

Psalm 103 "The God Who Should be Worshipped"

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[0 : 0 0] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

Heavenly Father, we give you thanks and praise that you draw us into yourselves. That's nothing that we do that helps us get to you, but it's everything that you do. Father, we ask now that you would speak to our hearts and our minds that any distractions from this week, Lord, would just fall away. Whether it's been a great week or whether it's been a very hard week, Lord, we just want to hear from you.

We want to hear you speak to our hearts and our minds. And I pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated. Now, for those of you who know me, it's great to see you again. But for those of you who don't know me, my name is Matthew Usherwood. Two years ago, I had the great pleasure of being a ministry intern here at Church of the Messiah for, I think, about four years. And then my family, we went off and we did, I was an assistant pastor in the GTA area. And now we've come back because that's come to a close. And now we're discerning the next steps about what we're doing in ministry. But the thing that, that's been a great blessing since being back. We've been back for about a month now.

[2 : 3 0] I've had the great privilege of going around to different churches in Ottawa, but also in Kingston, and preaching there as well. And it's been a great privilege to be able to worship together with other brothers and sisters in Christ, and to lift up our praises to God, and just to talk with people, and just remember that it's so easy to feel like in a little bubble in our church. But the body of Christ is so vast and so big, and it's worldwide. And it's a great reminder. So I just want to say I feel very privileged to be up here right now to speak to you, to study God's Word together. So we're going to get into it. And last week, I was preaching at a different church, and after, we went to a restaurant after to pick up some food and go home and have it.

And it was lunchtime, so I ended up being the only one in the restaurant ordering the food and picking up while Amy and my wife stayed in the car with our son. And I got to talking with the owner who was there, because no one else was there. And we got to talking, and he asked me, what have I been up to this weekend? Where did I just come from? Why am I getting food now? And I said, I just spoke at a church. I'm an Anglican minister. And that really perked his interest, and we got to talking about it.

And we talked for the whole time the food was being made. And then he mentioned that he was a Muslim man, and he tries to go to the mosque. But he finds it hard. He doesn't really want to commit to all the amount of times he has to go during the week if he wants to be a very committed follower. He said it's not for him, but he just tries to go on Friday, because Fridays, he said, were the big days of worship there. So he tries to get there on a Friday. But then he also mentioned to me, as he was packing up the food to when I was about to leave, he said, all religions, aren't they just for the same? We all worship the same God, just looks differently. We do different things. We call it

different things. But it's the same God, essentially. And he said, all things, all pathways, you know what the classic saying, all religions, all pathways lead to the same God.

We'll get there in the end. But that's a very common assumption that the Western culture makes about God and about religion, and even about secularism. It's also a religion nowadays. But it's a very, to make that claim is a very uneducated claim. Because when you start breaking down all the other great religions of the world, the very popular ones, and even secularism, they all worship a very different God in a very different way. And it's like, it'd be like me saying to a sound person, Andrew's not here today, I was going to use him as an example. But it'd be like me saying to Andrew, our tech person of Messiah, telling him, he'd be talking about all the tech stuff. And then I'd be saying, well, aren't all soundboards just the same? They all do the same thing, essentially. It all sounds the exact same. But that's not true. Because each soundboard is very different. You can get some really cheap ones that don't really hone in and mix the sound properly. But then you can also get some really expensive ones that do a way better job at mixing the sound. So we're continuing this series in the Psalms. And we're going to look at this idea of that, this assumption that people make about you can just worship any God you want. But the Psalm today shows us there's only one true God that you can worship. Because in, because we all have to worship something. If you're here and you don't know, you don't want to call yourself Christian, or you're watching online and you want to call yourself

[6 : 22] Christian, you got to serve somebody. The famous Bob Dylan song, you got to serve somebody. And the thing is about this Psalm, this Psalm shows us the God who should be worshipped. So if you haven't already, please turn to Psalm 103 in your Bible. So it would be very helpful to have your Bible here with you today. Because I'm going to be jumping around in the Psalm. I'm not going to go in order of the verses. I'm going to make Claire work today really hard trying to match the verses as I'm going. And we're going to start, get Claire ready here, and we're going to start at verse six. But we're going to look at this Psalm, Psalm 103, in three ways. We're going to look at it in point number one, who to worship. Then we're going to look at it the second way, why to worship this person. And the third way is going to be how to worship. So who to worship, why to worship, and how to worship. So point one, we're going to begin at verse six. And this is David, the great king of the Old Testament, the people of Israel, writing about this. And he's meditating on these great truths. If you haven't spent a lot of time in the Psalms,

I would really recommend it through the summer months, trying to read a Psalm. Maybe if you get to Psalm 119, split it up because it's a long one. But the Psalms are such a great book to read. Martin Luther, one of the great reformers of the church history past, he called the book of Psalms a mini Bible. Because the Psalms show the gospel in every single Psalm. And then it also shows every single human emotion possible that you can feel in the Psalms. So it's a great reminder as you read the Psalms that you can come to God. You can come to the Lord in any emotion. You don't have to get yourself all trim and proper before you come to God. But you can come to him feeling any emotion you want. So let's look at it. Verse six. This is King David speaking. The Lord works righteousness and justice for all who are oppressed. He may know in 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 chide, nor will he keep his anger forever. He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. So David here, he's reflecting on a great truth about this God who should be worshipped. This God who should be worshipped is a covenantal God, and this God who should be worshipped is a historical God. In this Psalm, it says the Lord 11 times, I'm pretty sure. I counted it this morning. I might be wrong, but I wonder too. It says the Lord. And when you see the Lord in the Old Testament, it's talking about the covenantal Lord, the covenantal God. This is the God in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, that says to Abraham, who makes him, he says that it gives him the promise that I will make you a great nation. I will rescue your people, the people who through come through your offspring. He, this is the God who comes to his people, who reveals himself to his people.

And he's a God who reveals himself historically. And David here is bringing up the end of Genesis into Exodus, the book after Genesis, the second book of the Bible. He's bringing up in verse 6, Israel's enslavement, those who are oppressed, those who need justice for them. God will work for them.

[10:16] At the end of Genesis, the people of Israel, the people go to Egypt because there's a famine in the land. So they go to Egypt. And then in the beginning of the book of Exodus, the people become enslaved by the people of Egypt because the Pharaoh who was protecting them has died, and the new heirs have come through. So they are enslaved people. They are people who are oppressed. They are people who need justice for them. And David is reflecting on this as he writes. He's reflecting on the great history of his people. And then in verse 7, it says, he made known his ways to Moses, his acts to the people of Israel. So this is David also reflecting on God working in time, God working in history.

He's reflecting on the plagues of Egypt, the plagues that God does to get his people out of Egypt, to rescue them, to rescue those who are oppressed. And then he's also reflecting on the people in the wilderness of the miracles, working that God works miracles, that he feeds his people. He looks after them. And then he's reflecting on also Moses on Mount Sinai, where God gives the law, the Ten Commandments.

See, God that David is reflecting on, the God of the Bible, is a God who works in history. He's not a God who works outside of history. He works within history. And then the verse 8, he says, the Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love. Again, David is reflecting on God working in history. And this verse is basically verbatim of what it says in Exodus chapter 34, verse 6. And this is right after the golden calf has happened, when the people of Israel were waiting on Moses to come down from the Mount of Sinai. They become lost, they almost become bored, and they're like, we need someone to worship. We need something to worship. And they end up making a golden calf, and they start worshiping that. And then God gets angry, but Moses prays for them. And then this is where verse 8 comes in, where the Lord is merciful. The Lord did not inflict wrath upon them. He was merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love. See, no other religion, no other mindset, no other ideology can say their God has worked in history. I had the great pleasure of going to Ryle Seminary here, which Church of Messiah runs with other churches. And that's the thing that really stood out to me as I went through seminary, is that we are able to study a God who works in history.

This isn't a God that's on the outside of history. This is a God that comes into time and reveals himself to man, to humanity. It's a great truth.

[13:21] So here we see David showing us who to worship. A historical God who makes a covenant with his people. But David also shows us something else about this God.

And we're going to look at that now in verses 11 to 14. Let's look at it. See, I just want to acknowledge first and foremost, before we talk about this, is that, and I fall into this category. There's people here who haven't had really great dads growing up. And I know when God is referred to as the father, it can really make you remember some bad memories that you have in the past.

But this text shows us something that's so great about this father. And we're going to look at it. So verses 11 and 12, David is writing, and he uses an illustration here.

What he's saying is that this love of the father is so high, so vast. It's like when you're riding an airplane, and you're up in the clouds, and you look out the window, and you remark to yourself, you think to yourself, like, wow, I'm really high.

[14:50] God is higher than that. Or here, David also says how vast he is, how vast God is. He says that as far as the east and from the west, this is showing God's great love.

You think about if you're driving across Canada and you're in Saskatchewan, how vast it is, how you can see forever. God's love is greater than that. The father's love is endlessly vast. Because in verses 13 and 14, it shows the father. And there's no father like this. There's no father. You may have had a bad father.

This is not a bad father. This is a great, loving, endlessly loving father. Myself and Amy, we now have a five-month-old baby.

And when I look at him, I feel a great sense of pride, a great sense of love. But it doesn't come close. To the love that the father feels for those who put their faith and trust in Christ.

[15:56] Because the father, this father, knows us so greatly. In Psalm 139, I preached on that last week. David is also writing about how great God is and how his omniscience, how he knows everything, and his omnipresence, how he's always present with us.

Because this God, the father, knows every thought about us. Is always with us. Even in those moments where it feels so dark, so gloom, that's so terrible, that you feel like you can't carry on in life.

This father is with you, is with us. David writes about this. But he still chooses to love us. He's the creator.

Because David also reveals that, reflects on this God. And he calls him the king. In verse 19, it says, See, he reveals him also as the God who is the great king of the universe.

All other kingdoms will fall under this God. No other kingdom rises above this God, this king of the universe. See, you can either worship a distant God on the outside, who appears to be on the outside of time, who actually ends up enslaving his people.

[17:19] Or you can either worship the God of self, of trying to accumulate material, to make your perfect image of yourself, whether in person or online. Or you can worship the God who reveals himself in history, makes a covenant with his people, who reveals himself as a loving father, who is the king of the universe.

But you might be thinking, Why should I worship this God? What does this have to do with me?

Point two, why to worship? We're going to look at verses 15 and 18 for this point, where it says, As for man, his days are like grass.

He flourishes like a flower of the field, for the wind passes over it and it is gone, and its place knows it no more. 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. See, man dies.

Humanity, everyone, all of us here will die someday unless Jesus returns first. But it says here that God, the historical God, the covenantal God, the father God, the king of the universe, is from everlasting to everlasting.

[18:42] One commentator on this part of the text uses an illustration to describe humanity as this. It's like humanity is like a bird that flies in the air.

You see it pass by, but there's no track of it, no trail that it leaves. Or you see a boat in the sea as it leaves port and goes out into the sea. There is no trace of it after it's gone.

There's nothing. Humans, when they die, they leave nothing. But this also shows that humans, because God is everlasting to everlasting, are eternal beings.

We are eternal beings, even though we face death. But we see this. This shows us we are eternal beings. And this shows us also, because we are eternal beings and because we die, when we go back to the book of Genesis again, in the first three chapters, it shows us the fall of man, the fall of humanity, where sin enters the world, where humanity tries to lift themselves up to God, but they just become crushed by it.

Sin enters in, and it actually pushes them away from God. We need somebody else to stand for us. But the thing that's interesting here, did you catch it? If God reveals himself as a father, as the loving father, he has to have a child to be a father, right?

[20:06] See, God has a son, and the son is Jesus. As you read in the New Testament, God sends his son. Here we see God entering into history even more, becoming a person, walking among us, walking on this earth, to take the sin that we so rightfully have put into the world, and the punishment that we deserve.

He takes it on himself. For he goes to the cross for you and for me, and for all those who have put their faith and trust in him, and he rises again.

See, in this psalm, Owen read it, in verses 2 to 5. These can only work with Jesus in the forefront of our minds.

Let's look at them. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquity and heals your disease, who redeems your life from the pit, who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy, who satisfies you with good so that your youth is renewed like the eagles.

Now, in Port Perry, where I was serving as an assistant pastor, I had the great pleasure of getting to know a man over the span of the two years I was there, and his name was Norman.

[21:23] And when I first met this man two years ago, this man, he was considering doing MAID. He was a shut-in in the community. He couldn't leave his house.

And the thing about Norman is that at a young age, he faced a lot of sickness. He faced a lot of disease. He was basically blind.

He could only see, like, blobs, the way he described it. He couldn't really see my face. Everything was going wrong for him his whole life. And the reason why he couldn't do MAID is because he actually didn't qualify for it because he wasn't terminally ill.

He just dealt with all these sicknesses and these things that plagued him his entire life. And when you get to know him, he was a nice guy, but he definitely had a lot of things that were going against him.

But the thing is with him, over the two years, I got to know him and visit him in the hospital when he would go from time to time, is that he got curious about what it means for me to be a pastor, and he started asking about Christianity.

[22 : 25] I never pushed it on him. I just wanted to meet with him and give him my time. And he started getting curious, and then over the two years, he got more curious.

And then before we left Port Prairie to come back to Ottawa, he gave his life to Christ. I got to see God do everything in his life. I didn't do anything. God worked in his life, and he gave his life to Christ.

And then this week, when I was driving to a meeting, I got a call, and then Norman died in his sleep on Tuesday night. See, Norman, for this text, this text is so real to him right now.

Because for Norman, all his sins are forgiven. His iniquity is forgiven. His sin is healed. His disease is healed. His life has been redeemed from the pit of hell.

He's been crowned with righteousness, with the steadfast love and mercy. He's been satisfied with the good of Christ. And his youth has been renewed. See, when you read this text, when it says, so that your youth is renewed like an eagle, what it's talking about here, it's not talking about that if you start blessing the Lord, you're going to start getting young.

[23 : 35] It's not a way to get young. What it's talking about here is a resurrection. David's talking about a resurrection here, new life. Norman's experiencing this youth.

And that same invitation is here for you. If you have put your faith and trust in Christ, your sins have been forgiven. You may experience suffering.

You may experience hardship in your life. But your disease of your heart, of the sin that was in it, has been healed. But our bodies still crumble because sin is still in the world and we wrestle with the flesh.

Our sins have been forgiven if you put your faith and trust in Christ. We see the gospel in verses 2 to 5.

But you also might be asking, well, here's Ice Cat. God's historical. He's revealed himself in his son. But how do I worship this God? How?

[24 : 32] If you're here and you put your faith and trust in Christ, that's the first step. That's the only step, really. But there's things you need to do within your life. So how do you worship?

Point 3. And we're going to look at verse 1 where David says, Bless the Lord, all my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name.

See, here we see something that we need to do constantly. We need to remind ourselves constantly of the great benefits, as it says in verse 2, of God and what he's done in our life through his son, Jesus Christ.

But to bless God seems so lofty. Seems like we shouldn't bless him. But what it means by bless, bless means worship. And we need to worship God for his greatness, for his reverence, for how he's the creator, the great king, the father of the universe.

And then when it says soul, that means your entire being. And then it says all that within me. Bless this Lord, all my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name. What it means, all that is within me.

[25 : 39] It means your body, my heart, your will, my emotions, your affections, my feelings, your desires. Everything needs to be given to the Lord.

And we need to bow our knees and worship the Lord. Worship Christ. But you also do it in another way, as David says in verses 11 and 13. I'm not going to read it, but he talks about the fear.

We need to worship in fear. Now this isn't a father coming home to punish his naughty boy or his naughty daughter. What it is, is that we fear the Lord in the sense of this great reverence, that this all-powerful being who knows us so deeply, who's such an intimately close God, is with us in our life.

That we fear him in that sense. Not in the sense where we cower, but in a sense of like, Lord, I give my life to you because you are so great. Worship in reverence.

We worship him because he gave his son. We worship him because he created the universe. And then there's the last sense of this great psalm that we should meditate on constantly.

[26 : 52] In the end of the psalm, the way the psalm is written, the way David writes it, is that it starts personal. In verses 1 to 5. And then it moves on to the people of God, the church, in verses 6 to 19.

And then it moves on to all of the universe creation in the next verses of 20 to 22. When it says this, or yeah, 2022, Bless the Lord, all you his angels, you mighty ones who do his word, obeying the voice of the word.

Bless the Lord, all his hosts, all his ministers, who do his will. Bless the Lord, all his works, in all places of his dominion. Bless the Lord, all my soul.

See, this is the only God. This is the God who should be worshipped. This is the God that when you put your faith and trust in Christ, you will stand with the entire universe, worshipping him at the end of time, when Jesus returns.

This is the God where we can gather together as a community of believers and bless the Lord and worship him. But we are only here because of his son and his work that he did on the cross.

[28 : 07] And we get to bless him. We get to worship him for that. And we get to have this father figure who is so close to us, who has given his son for us. And let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we thank you for sending your son into the world. We thank you that you have revealed yourself as a God who works within our history, who is a God who is not on the outskirts of time, but we can tangibly see you working through our time.

And Lord, we give you thanks and praise for that. Father, continually remind us of the great things you've done for us through your son. Please pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. In Jesus' name. Amen.