in all places”
 - 3. And we must join in the praise. The psalmist concludes as he began:
Psalm 103:22 KJV - "bless the LORD, O my soul."

Conclusion:

- 1. What a blessing that God would be mindful of us – mere specks in the fullness of His creation.
- 2. And what a blessing it is that we can join in the chorus of praise.