

Bless the Lord O My Soul

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[0 : 00] Psalm 103 Psalm 103 This is the kind of psalm that calls people to worship God and to thank God, but also spends most of its time giving us reasons why we should praise the Lord.

So you can see at the beginning, there's a call to worship. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me. Bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

And then the rest of the psalm, all the way to 19, is giving us reasons to praise the Lord. Then it ends with further calls to praise.

Bless the Lord, his angels. Bless the Lord, his hosts. Bless the Lord, all his works. Bless the Lord, O my soul. The point is that the psalmist is saying our praise is to be intelligent.

It's not simply praise the Lord, as if that's a meaningless call. But it's praise the Lord, and here is why and why and why.

[2 : 09] And here is why and why and why. We're to praise the Lord for these reasons. And if you want to know the central reason of this psalm, why we should praise the Lord, it's his amazing grace, his steadfast love.

If you look at verse 4, you'll see steadfast love. If you look at verse 8, steadfast love.

If you look at verse 11, steadfast love. If you look at verse 17, steadfast love. It runs through the whole psalm. The psalmist praises God for his astonishing grace and mercy.

And he calls on everyone who knows the same God. Indeed, he calls on the whole universe to come to know this God. And praise the God who is love.

The God who is grace. For his mercy and kindness to needy sinners. So let's try and work through the psalm in three sections.

[3 : 24] The praise seems to me to expand in widening circles. There are big reasons to praise God. Verses 1 to 5, I'll call my song.

The song of the child of God. Verses 6 to 18, I'll call our song. The song of the church of God.

And verses 19 to 22, I'll call their song. The song of the whole cosmos of God.

So section 1 is saying Christianity is personal. Me and God. Section 2 is saying Christianity is communal.

It involves a whole people throughout the world and throughout the ages. And section 3 is saying Christianity is cosmic. It involves the universe.

[4 : 30] It involves the universe. And will one day involve a new universe under Jesus. So first of all then, my song. Verses 1 to 5.

The song of the child of God. Now these first five verses are very, very personal. You see that David is talking to himself actually.

He's encouraging himself to praise. He says, bless the Lord, O my soul. And all that is within me, bless his holy name.

We sometimes find that in the Psalms. Look at Psalm 42 and 43. Where the psalmist is saying to himself, why are you cast down, O my soul?

Then he exhorts himself to hope in God. People say talking to yourself is a sign of madness. Well, sometimes in the Psalms, talking to yourself is a sign of spiritual sanity.

[5 : 42] And here the psalmist says to himself, bless the Lord, O my inmost being. He exhorts himself to worship.

It reminds us, of course, that God wants inward worship, my inmost being, to praise his holy name. It's also significant that he wants to bless the Lord himself.

Before he goes on to recount the Lord's specific blessings to him. God is more important than the blessings to the psalmist. The blessings are important.

And the blessings are expressions of God's love. But he still recognizes that to have God is more important than anything else. So he blesses the Lord before he recounts his many blessings. And so he's focusing here on remembering God's goodness to him. Forget not all his benefits. We know in our own lives that the danger of forgetting is a very serious one.

[6 : 52] We have it right through the Bible. There are great passages, for example, in Deuteronomy. About Israel forgetting the Lord. Being warned about the danger of forgetting the Lord.

And actually, eventually, in danger of, it says, forgetting the Lord who gave her birth. Forgetting the rock himself.

Perhaps you can illustrate it in terms of the pain that a parent feels from a thankless child. A child who's looked after and loved and cared for.

And a child who grows up and has no sense of gratitude. No sense of love. Doesn't want to know the parents, perhaps.

Is embarrassed by them because they've grown up and gone away. And they feel they're too sophisticated. And they've changed. And they're not interested anymore in much contact with home.

[7 : 51] You can imagine the pain of the heart of a parent who has a thankless child. Think of God. Think of our Father.

Does he not want us to remember him as well as his benefits? And come to him and say, our Father. And show him that we love him.

Let me run through the benefits that he itemizes. I think there are five of them. First of all, the Lord forgives. Verse 3.

Who forgives all your iniquity. Is that the first thing you would have thought of? The first thing to thank God for.

According to the Bible, it's absolutely primary. Remember how Jesus spoke about this famous story of the paralyzed man.

[8 : 49] You have it at the beginning of Matthew chapter 9. And he says to him, take heart, son. Your sins are forgiven. And people around might have thought, why is he telling him to cheer up?

This man's paralyzed. He's come with this problem. He's been brought to Jesus with a very specific need that's obvious to everyone.

But Jesus, first of all, says, your need is spiritual. Take heart. Your sins are forgiven. And then, in the second place, he heals him.

It's a wonderful thing to know that you've been forgiven. Everybody here tonight who knows Jesus for themselves, whether it's a distant conversion event in terms of time or a very recent one, you know the joy of sins forgiven.

And even if it happened a long time ago, you can probably still summon up that day, that night, if there was a moment like that.

[9 : 56] And these feelings and these emotions and that relief, you remember what it is to know that you've been forgiven through Jesus.

Somebody once said, if you really understand what it is to be forgiven, if you really understand that you're a hell-deserving sinner, and you really understand what it cost God, and you really understand what it means to have all your sins forgiven and forgotten forever, then you'll never be disappointed with God.

Whatever happens in God's providence. And there are many disappointments that we will all have in life. Many struggles. But if we really understood what it means to be forgiven, and to be forgiven forever of every single sin we ever commit, then we would have no sense of disappointment.

Because God has done the greatest thing and the most amazing thing, and we are secure in that. Then the Lord heals, who heals all your diseases.

Some people think this is a reference to spiritual things, guilt, but I think it's more likely physical. And it's not that he's saying he never has anything that he doesn't get healed miraculously.

[11 : 26] I don't think that's what he's saying. He's not obviously saying that every believer gets healed of everything they'll ever have. But he's saying, every time I've been healed, it's the Lord who did it.

That's what he's saying. Every time you've been healed, it's God that did it. It may have happened naturally.

Something just seemed to sort itself in a few days. May have happened medically by getting professional help. And it was sorted. It may even have happened miraculously. But however it happened, it was all of the Lord, he's saying. It was all of the Lord's providence. Every good thing I enjoy, every healing I enjoy, is because God has been at work. Sometimes through means. Sometimes in very mysterious ways that I don't know about. But however it happened, it's God that did it.

[12:32] He heals all your diseases. Then he says the Lord redeems. Verse 4. Redeems your life from the pit. From death.

Maybe he's had a recent brush with death. Many times he's been in danger of death. And he's been rescued. Of course, the New Testament makes it very clear.

And I'm sure it's being taught here as well. That there's another pit that we are rescued from by grace. The pit of hell.

And this God is the God who if we're ever rescued from death, he's rescued us from death. And if we've been rescued spiritually from hell.

He's rescued us from that pit. And even when we die, he will rescue us. Because he will take us to be with himself.

[13:33] And then in the world to come, he will rescue us again. Because he'll give us a new body to live in a new world forever. So when you think of the pit as physical, God rescues us in all kinds of ways.

When you think of the pit as spiritual, God rescues us through the Lord Jesus Christ. Only the Lord redeems from the pit. Then he says the Lord crowns.

Who crowns with steadfast love and mercy. Here's David the king. Talking about being crowned with honor.

It's a royal thing. But I don't think he's speaking as a king. As somebody different from the rest. I think he's saying as an ordinary believer.

I am crowned with covenant love and mercy. He's not saying I'm a king who's been crowned. He's saying I'm a believer. And like every other believer.

[14:37] I am crowned with mercy and honor by God. He is saying I think to every one of us. In Jesus, everyone can feel like a king.

Because we have a father in heaven. Who's sovereign over the universe. And everybody who comes to trust in Jesus. Becomes a son or a daughter.

If you don't think it's too corny to say. You become a prince or a princess. In the royal family. So it's not just David.

Everybody who comes to know the Lord. Becomes royal. Has royal dignity and honor. Everyone in Jesus.

Can feel like a king. Belonging to the family of the sovereign. And on the way to the palace of the king. Forever and forever.

[15:39] And then fifthly. The Lord satisfies. Verse five. Who satisfies you with good. Many people in our world tonight. Would say. Well good things don't satisfy.

The bad stuff of this world. Satisfies. But it only seems to satisfy. For a little while. Then you need it again.

You need another kick. Or another high. You need something more. The bad stuff. Seems to satisfy. But doesn't. But the good stuff.

God stuff. That satisfies me deep down. And satisfies forever. Forever. Ultimately. Only God can satisfy. Because we were made.

For God. And so this man feels. Renewed. As God blesses him again. He feels that his. Youth is being renewed.

[16:39] Like the eagle. Spiritually. He's able to mount up on wings. Because God is. Blessing him. So the Lord has satisfied him. So these things he says.

The Lord forgives. The Lord heals. The Lord redeems. The Lord crowns. And the Lord satisfies. He's recounting his own.

Experience of God. A personal song. Personal experience. What would your list be? As God has blessed you. If you were going to write a song.

About God's blessings. In your life. What would your. Top five. Things. Be. The psalmist is saying to us. Try and remember.

How good God has been to you. Try and. Count his blessings. Enumerate them. And use them as fuel. For thankfulness.

[17 : 36] To God. And of course also. Just in the passing. All of these things. Are pointers. To the complete. Blessing. Of heaven.

If. If. You think. You know. These kinds of. Posh restaurants. That. Have. Have. Taster menus. And you can go in.

And you can have. Seven little courses. Or ten little courses. And they're sort of. Taster menu. Of. All that might be available. If you want to go another time. And choose one of them.

As a main course. This is a sort of. Taster menu. Of heaven's. Blessings. If you think of these. Five things. The Lord forgives.

Well. In heaven. You'll know. That all your sins. Are behind you. Forever. Never to sin. Again.

Healing. You'll know. That everything. Has been healed.

[18 : 32] No disease. Or decay. Forever. The Lord redeems. From death. And hell. You will know. That you'll never die again. And you're in heaven.

Never. To worry about hell. The Lord crowns. You're. In the palace. As it were. You're crowned.

With glory. And honor. And you'll have that.

Dignity. Forever. And the Lord satisfies. You'll be fully satisfied. In every aspect. Of your being. You will never. Again. Experience.

Dissatisfaction. Because every part. Of your humanity. Will be fully. Satisfied. By God. Forever. And forever. And forever.

This is a taster menu. Of heaven's. Final satisfaction. The psalmist. Knows it now. And he knows. He'll have it. Forever. My song. I hope it's your song.

[19 : 27] That you trust in Jesus. Secondly. Our song. Verses. Six to eighteen. The song. Of the church. Of God. I'll need to go through this.

A bit more. Quickly. But it's reminding us. That. Our salvation. Is. Held. And enjoyed. With other people. We're thinking of that.

This morning. And back. We started. Looking at the Lord's prayer. Just. Over two weeks. And it's interesting. That it begins. With. Our father. He's of course.

My father. Father. But Jesus says. Say. Our father. Remember. At the very beginning. That you are not just. Somebody.

Who's. Only. In an individualized. Relationship. With God. But your personal. Relationship. With them. Also means. That you're connected. With the rest. Of the family.

[20 : 24] And you're all together. In kinship. With one another. Because you're all. In relationship. With the same. Father. Now. In these verses.

Six to eighteen. He moves from. The singular. To the plural. He's been talking about. My. Now he talks about.

People. In the plural. He's recalling. God's mercy. To. His people. Israel. And the kinds of things. That this gracious. God. Has done.

For needy. Israel. And all that. God has done. You notice. Is righteous. The section. Begins. Verse six. The Lord works.

Righteousness. And I think. It ends. In verses. Seventeen. And eighteen. Which. Seventeen. Has. His. Righteousness. I just say that. Because that's why.

[21 : 17] I bracket it. The ESV. Has. It's six to nineteen. But I put it. Six to eighteen. And the thought. Begins. In righteousness. And ends. In righteousness.

So I. Would tie these verses. Together. Now. A couple of things here. Again. He's saying here. As he looks. As he looks out.

And as he looks back. At the church of God. At the people of God. He's saying. First of all. We are his people. And then he's saying. We are his family.

These two things. First. We are his people. If you look at verses six. To twelve. In verses six to twelve.

He's. He's thinking about. What God did. For his people. In the past. You look at verse seven. You can see the reference. To Moses. And his.

[22 : 12] Acts for. Israel. This. This God of. Of righteousness. And of justice. Who was concerned. For his oppressed people. He.

He. Acted. For them. In. Rescue. In the exodus. And that exodus. Theme. Is continuing. If you look at verse eight. If you know.

That. Language. In verse eight. It takes. The psalmist. Back. To exodus. Thirty four. In verse six. To where God.

Said these same words. And that was in the incident. Of the golden calf. Stressing how gracious. God. Is. It's a classic instance.

Of God's. Mercy. The kind of mercy. That's celebrated. In the following. Verses. So. Verses. Eight. And nine. You see the contrast here.

[23 : 09] Between anger. And love. God is angry. For a little while. But. His love. Is steadfast. You know. Love. Is. What he is.

God. Is love. But his anger. Against his people. Was temporary. And verse ten. Then he says. He doesn't give us. What we deserve. And we say. Thank goodness. For that. God. Didn't give his people. What they deserved. And God.

Doesn't give us. What. We. Deserve. I want you. I want to point out. Something here. I'm sorry. I'm. I'm. A little.

Obsessed. With. With. The sort of details. That. That I. Like. And. Maybe. That nobody else. Is. Terribly. Interested. In. But.

[24 : 03] You see. The language. Here. In verse ten. Of. Doesn't. Repay us. And. The word. Therefore. Repay.

Is. Actually. The same. Root word. As in. The end of verse two. You have. For benefits. So. What it's saying is. Verse two. God.

Gives us. His. Amazing. Gifts. Okay. He. Gifts. Us. Things. But. Verse ten.

Is. Saying. That the most important thing. Actually. Is. What he doesn't. Give us. Or gift us. He. Doesn't.

Gift us. According. To our. Iniquities. Amazing. Thing. Isn't it? The. Most amazing. Thing.

[24 : 57] Is. Not. What God. Gives us. Day by day. The most amazing. Thing. Is. What God. Doesn't. Give us. He. Doesn't. Give us.

What our sins. Deserve. He. Withholds. That gift. What our sins. Deserved. He. Refuses. To repay us. According.

To our sins. Because. As we know. Very clearly. From the new. Testament. Someone. Else. Has taken. What our sins.

Deserved. He. Doesn't. Give us. What our sins. Deserve. Because. He. Has given. Jesus. What our sins. Deserve.

He. Has. Gifted. All of that. Guilt. And. All of that. Judgment. To Jesus. So that. He. Might. Never. Give us.

[25 : 52] What we. Deserve. And so. In verses. Eleven. And twelve. He. Has. These. Two. Pictures. Sort of. Spatial. Pictures.

Of God's. Kindness. In terms. Of. The height. Of the heavens. Above the earth. So great. Is his love. Towards those.

Who fear him. Big as the sky. As our girls. Used to say. How much. Do you love me? Big as the sky. They would say.

That's what children. Say. That's what the bible. Says. About God's love. You say. To God. How much. Do you love me? God. And God.

Says. Big as the sky. His thoughts. Are not our thoughts. His thoughts. Are heavenly thoughts. But he loves us. As big as the sky. He loves us.

[26 : 46] As big as the universe. And then the other picture. Other spatial picture. Is not. That away. But that away. East and west. As far as the east.

Is from the west. So far. He removes our transgressions. From us. We say. East is east. West is west. Never the twain shall meet.

That's true of our sins. If we trust in Jesus. They're on the opposite horizon. Somebody was pointing out to me. They were imagining an observer.

You're looking at one horizon. Your back is to the other horizon. You can't see them both. Simultaneously. And that's what we're being told.

About our sins. That they are on. Another horizon. East is east. West is west. Never the twain.

[27 : 45] Shall meet. They are on completely. Different. Different. Different. Horizons. Quickly. Let me move. We are his family. Verses 13 to 18. Here you have the language of.

God as father in verse 13. God's people are family. They have a kinship with one another. Because God is their father.

As a father shows compassion to his children. So the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. I don't have time to go through this in detail.

But he goes on to stress God's fatherly love for us. Knowing our weakness and our frailty. He knows our frame. He remembers that we are dust.

It's a wonderful thing to see that in the Old Testament. Of course. God's complete knowledge of us. Understands better than we will ever know.

[28 : 44] That we are frail. Physical. Human. Weak creatures. And at last we go to the dust. And what's so moving about the New Testament too.

Is that the son of God came. And took a human nature. And had to live. In weakness. And in frailty. And in hunger.

And thirst. And sorrow. God in the Old Testament here is saying. I know omnisciently. Everything about your frame. In Jesus.

He's saying. I know from the inside. What it's like to be a weak. Frail. Human. Being. God understands us.

And God is concerned for us. He goes on to talk about. The grass and the flowers from verse 15. How quickly human life goes.

[29 : 41] How short life is. Everybody who's young here. Thinks that's nonsense. But everybody who's old here.

Knows how true it is. And you tell younger people. I tell younger people. How quickly life vanishes. And they say. Don't be ridiculous. It seems ages to wait.

Till the summer holidays. Seems ages till Christmas comes round again. Takes forever. Forever. But we know. How quickly these years go by.

And the psalmist is saying. That these years vanish so quickly. They're gone. But then the great thing is. Verse 17. But God's love is everlasting.

We're just here for a very short time. But God's word. Is permanent. We are transient. But he is so permanent.

[30 : 42] And his love. Is from all eternity. To all eternity. His love for us. God's people know. Had no beginning. It will have no end.

His love for you. In Christ. Is from everlasting. To everlasting. You as a Christian. Have an eternal home.

In the heart of God. You were always there. In his heart. He always loved you. And you have had. And will always have.

Eternal security. In the heart. Of God. And he's ours through the generations. You see the reference to children's children. We will go.

Or children will still be here. And their children. And their children. And their children. We will vanish. From the scene of time. But God's love.

[31 : 41] Never vanishes. And we can trust our children. And our children's children. And our children's children's children. To that love. And we can know. And we can hope.

And we can pray. That God will continue to work. In our families. Through the generations. As we leave them. In the hand of God. And who knows all this.

We are his people. We are his family. If you look at verse 11. And 13. And 17. See that recurring phrase. Those who fear him.

Or those who. Revere him. Those who have a reverence for God. Who recognize him as God. Who recognize their own sinnership.

And weakness. And who have thrown themselves. On the mercy of God. Those who reverence God. Those who have an awe for God. Those who have given their lives to God.

[32 : 40] And who worship God. They are the ones. And all of them. Who enjoy this. And who sing the song. Of the church of God. I wish I had time.

To expand on this. Because I feel often myself. That I don't have enough of a sense of history. Maybe part of a generation who grew up. Without enough of a sense of history.

But we're being told here. That this is our history. Don't know if you think like that. When you read the Old Testament. It's not about the Jews. It's about us. It's part of the story of the people of God. It's our story. I know they were Jews. But it's our story. The same God.

When we read the New Testament. It's our story. Those who follow Jesus. And everything Jesus did. Was done. For his people. So when Jesus is doing anything.

[33 : 40] He was doing it for you. As a Christian. Every Christian should know that. As you read the Gospels. Everything Jesus was doing. He was doing for you. And then when.

He died. He died for you. And he rose again. He rose for you. But right through his life. He was doing it for you. It's your story. In the Gospels.

It's your story in the Acts. It's your story. In the whole of church history. These are our people. The people who love the same Jesus. You may have never lived through a revival. But the history of revivals. On the Isle of Lewis. It's your story. It's part of the story. Of the people of God. And it's a reason for us to sing.

As the people of God. That this God brought revival. And this God can bring revival again. For people just like us. So let's sing a communal song.

[34 : 39] A historical song. A song that takes up the Old Testament. And the New Testament. And the whole of church history. And all of experience through the ages. And across the colors and the cultures today.

Wherever Jesus has been known. And is known. And will be known. It's part of one story. One covenant of grace. And it's our story.

And we should feel part of something really big. I may have said it here before. But it's a bit of an obsession. When I hear people say.

Christians are so narrow. There's nobody in the world with a greater horizon. Than a Christian. We believe in a bigger universe.

Than Dawkins and the rest of them believe in. We believe in things they don't believe exist. We believe in God. We believe in heaven. We believe in the angels. We believe in a new heavens and a new earth.

[35 : 36] We believe in a much bigger world than they believe in. And we have this huge history that we believe in. And we have this huge family. Of all colors and cultures that we believe in.

We are big people. With a big mind. And a big heart. And a big view. Big perspectives. Eternal horizons.

And this song is saying. This is your song. This is our song. This is the song of the church of God. And thirdly quickly. Just in a word or two. Their song. Verses 19 to 22.

The song now of the cosmos of God. In verse 19. You see. He's about to summon the whole of creation to worship. Verse 19. The Lord is king in heaven.

Okay. Heaven above. You can't get higher than that. And the Lord is king over all. You can't get bigger than that. So the Lord is king of everything.

[36 : 40] Everywhere. And everyone. Everywhere. And then verses 20 and 21. He looks upward. To the angels.

And maybe also to the stars. But certainly to the angels. And he calls on the angels. To worship. And then in verse 22.

The beginning of verse 22. He looks outwards. I'm saying these two things. He looks upward. To heaven. And maybe also the heavens. And he looks outward.

To all God's works. Everywhere. Everywhere. And he's saying. I want everything. And everyone. Everywhere. To praise the Lord.

And he knows that one day. Everywhere. Will praise the Lord. Because God will banish. All those who do not love him.

[37 : 38] And know him. And they will be. Outside. Revelation says. In the symbolism of that book. And God will bring in. A new heavens. And a new earth.

And everything. In that new world. Will redound. To the praise. Of God. So he's looking. Upward. As high as he can look.

And he looks outward. As far as he can go. And he says. Everyone and everything. Up there. Should worship. And everyone and everything. Out there. Should worship. And all of creation. Will one day. Worship. And he calls for their song. Because Christianity. Is. Cosmic. My song.

Our song. Their song. I'm going to leave it there. Apart from reading something. Which will take one minute to read. Somebody said to me.

[38 : 38] On Friday here in Stornoway. When they heard I was preaching. Well don't have four sing psalms. Well. I'm going to read a hymn. So.

If they didn't want four sing psalms. I'm just going to read it. I'm not going to sing it. But if you know the hymn. Praise my soul. The king of heaven. It's actually.

A paraphrase. Of this psalm. If you read it. If you think about it. You'll hear this psalm. It's various sections. Running through it. I'm going to read the five verses.

Of the hymn. And I want you to think of it. As a prayer of praise. And to see. If you can pray. This prayer of praise.

As we finish looking at Psalm 103. Can you make this prayer. Your own. Personal praise. Praise my soul. The king of heaven.

[39 : 32] To his feet. Thy tribute bring. Ransomed. Healed. Restored. Forgiven. Who like me. His praise should sing. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him.

Praise the everlasting king. Praise him for his grace and favor. To our fathers in distress. Praise him still the same forever. Slow to chide.

And swift to bless. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Glorious in his faithfulness.

Father like he tends and spares us. Well our feeble frame he knows.

In his hands he gently bears us. Rescues us from all our foes. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him.

Praise him. Widely as his mercy flows. Frail as summer's flower we flourish.

Blows the wind and it is gone. But while mortals rise and perish. God endures unchanging on.

Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him.

[40 : 30] Praise the high eternal one. Angels help us to adore him. Ye behold him face to face. Sun and moon bow down before him.

Dwellers all in time and space. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise him. Praise with us. The God of grace. Amen.

Lord bless and pity us.

shine on us with thy face. Shine on us with thy face. Shine on us with thy face. God bless and pity us. God bless and pity us. God bless and pity us.

Shine on us with thy face. God bless and pity us. God bless and pity us. God bless and pity us.

[41 : 49] God bless and pity us. God bless and pity us. May know thy saving grace. Let people praise thee, Lord.

Let people all be praised. O let the nations be loved.

In songs their voices raise. pursue thee, Lord. Weil justly people ■ Photograph ■ ■ On earth through nations all Let people Praise thee, Lord.

Let them Praise thee both great and small. The earth her fruit shall yield, her God shall bless his name.

God shall God's bless, men shall in field unto us at most end.

[43 : 31] We ask, Lord, that grace, mercy, and peace from Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be ours tonight and always. Amen.