

## Let All That I Am

Series: I Will Praise You In This Storm

Psalm 103

August 22, 2021

Welcome again to worship. It's so good to be together today as we praise the Lord's name.

I don't know about you, but I had a wonderful week. I got to fly. I finished 2 chapters in an upcoming book. I spent several hours in the library and learned some fascinating things about Germantown history that will definitely be fictionalized in future books. I had a wonderful time at the Men's Breakfast yesterday, with some 12-13 other guys. I feel like God has blessed me this week, and I want to praise Him.

But there are some of you who had a difficult week. Things didn't go well for you. You don't feel blessed right now. Then I'm glad you are with us.

We are in our series "I Will Praise You In This Storm." We are looking at a few of the psalms that help us when we feel like we are in a storm. I invite you to turn to page 6-7 in your bulletin, or if you are online, open your Bible and spiritual journal to Psalm 103.

Right off the bat, **Psalm 103 is a psalm of thanksgiving.**

It is a psalm of thanksgiving for the many merciful blessings of God upon us. It is a psalm of encouragement to the saints and exaltation for the Lord.

**Spurgeon called it the Monte Rosa of the psalms.**

It is one of the mountain peaks of the psalms. Yet, it is not in the Lectionary. You will be shocked to see how many verses are in this psalm that you will recognize, that should be underlined in your Bible.

One more thing about Psalm 103, and it's kind of a nerdy thing, one for Bible scholars.

**It is 22 verses long, the number of letters in the Hebrew alphabet.**

The verses do not start with consecutive letters of the alphabet, as does Psalm 119 and others, but David fits the length of his song into that alphabetical length.

As you read this psalm, you will discover nine lessons for the believer.<sup>1</sup>

**First, God is praised for His benefits to His people.**

Verses 1 and 2:

*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits.*<sup>2</sup>

This is repeated in the final phrase of the Psalm:

*Bless the LORD, O my soul.*<sup>3</sup>

This an inward call to praise God. David calls on his soul, and all its faculties and powers, to magnify God for His mercies, then to not forget all His benefits.

We have a tendency in the storms of life to forget God's benefits. But as the lyrics goes:

*I'll praise You in this storm  
And I will lift my hands*

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Adam Clarke's Commentary, Psalm 103

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 103:1-2 (NRSV)

<sup>3</sup> Psalm 103:22b (NRSV)

*For You are who You are  
No matter where I am.*

No matter where you are, praise the Lord.

**Second, God forgives our sins, and heals our diseases.**

Look at verse 3:

*who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases,<sup>4</sup>*

I read a story about a person who committed a terrible sin of the first day of a new year. Each day after that, he asked God to forgive him. Each year following that, he asked God to forgive him. Then, he had a dream. Jesus stood before him. Once again, he pleaded with Jesus to forgive his sin. Jesus grabbed a book; it was a record of sins by year. He flipped the pages to that particular year, that particular day, then showed it to the man. There was nothing but a blank sheet.

God forgives our sins, and he heals our diseases. One day, you and I will be completely healed of all the frailties of this sinful life, and we will forever be healed. Some will experience healing in this life, but all believers will be healed one day.

**Third, God redeems our lives and crowns us with lovingkindness.**

Verse 4:

*who redeems your life from the Pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy,<sup>5</sup>*

I like the Message version:

*He redeems you from hell—saves your life! He crowns you with love and mercy—a paradise crown.<sup>6</sup>*

This is not only a prophecy of how Jesus would redeem us from the punishment of sin on our lives, but it is also saying how God protects us from many bad events. All of us can look back in life and see His hand of protection in many critical situations which without His protection, would have been our destruction, our end.

And we receive a crown. Now, as a boy, I didn't play or imagine I was a king wearing a crown. But I bet a lot of you ladies dreamed of being a princess with a crown. A crown is a symbol of one's status; it establishes immediately someone's royal position. God crowns us with His steadfast and everlasting love and mercy. We are royal. Yes, indeed.

**Fourth, God satisfies us with good things and renews our youth.**

Verse 5:

*who satisfies you with good as long as you live so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's.<sup>7</sup>*

This is reminiscent to the famous words found in Isaiah 40:

*Have you not known? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary; his understanding is unsearchable. He gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless. Even youths will faint and be weary, and the young will fall exhausted; but those who wait for*

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<sup>4</sup> Psalm 103:3 (NRSV)

<sup>5</sup> Psalm 103:4 (NRSV)

<sup>6</sup> Psalm 103:4 (MSG)

<sup>7</sup> Psalm 103:5 (NRSV)

*the LORD shall renew their strength, they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint.*<sup>8</sup>

God rejuvenates us in spirit and body many times in our lives. The blessing He has for His people is for always.

**Fifth, God helps us.**

Listen how He helps us. Verses 6-9:

*The LORD works vindication and justice for all who are oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love. He will not always accuse, nor will he keep his anger forever.*<sup>9</sup>

When I visit someone who is dying, I will read verses 8-9.

Psalm 86:15 reads:

*But you, O Lord, are a God of compassion and mercy, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness.*<sup>10</sup>

In other words, the Lord helps the oppressed, makes His ways known, is merciful and gracious, and keeps not His anger forever.

**Sixth, God forbears and pardons us by His mercy.**

Verses 10-12:

*He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far he removes our transgressions from us.*<sup>11</sup>

Our sins deserve eternal hell fire in punishment, but God's forgiveness through our Lord Jesus Christ means we escape eternal damnation. It is an undeserved blessing.

*For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God – not the result of works, so that no one may boast.*<sup>12</sup>

You and I don't deserve it, for the Lord "does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities."

This psalm also says God removes our sins as far as the east is from the west. Do you understand how far that is? Let me just give you a hint. If you were to travel north from anywhere, at what point would you begin going south? At the north pole. But if you were traveling east from anywhere, at what point would you begin going west? You could go east forever and never be going west. That's how far God removes our sins from us when they are forgiven.

**Seventh, God is a tender and considerate Father in our frailty.**

Listen to verses 13-16:

*As a father has compassion for his children, so the LORD has compassion for those who fear him. For he knows how we were made; he remembers that we are dust.*

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<sup>8</sup> Isaiah 40:28-31 (NRSV)

<sup>9</sup> Psalm 103:6-9 (NRSV)

<sup>10</sup> Psalm 86:15 (NLT2)

<sup>11</sup> Psalm 103:10-12 (NRSV)

<sup>12</sup> Ephesians 2:8-9 (NRSV)

*As for mortals, their days are like grass; they flourish like a flower of the field; for the wind passes over it, and it is gone, and its place knows it no more.*<sup>13</sup>

Verse 13 is a very emphatic verse. Nothing can place the tenderness and concern of God for His creatures in a stronger light than this. What yearnings in the heart does the father of the parable feel toward the prodigal son, who, sensible of his ingratitude and disobedience, falls at his parent's feet, covered with confusion and melted into tears, with, "Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before you, and am not worthy to be called your son!" The same in kind, but infinitely more exquisite, does God feel when the penitent falls at His feet, and implores His mercy through Christ crucified.<sup>14</sup>

God is a tender and considerate Father in our frailty.

**Eighth, God has everlasting mercy, and universal dominion.**

Verses 17-19:

*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.*<sup>15</sup>

Verse 17 in the King James is familiar:

*But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;*<sup>16</sup>

The word for mercy or steadfast love here signifies a particularly exuberant goodness of God. This is an attribute of His nature – who He is – and must be from everlasting to everlasting; and hence, His righteousness, His merciful mode of justifying the ungodly, is extended from one generation to another.<sup>17</sup>

We talked about generational blessing last week. Even if your children or grandchildren are not where the Lord wants them to be, God is still blessing them because of you.

**Our final lesson is a reminder: Let all that I am praise Him.**

Verses 1-2 were a call for inner praise. Verses 20-22 are a call to outer praise:

*Bless the LORD, O you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, obedient to his spoken word. Bless the LORD, all his hosts, his ministers that do his will. Bless the LORD, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the LORD, O my soul.*<sup>18</sup>

Everything everywhere is to praise the Lord: all His angels and all His works! Praising God means remembering all He has done for us (verse 22), fearing Him and obeying his commands (verses 17-18), and doing his will (verse 21). Does your life praise the Lord?

Psalm 103 is a psalm of praise. David's praise focused on the good things God was doing for him. It is easy to complain about life, but David's list gives us plenty for which to praise God: He forgives our sins, heals our diseases, redeems us from death, crowns us with love and compassion, satisfies our desires, and gives righteousness and

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<sup>13</sup> Psalm 103:13-16 (NRSV)

<sup>14</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary, Psalm 103:13

<sup>15</sup> Psalm 103:17-19 (NRSV)

<sup>16</sup> Psalm 103:17 (KJV)

<sup>17</sup> Adam Clarke's Commentary, Psalm 103:17

<sup>18</sup> Psalm 103:20-22 (NRSV)

justice. We receive all of these without deserving any of them. No matter how difficult your life's journey, you can always count your blessings—past, present, and future. When you feel as though you have nothing for which to praise God, read David's list.<sup>19</sup>

There once was a farm dog by the name of Sam. Sam never had any of the frills dogs nowadays enjoy. Sam was never allowed to beg at the table, because Sam was never allowed in the house and was only fed table scraps.

Sam never had a doghouse, fancy bed or a fancy dog sweater. Sam never even went to the vet for a shot. Sam's only perk he was allowed to do was to hang around and chase cars up and down the road. Everyone always said Sam would probably get hit by a car doing that, but he never did get hit.

Sam hung around his whole life for scraps and by the way he lived to be 21 years old and died of old age.

The devil would have you think all you are entitled to, is a life like Sams. No frills, no promise, a no nothing kind of life with just a scrap thrown to you every once and a while.

God doesn't do scraps. The love God has for you offers a buffet of promise, hope, favor and blessing!

God wants you to know, life doesn't have to be that way, you can have life on the grand scale! Because if you know and have a relationship with Jesus you can have and are entitled to an abundant life. A blessed life with a lifetime guaranteed seat at the table and will never have to settle for scraps!

*Bless the LORD, O my soul.<sup>20</sup>*

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<sup>19</sup> Life Application Study Bible, Psalm 103

<sup>20</sup> Psalm 103:22b (NRSV)