

Psalm 103 (ESV): Forget Not God's Benefits

Main point: Bless the Lord for his goodness and forgiveness.



Open with a short prayer, inviting God to teach us.

Background: A psalm of David.

Focus of the study:

- 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,
- ³ who forgives all your iniquity,
who heals all your diseases,
- ⁴ who redeems your life from the pit,
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,
- ⁵ who satisfies you with good
so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.
- ...
- ⁸ The Lord is merciful and gracious,
slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.
- ⁹ The Lord will not always chide,
nor will he keep his anger forever.
- ¹⁰ The Lord does not deal with us according to our sins,
nor repay us according to our iniquities.
- ¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth,
so great is the Lord's steadfast love toward those who fear him;
- ¹² as far as the east is from the west,
so far does the Lord remove our transgressions from us.
- ¹³ As a father shows compassion to his children,
so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.
- ¹⁴ For the Lord knows our frame;
he remembers that we are dust.

Questions:

1. v. 1: *What is the writer David's first instruction to himself and his readers?*
 - a. "Bless the Lord" – *I wonder what it means to "bless" God?*
 - i. Be grateful, approve, praise, give thanks
2. *What is David's second instruction?*
 - a. v. 2: and forget not all the Lord's benefits.
3. *What benefits does David list?*
 - a. v. 3: forgives all your iniquity. *What is iniquity?*
 - i. Sin, wrongdoing, faults, failures

- b. v. 3: heals all your diseases. *I wonder what it means that God is a healer?*
 - c. v. 4: redeems your life from the pit. *I wonder what that means? What is a pit like?*
 - i. Dark, scary, seems impossible to get out
 - d. v. 4: crowns you with steadfast love and mercy. *Let's think a bit more about those phrases: "crowns you," "steadfast love and mercy." I wonder how that would feel? Who usually gets crowned?*
 - i. Royalty, winners (like the Olympics), someone honored
 - ii. *How is this kind of "crown" (a crown of steadfast love and mercy) different than crowns that people have in this world?*
 - 1. Unlike worldly crowns, this is a lasting crown! Steadfast
 - e. v. 5: satisfies you with good, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle. *How does it feel to be satisfied?*
 - i. Content, happy, not needing anything
 - 4. *What is the opposite of all these benefits – that is, what state would we be in without God?*
 - a. Stuck in iniquity/sin; not healed; in a deep dark place/pit; without love and mercy; unsatisfied, tired, weighed down
 - 5. *And what does David say is the result of all of God's benefits?*
 - a. v. 5: **so that (i.e., the result is)** your youth is renewed like the eagle's. *What can an eagle do? How do you think that would feel?*
 - i. They can fly! Free!
 - 6. *David goes on, in v. 8-10, to detail specifics of God's character and goodness: "The Lord is..." (Ask questions to expand on what each of these mean)*
 - a. merciful
 - b. gracious
 - c. slow to anger
 - d. abounding in steadfast love
 - e. does not deal with us according to our sins. *What is sin?*
 - f. doesn't repay us for iniquity (does not take "an eye for an eye")
 - 7. *What do all of those qualities tell you about God's concern for you? What is the conclusion to the problem of our failures and wrongdoings??*
 - a. v. 11: steadfast love
 - b. v. 12: removes transgressions – *how completely?*
 - c. v. 13: shows compassion
 - 8. *For whom do the Lord's benefits apply?*
 - a. v. 11 "Those who fear him" – *what does that mean?*
 - i. When we turn to God, trust in God, and remember God, instead of focusing on the world and our problems, God's benefits are ever present and everlasting.
- Ask for prayer requests for today.
 - Close in prayer, naming people and needs listed.
 - End with a song, e.g., first verse of Amazing Grace

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