

Psalm 103: Bless the LORD!

A Psalm of David. 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 iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, 5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

6 The Lord executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. 7 He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel. 8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9 He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever.

10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. 13 As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. 16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. 17 But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, 18 to such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.

19 The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. 20 Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word. 21 Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, you ministers of His, who do His pleasure. 22 Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul! (Psalms 103:1-22 NKJV)

- Its great theme is a loving God who, despite His great power, treats His children with lovingkindness and compassion.
- Contains parallel statements, a form of Hebrew poetry.
- Three main sections:
 1. Verses 1-5 show David encouraging himself to bless God and he is also talking about the benefits God has given him.
 2. Verses 6-19 speak about the greatness and the goodness of God
 3. Verses 20-22 are an exhortation to the angels and to all the creatures He has made to bless Him as David has encouraged himself to do.

A Psalm of David. 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...

- Blessing the Lord here means to praise Him. The word is *barak*, to kneel or to praise. Here he is praising the Lord in a submissive and trusting way.
- Sometimes we need to stir ourselves up to praise Him. If we wait until we feel like it to praise God... then what?
- Five David is teaching us we should bless God:
 - First, we bless Him with our soul.
 - Second, we bless Him with everything that is within us.
 - Third, we are to bless (acknowledge) His Name.
 - Fourth, recognize that His Name is holy.
 - Then the fifth thing is that we must worship him with thanksgiving.

3 Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, 4 Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, 5 Who satisfies your mouth with good things, so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

- “Iniquities” here means moral evil or perversity, not just “sins.”
- God revealed Himself as Jehovah-Rapha, meaning the Lord your Healer.
- David also experienced in his own life how God delivered him from destruction.
- David views the life of the believer as a life crowned!
- God not only meets our needs, but He does so in a way that tastes good.
- The eagle is a beautiful picture of how God will bless us when we are weary.

6 The Lord executes righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed.

- For David, as we have seen many times, an important feature of God’s reign is His issuing decrees of justice for the people.

7 He made known His ways to Moses, His acts to the children of Israel.

- Notice that God wants to reveal himself to us.
- Second, notice that there is a gradation in the revelation of God. Let’s not be satisfied to know God at a distance. Instead, decide to be like a Moses or a David who asked God, *Show me your ways!*

8 The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in mercy. 9 He will not always strive with us, nor will He keep His anger forever. 10 He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor punished us according to our iniquities. 11 For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward those who fear Him; 12 As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.

- Matched only by God’s description of Himself to Moses in Exodus 34:6-7: *And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin...*

- God does not deal with us in the way our sins and iniquities truly deserve.
- Verses 11 and 12 have often been used as an illustration of a cross.
- And verse 12 has often been said to display the fact that our transgressions have been sent completely away, for east and west can never meet!

13 As a father pities his children, so the Lord pities those who fear Him. 14 For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust. 15 As for man, his days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. 16 For the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place remembers it no more. 17 But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children's children, 18 To such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.

- We are only dust, he says, but he notes that the mercy of God toward man will last forever. This speaks of the resurrection.
- God's mercy is from "everlasting to everlasting," which means that God has also known us and planned mercy to us in the eternity past before we were even born.
- Notice that this keeping of the covenant involves doing the commandment, not just hearing the commandment!

19 The Lord has established His throne in heaven, and His kingdom rules over all. 20 Bless the Lord, you His angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word. 21 Bless the Lord, all you His hosts, you ministers of His, who do His pleasure. 22 Bless the Lord, all His works, in all places of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul!

- God has set up His throne securely so that His kingship may not be challenged.
- David now issues a call to all of creation to worship the Lord together with him.

- A sixfold and sevenfold description of the angels of God.
 - First, they are His angels.
 - Second, they excel in strength.
 - Third, they do His commandments or His word.
 - Fourth, they are attentive and obedient to His word.
 - Fifth, they are His armies.
 - Sixth, they are His ministers or servants.
 - Seventh, they do His pleasure.
- Finally, David comes full circle by calling everything that God has made to worship Him, to bless Him, and once again, he includes his own self in this, as he says, “Bless the Lord, O my soul!”

*All quotes NKJV except as noted. New King James Version®
Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*