

The LORD's Mercies
Psalm 103:1-13

Good morning,

As a child, I remember my grandfather talking about going through the Depression and trying to find work.

I remember him telling stories of how, in the pre-union times, if you were sick, you didn't get paid. If you got hurt, too bad; go home, and someone else would take your place.

Today, we have social security benefits, workman's compensation, sick days, and many other benefits.

Healthcare benefits are mandatory in most states, but some companies offer better medical than others.

Some of the bigger corporations today offer benefits that amaze me in order to retain or attract employees.

Some companies offer PTO, extended leave, and paid holidays. Some offer 401(k) retirement plans, bonuses, and parental leave.

Some Silicon Valley companies offer extravagant perks. Mental health support, free meals, laundry services, on-site massage therapists, gym memberships, and other amenities as well.

Please open your Bibles to ***Psalm 103*** as we continue to survey.

Most of our Bibles declare ***Psalm 103*** a ***Psalm*** of David, even though we do not know what circumstances led him to write it.

This *Psalm* is truly a song of praise, and it is mainly about the LORD's benefits for His people.

G. Campbell Morgan said, "*It is perhaps the most perfect song of pure praise to be found in the Bible....*

Through centuries it has been sung by glad hearts, and today is as fresh and full of beauty as ever."

I. Bless the LORD.

Read *Psalm 103:1-5*

This is not like other blessings found within scripture, where the greater person gives a blessing to a less significant person.

The LORD is so much higher than any man, and we have nothing that the LORD God needs.

In *Psalm 103*, David said to *bless the LORD*, as a way of honoring Him as His creation and praising Him, from a heart of thanksgiving.

To *bless the LORD* means to praise, worship, and exalt Him.

We bless the LORD by knowing Him personally through a **relationship**. This happens through prayer, doing God's will, meditating on His Word, praising, and remembering His gifts.

We can *bless the LORD* by remembering all the things that He has done for us, as David also reminds his readers not to forget all that the LORD has done.

Notice next, “*All that is within me*”

James Boice said, “*What a rebuke to much of what passes for praise in our assemblies*”.

“*We come to church, but we leave our minds at home. We hear of God’s grace, but our hearts have been hardened by a critical spirit.*”

I already said some companies offer extravagant perks, but those are all the temporary trappings of this world and none of those potential perks can meet our true need of salvation.

There are so many benefits that come from serving the LORD, that I don’t know if anyone could ever number them all.

Paul said in *1 Corinthians 2:9*, “*Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.*” NKJV

Let’s discuss some of the benefits David listed in *Psalms 103*.

a. The LORD forgives us. (v 3)

The Gospel teaches that every person has sinned, and that sin separates us from the LORD. Sin's final payment is death.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. NKJV

The LORD desires us to have a relationship with Him and that begins by Him forgiving all of our sins, so we can be right before Him, and then we are able to enjoy fellowship with Him.

b. The LORD heals us. (v 3)

We are all in need of healing; emotionally, spiritually, and physically. The world began as a perfect place with no sickness or sin, but man sinned and now we live in a fallen world.

The LORD offers spiritual healing and for those who are His, and we are promised a new glorified body in heaven someday.

c. The LORD redeems us. (v 4)

Our redemption was *finished* on the Cross...*John 19:30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. NKJV*

The word *finished* in Koine Greek is “*Tetelestai*” and it has a few different meanings depending on how it is used in context.

It means “Paid in full” or “the debt is finished” for a bill that was owed. It also means the sentence was “Fully served” in a judicial context, and the “Battle is won” in a military context.

Jesus paid the debt we owed due to sin, He served our prison sentence, and He defeated sin and death on the Cross.

d. The LORD crowns us with lovingkindness. (v 4)

A Crown signifies a **special position** within the kingdom. The LORD by His grace and mercy, has placed us in His kingdom.

Colossians 1:13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

Colossians 1:14 in whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins. NKJV

e. The LORD satisfies us. (v 5)

As Mick Jagger said, “*I can’t get no, satisfaction*”. The world **cannot find** a way to fill the God-shaped vacuum in their life.

Soloman said in *Ecclesiastes 3:11 He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end. NKJV*

When we are hungry, we look for a meal to satisfy, but even when we find something to fill the craving, it is temporary.

For every craving, the things we use to satisfy are temporary.

Only Jesus can truly fulfill our deepest needs and cravings.

f. The LORD renews us. (v 5)

We see people today trying to prolong the viability of their bodies through fitness, supplements, and better eating. But these bodies are all wearing out, and someday this tent will fail.

The LORD has promised us a new, perfect, glorified body.

1 Corinthians 15:51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed —

1 Corinthians 15:52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Corinthians 15:53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

1 Corinthians 15:54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." NKJV

Again, *bless the LORD* means to praise, worship, and exalt Him

Because of all the benefits the LORD gives His children, the least we can do is to bless the LORD.

II. The LORD is merciful.

Read *Psalms 103:6-10*

We live in a world where righteousness and justice seem elusive. But as we learned last week, the LORD will execute righteousness and justice to the oppressed.

The LORD will bestow His steadfast love upon all who are depressed, but seek Him.

Who are the oppressed? It depends on who you ask.

James 1:27 Pure and undefiled religion before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their trouble, and to keep oneself unspotted from the world. NKJV

In vs. 7, King David recalls the exodus event, which was the central act of God's deliverance in the Old Testament.

Exodus tells how the LORD delivered Israel from the slavery and bondage in Egypt and of their entry into the Promised Land.

But the new exodus happens for all who will believe in Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

When Jesus defeated Satan on the Cross, He broke the **bondage** and slavery of oppressed people, who were slaves of sin.

Christianity Matters said, “*As we look at the Exodus Event, we see that it serves as a type pointing to the New Exodus that is led by Jesus Christ.*”

The new exodus tells us the scope of God’s mission, which includes a release from the bondage of sin and the rule of Satan over our lives so that we can worship God.”

Re-read **Psalm 103:7**

One aspect of the LORD’s greatness is His revelation about Himself. The Lord makes ***His way*** and ***His acts known***.

Re-read **Psalm 103:8**

Psalm 103:8 speaks of the LORD’s steadfast and forgiving love.

Even while presenting Moses with the Ten Commandments, the steadfast love of the LORD was displayed.

Exodus 34:4 *So he cut two tablets of stone like the first ones. Then Moses rose early in the morning and went up Mount Sinai, as the LORD had commanded him; and he took in his hand the two tablets of stone.*

Exodus 34:5 Now the LORD descended in the cloud and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the LORD.

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed before him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness and truth,

Exodus 34:7 keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, NKJV

Grace is receiving an underserved or unearned gift. Mercy is not receiving the justice we **deserve**. Oh, praise the LORD for His grace and mercy because without them, we are doomed.

Notice, ***“He will not always strive (quarrel) with us”***

Matthew Henry says, *“Though He signify his displeasure against us for our sins by the rebukes of Providence, and the reproaches of our own consciences,*

...and thus cause grief, yet he will have compassion, and will not always keep us in pain and terror, no, not for our sins, but, after the spirit of bondage, will give the spirit of adoption.”

The NLT of ***Romans 9:22 God has every right to exercise his judgment and his power, but he also has the right to be very patient with those who are the objects of his judgment and are fit only for destruction.***

Romans 9:23 He also has the right to pour out the riches of His glory upon those he prepared to be the objects of His mercy. NLT

Notice, ***“He has not dealt with us according to our sins”***

The LORD’s steadfast love is not deserved by any of us.

David knew the longsuffering and mercy of the LORD personally.

David knew his sins deserved judgment and discipline, but he also knew the LORD’s mercy and grace.

“We ought to praise the Lord for what He has not done as well as for what he has wrought for us; even the negative side deserves our adoring gratitude.” (Spurgeon)

III. He has cast out our sins.

Read ***Psalms 103:11-13***

Usually, our forgiveness and compassion for other people have a short shelf life.

Psalms 103:11-13 tells of the **enormity** of God’s grace and mercy as it explains how far the LORD has removed our sins from us.

When speaking of heaven, *was David referring to the immediate sky, outer space, or the throne room of God?* The distance between the Earth and the atmosphere is over 6,000 miles.

David said, *as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him.*

The Apostle Paul caught a glimpse of the enormity of God's grace and mercy as well, and he said...

Ephesians 3:14 For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Ephesians 3:15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,

Ephesians 3:16 that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man,

Ephesians 3:17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Ephesians 3:18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height —

*Ephesians 3:19 to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
NKJV*

And if the height of the mercy of God was not enough, David also told us how far He has removed our sin from us.

Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. NKJV

This is an infinite amount of space between us and sin.

I have said this before, but it bears repeating. If you travel North long enough, you will begin traveling South. But if you travel East, you will go on for eternity and never start to travel West.

Adam Clarke said, “*As the east and the west can never meet in one point, but be forever at the same distance from each other, so our sins and their decreed punishment are removed to an eternal distance by his mercy.*” (Clarke)

1 Peter 3:18 For Christ also suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive by the Spirit, NKJV

When the LORD forgives our sins, they are forgiven forever.

Isaiah 43:25 "I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; and I will not remember your sins. NKJV

C. H. Spurgeon said, *God loves us, and He will love us forever. He loves us infinitely, and He could not love us more than if we had never fallen.*” (Spurgeon)

Notice, “***As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him.***”

Notice the caveat, the Father’s understanding, mercy, and pity are reserved for those who fear the LORD.

Lamentations 3:22 Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

Lamentations 3:23 They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness. NKJV

The type of *fear* a Christian should have towards a loving Father is respect for the LORD.

The LORD's enemies should be terrified of Him and His judgments, but His Children should respect Him and be in awe of Him.

Bible reference has said, *“Ideally, a father shows compassion to his children. "Compassion" from a Hebrew root implies action. It's not merely a feeling, but an emotion that inspires action.*

If one of Dad's children is ill, he feels sympathy for the child, but compassion is reflected in nursing the child back to health.

If one of his children is in trouble, Dad hurts for him, and compassion inspires him to remove the child from danger.

Like a good father, our heavenly Father demonstrates strong compassion for us.”

1 Peter 5:6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time,

1 Peter 5:7 casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you. NKJV

IV. Practical Application.

Psalm 103 is David praising God for what He has done.

This included praises for how the Father blessed David as well as the entire nation. David also encouraged his readers to ***bless the LORD***.

Psalm 103:1 Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy name!

Psalm 103:2 Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits: NKJV

This ***blessing*** is not meant like other blessings found within scripture, where the greater person gives a blessing to a less significant person.

In ***Psalm 103***, David said to ***bless the LORD***, as a way of honoring Him as His creation and praising Him from a heart of thanksgiving.

I said some companies offer extravagant perks, but those are all the temporary trappings of this world and none of those potential perks can meet our true need of salvation.

There are so many benefits that come from serving the LORD that I don't know if anyone could ever number them all.

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For every craving, the things we use to satisfy, are temporary. Only Jesus can truly fulfill our deepest needs and cravings.

f. The LORD renews us. (v 5)

Psalm 134:2 Lift up your hands in the sanctuary and bless the LORD. NKJV

To ***bless the LORD*** means to praise, worship, and exalt Him. Because of all the benefits the LORD gives His children, the least we can do is to bless the LORD.

The LORD told Moses and Aaron to say to His children in ***Numbers 6:24, "The LORD bless you and keep you;***

Numbers 6:25 The LORD make His face shine upon you, and be gracious to you;

Numbers 6:26 The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you peace." NKJV

The LORD loves to **bless** His people and as a response, we should love to bless **Him**.

We ***bless the LORD*** by knowing Him personally through a relationship. This happens through prayer, doing God's will, meditating on His Word, praising, and remembering His gifts.