

# Grace Manifested

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[ 0 : 00 ] Amen. Thank you so much. Psalm 103, what a great prayer to ask God to give us a servant's heart. Psalm 103, we'll look at this chapter together. Hope you got the handout there if you would like to follow along. We started the night before the service, right when it started, with a call of praise. And here the psalmist calls that he would owe my soul and all that is within me, bless his holy name, bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. He exhorts himself with his whole being to bless the Lord, and he exhorts himself not to forget the benefits.

That's what I'd like to do with our time in here is look at this psalm and remind you not to forget how God has shown his grace to us. I think last week I told you about my first sermon about Eutychus and how it was all built around one joke and it landed pretty bad. Well, maybe my third or fourth sermon I had an idea where I was going to talk about how to build the church because, you know, I was 16. Who else is more qualified to know how to build a church than a 16-year-old?

And so where the sermon started was with a tool belt. And so I had the tool belt and then I was trying to match all the things in the tool belt to what I really wanted to say, all right? This isn't how you prepare a sermon. It's how many people prepare a sermon, all right? And so I was taking the hammer and I took the nail and I was spiritualizing all these things. And so when you do that, you're saying, these are the things I would like to say. Now let me go all throughout the Bible and find a verse that goes to it. Well, we have portions of scripture like if you wanted to preach a message on how gracious our God is, you don't have to bounce all over throughout the Bible. You could just take a walk down a psalm and see it. And that's what we're going to have here is at least seven different ways that God has manifested his grace to us. Admiring gratitude shines through every line of this hymn to the God of all grace. I read that early on in studying this and just knew that this was going to be something I very much needed. Admiring gratitude shines through every line of this hymn to the God of all grace. As Tyler spoke about, we live our lives with those who need to see grace of God manifested in their lives. They need to see a Christian witness. And then you also have other people that are witnessing the grace of God. This week, I dealt with two polar extremes of somebody that loved very much that has seen the grace of God and renewing his mind and just rejoicing in that and just the great blessing of it. And then also dealing with somebody who just seems like they've never seen the grace of God. They don't understand the love of God. They don't understand the grace of God.

And what does that do to a person? And your view, you know, forget who said it, but what you think, maybe A.W. Tozer, whoever, whatever you think about God is the most important thing about you. You know, what you think about God is the most important thing about you. What you think about the grace of God is just going to radically change the way you live your life out? Tyler said, as a person with a full tank of gas, right? If you're the manifold wisdom of God that's been given to us, the Bible would say would allow us to live a life of overflow that is generous.

Before I read the chapter to you, I give you a background reading in Exodus. As we speak about the grace of God, we go back to the time of the children of Israel. They committed idolatry at Mount Sinai. God had just given the Ten Commandments. God had told Moses that he was going to destroy all the people, very much like in the days of Noah. It was going to start all over with Moses.

[ 3 : 31 ] And then Moses interceded for them, and he prayed that God would not destroy them. And then God, in fact, responded to the prayer of Moses. And in his response to Moses, he says, in Exodus 34, he says, I'm going to reveal myself to you in a special way. Listen to how it's said in Exodus 34, 3. And no man shall come up with thee, neither let any man be seen throughout all the mount, neither let the flocks nor herds feed before that mount. So here's Moses getting ready to meet with the Lord. Then verse number 5, and the Lord descended in the cloud and stood with him there and proclaimed the name of the Lord and stood with him there. That's why I said it was going to be revealed in a special and unique way, and that he is going to proclaim the name of the Lord.

We have a missionary in Dearborn, Michigan named David Gates. And many years ago, we were at a place and we said, go up there and just talk about the goodness of God. And several people couldn't make it but two or three minutes, which is a real shame. David Gates, I think, is still going from that night. He went up there and he just went one thing after another about the goodness of God. It was just in his heart. God used him in Muslim country now in Dearborn in a Muslim city. But having more than somebody like that, have the God of heaven describe himself to you is that unique thing that Moses got to have. And so the Lord passed by before him and proclaimed the Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin. And that will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and gave upon the children's children unto the third and to the fourth generation. The reason that God forgives is because he is compassionate and gracious.

Moses doesn't have to talk God into this position. He doesn't have to say this about God. God's saying it about himself. And the reason that God forgives in response to Moses' prayer is to teach the people the need for a mediator to intercede for them. Moses was not convincing God to be a certain way.

God said, I am going to show myself. It flows out of who God is. It's not a reaction to persuasion. Maybe growing up there was somebody and you never knew what you were going to get from them.

You're afraid. I'm afraid to take this to mom or dad. I just don't know which version of them I'm going to get or whoever it was in your life. But the compassion and the long suffering of God is who he is. And it always flows from him. Exodus 33, 19, it says, and he said, I will make all my goodness pass before them. And I will proclaim the name of the Lord before them. And I will be gracious to whom I'll be gracious and I will show mercy on whom I will show mercy. So there's Moses getting to learn about who our God is and that it flows from his character because those are the attributes of who he is. And so that's some background reading to get us to the Psalm 103 because you're going to find that theme as I read through it. First one, bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all of his benefits, who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies, who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles. The Lord executeth righteousness and judgment for all those that are oppressed. He made known his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of

[ 7 : 20 ] Israel. The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy. He will not always chide, neither will he keep his anger forever. He hath not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is thy mercy towards them that fear him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust. As for man, his days are as grass. As a flower of the field, so he flourishes. For the wind passes over it, and it is gone. And the place thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him and his righteousness unto children's children. To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember the commandments to do them. The Lord hath prepared his throne in heavens, and his kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, ye his angels. They excel in strength that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word. Bless ye the Lord, all ye hosts, ye ministers of his that do his pleasure. Bless the Lord, all his works in all the places of dominion. Bless the Lord,

O my soul. Ends with four doxologies. Four calls to praise him from the angels to the host, from his works, all of creation in himself. In the psalm, what we see is we see a wayward family, and we see a gentle and a compassionate and a forgiving father. If you think of verse number one, it says all those that were oppressed. And so, who was oppressed? Who is it talking about? That takes us back to Exodus. These people, the children of Israel, have been an oppressed people. But how did they get that? Who was oppressed as the children of Israel? But how did they get that way? How did they get to the land of Egypt? How did they get there so that they were having to build these things with no straw given to them? They were working around the clock. They had the burden of this country on them, and they had sinned their way into captivity. And the Lord executed righteousness and judgment upon them as they were oppressed. And here's a great picture, the greatest picture in the Old Testament of redemption here in the Exodus is that God is taking care of his oppressed people. And this is an act of tremendous grace that God revealed himself to them. Verse 7, it says, and he made known his ways unto Moses, his acts upon the children of Israel. And so, the Exodus that

I read you previously, there was Moses. Here's an oppressed people, a poor people, a downtrodden people. And in the middle of all of that, God made himself known unto Moses. He stood there with them, and he said, this is who I am. And so, what are some of those ways that have been made known to Moses and also been made known to you? If you think back over your life and your testimony, what are some of the ways that you have learned about the goodness and graciousness of God? I could stop here right now, and I would think that we could fill our remaining time with you telling me the answers to those questions. But let me remind you of some of them. First off, the reluctance of his anger. The Lord is merciful and gracious. He is slow to anger. He is plenteous in mercy. What a description. Let us consider how wonderful it is that that is our God, and that God is not like man. Rather than looking for reasons to be angry with us, which are plenteous, he looks for opportunities to be gracious to us.

That is our God, and we know that about him. How wonderful is that? My wife likes to send me quotes all day long to try to influence my way of thinking. I know what she's up to, all right?

And one of them she's sent to me lately is this one. It says, let their storm meet our calm. Let their storm meet our calm. When you're finding people that are in a storm, let them find the peace of God ruling and reigning in your heart. Anytime that you have been distraught, that you've been worried, that you have not been trusting God's word, what have you found when you come to God? Have you ever found him to be anything but merciful and gracious and slow, the anger and plenteous in mercy? So one of the ways that God had manifested his grace to us is that his reluctance of his anger, that he is slow and gracious towards us, slow to anger and merciful, and that's what we should want in our lives. That is a reflection of God that should be seen in our lives, and it's so challenging, isn't it? That would be an appropriate place to say amen. How challenging is it to be slow to anger, to be merciful and gracious, and to be long-suffering? And then next we see here the generosity of his mercy. He has not dealt with us after our sins, nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. Could you imagine someone fully knowing everything about you? If they did, you would only be able to request grace from them, all right? And that was weird, wasn't it? All right, let's move on. It scared me a little bit, all right? If somebody was to know everything about you, if somebody came to you and said,

[ 12 : 40 ] I know everything about you, you wouldn't even begin to defend yourself, would you? You would just say, I need grace. There's a story of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. He wrote the Sherlock Holmes series.

It said, may not be true, but it still works for a sermon illustration, that he sent out a telegram the 12 men of great virtue and respect in society. And the telegram said, flee, all has been discovered.

And within 24 hours, the story goes that all 12 men fled the country. And it's often quoted as an example of shame of a guilty conscience. It's that God knows completely about you. He knows everything about you. And you don't have to flee. You don't have to hide. You don't have to do like Adam in the garden and try to hide yourself from the creator of the universe because he has not dealt with us according to our sins. So we have no argument. We have no plea, right? It is enough that Jesus died, that he died for me. That's our only argument that we'd have. We'd plea for that. So God has shown his grace to us in life by not dealing with this according to our sins. The next in verse 11, for as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him. Now we're talking about the magnitude of God's love. I'm sure many of you dads, maybe moms in here have told the kids, how much do I love you? I love you this much, all right? And then you get into the competition.

I love you to the moon and back. And then you talk about it. But we're limited. Just as limited as I am to stretch my hands out. You're about as tall as you are. High, tall, right? My arms could go out maybe 5'10". That's as far as I can demonstrate how much I can love my kids. But God's ability to demonstrate his love would be that exponentially bigger. And it would be from high above the earth.

As far as the heaven is from the earth, that's how great his mercy is towards us. And so now we could see how abundant that it is. There's so many different ways to see how just abundant God is.

[ 14 : 37 ] We could think about the universe. There is so much universe we don't even need others in just to show the wisdom of God, right? It would seem like you would just kind of stop and be a blank canvas at a certain point. Like, you don't need any of this. You're never going that far. But it just goes beyond anything we can imagine. His love in knowing everything about us and then loving us, it's high above the earth. Nothing compares to it. When we sing, there should be no confusion that we're singing about the love of God and not the love of anybody else because it would not compare. God wants us to know that the love He has for us. Now, I'd ask you, have you meditated on the magnitude of God's love for you today? Did you have a good day? How did you feel today? Was it a good day? Well, let me ask you, if it wasn't a good day, how much time did you spend meditating on the love of God? Because after some time doing that, all those other things that have made it a cruddy day just really begin to kind of disappear. It's just nothing. There's nothing the world can match. There's nothing they can lay down where you cannot go to the depth of God's love and say, this is greater. This happened today, but this is greater. It's not always greater. John 17, 23 through 26, such a special passage for us.

It's all the Bible special, but this is special in the fact that it would be Jesus's prayer for us as the disciples of the disciples that would come. And He says, I in them and thou in me that thou may be perfect in one and that the world may know that thou hast sent me and has loved them as thou hast loved me. Father, I would they also whom thou hast given me be with me. There I am that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me for thou lovest me before the foundation of the world.

Oh, righteous father, the world has not known thee, but I have known thee and these have known that thou has sent me. And I have declared it to them, thy name and will declare it that the love wherewith thou has loved me may be in them and I in them. Jesus in his final days before going to the cross, wanted us to understand the love that he had for us and how that has now enabled us to love one another. Verse 12, as far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. The comprehensiveness of his forgiveness. As far as the east is from the west. I didn't check with Thatcher before saying this. I'm going to look at Thatcher, Graham and Chris. They know stuff here.

Unlike the north and the south, right? The north, you go north and eventually you'll start going south, right? At a certain point you can't say you're going north because you're obviously going south. But you can't do that with east and the west, right? You can always go east, continually going east and west. So east and west are never going to come together. And so that speaks about how far the comprehensiveness of his forgiveness. They will never come together.

It's incredible. We should consider that. If you haven't already today, as we get ready to take the Lord's Supper on Sunday morning together, you should meditate and thank God that his grace has been shown to you by how comprehensive his forgiveness is. How many times have you forgot something? And think about how important it would be that he would not leave something out. But when he died on the cross, he died for all your sins. All of those. There's nothing that was left on the table. As far as the east is from the west, he has removed our transgressions from us. Like a father pitieth his children, verse 13, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. This speaks of a tender, the tenderness of his compassion that God is so tender to us. It's like children that we don't know. He came to earth. He not only put on our flesh, but he put on our feelings. When he came to earth, he not only put on the flesh, but he put on our feelings. He knows what it's like. He knows what you're going through. He knows how to be compassionate towards you. Jesus knows all about our sorrows. We sing this. He doesn't just perform compassionate acts, but he is compassionate. He felt compassionate. He looked out on the multitude, he was moved with compassion. He looked upon an individual. I mean, it's one thing to care for a group of people and say, well, there's so many of them you have to care. But then he just looks upon a woman who had lost her child in Luke 7, 13, and he was moved with compassion towards her and said, weep not.

[ 19 : 01 ] And then we're given a story. Jesus gives a story for us to say, I want you to know about the heavenly father. And how does he tell a story? He tells a story where the younger son had gathered all together and he took a journey into a far country and he wasted it. But when he came back, his dad was moved with compassion towards his son. And so that reminds us of the grace that is shown towards us, that our God is gracious towards us and that he is tender in the way that he shows his graciousness.

He's not like an accountant that would come to him and say, okay, it's cleared, leave. He's like a father that would hold you in his arms and say, I have forgiven you. Hey, I know you don't believe me, but let me keep whispering it into your ear. Let me rock you into the night. Let me tell you this, even when you don't think it's true. Just like a dad would try to comfort his children in a storm because they don't feel like they're safe. The father would hold you and say, I am gracious towards you. I am loving you. I'm long suffering. Verse 14, for he knoweth our frame. He remembereth that we are dust. The familiarity of God's understanding of us. Do you sometimes feel as if no one knows you?

No one really knows your hopes, your fears, your dreams, and no one really understands you. No one listens to you. No one cares about you. Continuing with this thought of him being a father, he says that he knoweth our frame. He just knows everything about the position that we're in, knows everything about our circumstances. And what he also remembers about you is that you are just dust, that he created you, that without his help and involvement in your life, that you're completely helpless without him.

He knows this. Psalm 8, 4, and 6. What is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him? For thou art made a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor.

Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of thy hands. Thou hast put all things under his feet. This God knows everything about us, and he still loves us. John 21, 17.

[ 21 : 12 ] And he saith unto Simon, the son of Jonas, lovest thou me? And Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things. Thou knowest that I love thee. She saith unto him, feed my sheep. Peter isn't saying thou knowest all things. You know how many sparrows there are. You know how many hairs are upon a person's head. He's not just talking about that kind of counting. He says, you know into my heart, Lord, that you're asking me if I love you, but you know that about me. So, our God knows. He knows our heart, but he still says, even though I'm so familiar, and he's understanding, and he loves us. And we were made of insignificant dust. We were brief as the grass, as that it would be cut down. And then lastly, 15 through 17.

As for man, his days are as grass and the flower of a field. So he flourisheth, and for the wind passes over it, and it is gone. The Lord placed thereof shall know it no more. But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness upon children's children. The durability of God's love and faithfulness. We don't outrun it. It's there.

And some of you, Tina, a lot of you will know about this. In the 90s, every youth skit that went on, at some point during the skit, there was going to be somebody in an Energizer Bunny outfit that was going to hop through the skit, and they were going to play. The Energizer Bunny, still going. Anybody know?

You know this commercial, right? The Energizer Bunny, it just never stopped. And so it was constantly, when that was popular, at any youth event, some skit would go on, and some bunny would jump through, and are reminded that there was something in this bunny that was not going to stop. It would not be outlast. There's nothing in this world that compare to the everlasting love of our Father, because it all has a starting point. It all has an ending point. But that's not the case with our God, the durability of God's love. And so we meditate on this. It evokes gratitude in our heart. And so we're called upon. You angels, you've seen. He's excelled in the strength. His commandments hearken unto the voice of His Word. Angels, you've seen this about our God. From your vantage point, you've seen that our God is gracious. Bless the Lord. Join me in this song. All you hosts, all you ministers of this, that do His pleasure. Everybody, you see how gracious God is. Even all the creation, all the rocks cry out. All the trees clap your hands. And then it doesn't end there.

He speaks to Himself where He says, Oh, my soul, everything that is in me, calling this whole world to sing the hymn. I'll end with this quote. His song is no solo, for all creation is singing, or will sing with Him. But His voice, like every other voice, has its own part to add its own benefits. I can and should sing for God's grace upon my life. But you have the joy and responsibility to bless His name for His grace in your life. And so tonight I see a bunch of frail people that have been greatly blessed by the grace of God. And so not just creation, and not just His works, and not angels, not just me. But bless the Lord, Vision Baptist Church. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is in me. And we see His grace shown upon us. So let me review these real quick. And if somebody would like to stand and give a testimony of God's grace, I would love to receive it. And if not, we'll stand and sing together. But let's look at the grace shown in our lives. He is reluctant to anger, so I can show the grace to other people and be reluctant to anger. He is generous in His mercy.

[ 24 : 56 ] And because of that, I can be generous in my mercy. The magnitude of God's love means that I can never feel like I can love too much and then be depleted because His magnitude is so much more. I can be filled by it, and I can share it with other people. The comprehensive of His forgiveness. I can never feel like I have gotten to a place where there's no more mercy left. And then He is tender in His compassion. Not just saying, I forgive you, and I love you, but I want nothing to do with you. But He's like, no, you're my child. And then He's familiar with us and God's understanding of us. Not that He needs to keep us at a distance because He's irritated with us. And if He knew us enough, He would want nothing to do with us. But as a child, He says, I know you completely, and I love you. And the durability of it is that it's going to last for all eternity.

And we can love in the same way because He has loved us in this manner.