

Singing of God's Compassion

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Date: 08 September 2024

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[0:00] And today we're going to be looking at the Psalm 103 that Veronica very kindly read and read so beautifully. So thank you. And the title is Singing of God's Compassion because this is full of God's compassion.

And it's about David praising God for all that he's done for him. But it's much more than what he's done for him. This is not about a shepherd boy come good and becoming a king.

This is about a heartfelt praising the God that he knew that it was an awesome and mighty God. He recognized his mortality. He recognized who he was in God's kingdom.

And he recognized the compassion that God had shown for him. Now there's parts in the Bible that you just see David praising the Lord. He knows how to praise the Lord as this fellow.

He just can show us a few things, can't he? But it was one time when it was in 2 Samuel 6. 16 where he was jumping and leaping about because the Ark of the Covenant was coming back into Jerusalem.

[1:04] This was God's favor coming back to them. And he was leaping about. And his wife, Michal, was looking at him in disgust. She didn't quite get David loving and worshipping the Lord by leaping about.

And I'm not saying we have to leap about to love the Lord. And by all means, no. Because one of my very dearest friends who's gone to be with the Lord, we were so opposite. It was quite funny.

She was tall and very quiet. And she praised him through her heart, just quietly. And I'm a little mouse and I just bounce about. We were so different. But we still praised the Lord with our soul.

And this is what David did. This is how he started the psalm. Now, we're going to go on to the next slide. And I want you to actually say these words with me. Because I think whenever...

All the slides today, by the way, are just this verse, this psalm. So when you say it, I want you to just... I don't know. Just feel the word as you read it.

[2:03] And it sort of keeps us awake, doesn't it? Are you ready? You know, this wasn't just a lip service praise from David.

This was from his inmost being. You can't praise God any more than from your soul. You can praise him with your mind. You can praise him with your heart. But if your soul is praising him, that is the very essence of who you are.

And he knew God intimately, did David. But listen to this. God knew David infinitely more. And he knows us infinitely more.

David knew God's benefits, didn't he? His account, and I'm going to say it's account of his life. It's not a story. Because if we say story, that implies it's made up. And it's not made up.

The Bible is the account of David's life. It's the account of what happened to him. So the account, he actually says these following things, which seem like questions if you read it wrongly.

[3:15] But there's no question mark after them. It's a rhetorical statement. It's just to prove a point. So are you ready? Who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases?

Who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion? Who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagles?

Are you renewed like an eagle today? Do you feel youthful? It's lovely when we do a Bible study in the morning. We say, morning. And I like to say, good morning.

Because every morning is good. Because God made it. So these were statements that David knew full well the answers to. So I read it this way.

I know who forgave all my sins and healed all my diseases. I know who redeemed my life from the pit and crowned me with love and compassion.

[4:13] I know who satisfies my desires with good things so that my youth is renewed like the eagles. You know, David wore a king's crown, didn't he? But I bet he treasured the crown of love and compassion from God far more than the king's crown.

And Charles Spurgeon says that the psalm was written in David's old age. And he says it because he demonstrated a higher sense of the preciousness of pardon. That means he demonstrated a higher sense of God's compassion on him because of his keenest sense of sin.

Definitely different from his younger years. And you know, it's true, isn't it? The closer we get to God, the more we sit beside him, the older we are in our faith, the more we realize and recognize that preciousness of pardon that was given to us.

And we recognize our sin and we take it to him. You know, David wrote in Psalm 38, a psalm that I thought was quite incredible, really. It was a time of his life where he had no health in his body. He had weak bones, searing backache, festering and loathsome wounds that even his friends and neighbors didn't want to go near. Doesn't that sound like Job? Doesn't it sound like David? I was reading it thinking, what?

[5:29] This is David. He said, our feeble, utterly crushed, anguished, groaning, mourning, bowed down and with a pounding heart and no more words or strength to fight, he called out to God and said, and listen to this, he said he called out to the God he knew would listen.

And he said, confessed his sin and said, come quickly and help me, my Lord and my Savior. And we know that God heard and answered this prayer, don't we?

Because we know and see in all of his accounts of his life in the Bible. And I always think that when we read of his accounts, we read the times that he was in and out of trouble, but we read of the times that God showed his compassion to him so much more.

And I think, well, are you sitting here today and asking yourself these questions yourself? Who can forgive me? I've done so many bad things. Who can cure me of all the diseases?

The doctors can't. Who can show me the way to desiring good things? Who loves me enough to redeem me? That means save me from the place I'm in, from all of this.

[6:42] Do you feel so bad that you think God can't have compassion on you? Do you feel so bad sometimes that he can't forgive you or save you or perhaps even heal you?

Well, I hope today that this sermon really speaks to you because he can. I want you to listen to this account of a lady called Daniela Boikman from South Africa.

She went to church. She was a heroin addict and she was absolutely wracked with the pain of withdrawal. She went to church and she felt nothing through the service.

But as she was leaving, she felt something shift within her heart. She didn't understand it, though, and she went home. And when she went home, she went to bed and she was suffering with the withdrawal because it's so bad.

I don't know. I haven't had it. But I've heard of the accounts of heroin withdrawal and it's not pleasant by any means. And laid in her bed, she heard a quiet voice say, go and pray.

[7:42] And in the middle of the chaos of her mind, she went through to her bathroom. And in Cape Town, trust me, winters are cold and there isn't central heating. Your bathroom is a very cold place.

But she went there and she said to whisper to God, if you are real, I need you to help me. Now, if you're in a situation where you can't feel God today, whether you're a Christian or not, say these words to God.

God, if you're real. We know he's real, by the way, as a Christian. But God, if you're real, if you really care for me, show me, help me. David did it. She did it.

And this is what happened. Daniela said, the words were barely out of my mouth when everything changed. In that cold, dim bathroom, I encountered Jesus.

The icy Cape Town winter didn't matter anymore. I was enveloped by a warmth that could only be described as the overwhelming love of Jesus. The Holy Spirit flooded the room and revealed to me a love so deep, so pure, that it washed away every doubt, every fear, and every piece of my shattered past.

[8:48] In that sacred moment, my spirit knew I had found something, someone extraordinary. For the first time in my life, I felt I belonged, that I was loved unconditionally.

Now, didn't that song that we just sang speak those words? Veronica didn't know I was going to say this. And I didn't know she was going to choose that song. But God did. Is God speaking to your heart today?

She said, it didn't matter that I was a broken heroin addict. In his presence, all my wrongs were being made right. What felt like mere seconds turned out to be two hours of deep, transformative worship.

When I finally stumbled out of that bathroom, my eyes were swollen with tears, but my heart was renewed. I had met the king of kings. I had met the one that took away all my sins.

I had met the one who gave me hope, Jesus. She went on to say from that day forward, her life was never the same. The Holy Spirit ignited a hunger in her heart, a burning desire to know God and to immerse herself in his word.

[10:03] She spent countless hours praying, seeking, and uncovering revelation after revelation of how deeply Jesus loves us. You know, if you do that, if you pray and you seek, you will find Jesus says that.

She said, he showed me my life as meaning and that there is purpose to my existence. She said, yes, I've stumbled and there have been many times when I've let go of his hand, but God in his boundless mercy has never let go of me.

Now, this is important. Jesus was already there waiting to reveal himself to me. If you're looking for Jesus, he's waiting to reveal himself to you.

Just ask. Daniela and countless others' testimony, in fact, every single person in this room that knows Jesus as a savior knows that we are not beyond God's compassion, healing, or grace.

John Newton puts it this way. When we have been brought very low and helped, sorely wounded and healed, cast down and raised again, have given up all hope and been suddenly snatched from danger and placed in safety, when all these things have been repeated to us a thousand times over, we begin to learn to trust simply to the word and the power of God beyond and against all appearances.

[11:29] David showed us that in the Bible, didn't he? And he shows us it in our lives every single day. I know God listens because whenever I ask him something, he gives me an answer.

There is no such thing as an answer to prayer. No matter what we're going through, we know that Jesus is through it all. And he is with us from all the time truths that are mentioned in Ecclesiastes 3.

The time to live, time to die, and everything in between. Jesus is there, and he came in the form of a man, came from heaven in the form of a man, to walk and talk with us.

To cry and laugh with us, to mourn and celebrate with us, and to ultimately heal us from all disease. Because one day we will be healed.

If we put our trust in him and accept him as our saviour, we will be healed forever. Jesus has so much compassion that he took all our sin, all our ugliness, all our vileness, so that we could be redeemed from the wages of sin that were death.

[12:32] Now if I held up a little invoice here that said sin, and the cost at the bottom was death, imagine a great big red paid in full written across, stamped across it.

That is the stamp across a reborn Christian's life. Our debt has been paid in full. Psalm 107, 19 to 21 says this, He, God, sent out his word, that's Jesus, and healed them, snatching them from the door of death.

Let them praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for them. Let's make that more personal. He, God, sent out his word, Jesus, and healed you, snatching you from the door of death.

Let you praise the Lord for his great love and for the wonderful things he has done for you. Let's make it even more personal. I want to change the word you to me, and I want you to do the same. So whenever I say me, I want you to point to yourself. Are you ready? He, God, sent out his word, Jesus, to heal me. Snatching me from the door of death.

[13:42] Let me praise the Lord for his great love for the wonderful things he has done for me. Brings it to home, doesn't it, when we make it personal.

And it's much deeper than that. 2 Corinthians 5, 19 tells us that God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. Jesus is God's compassion.

The crown of love and compassion that was given to David is offered to us all. And Jesus wore our sin, our crown of thorns, to give us that. Let's hold on to that and remember it.

Because without God's love, without Jesus' sacrifice, we would be never forgiven. And I don't know about you, but that's a horrible thought. And the next part of the psalm, we read why it's so important to have God's compassion.

Let's go to part two, which is verse 6, Joshua, of this, where it says, are you ready? Are you going to read with me? The Lord works his righteousness and justice for all the oppressed.

[14:49] He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel. The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.

He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever. He does not treat us. Oops, sorry. Carry on. Next one.

He does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.

This part of the psalm makes it two clear and distinct points. God is holy and just, and he cannot be in the presence of sin, and sin is judged.

[15:56] But then God is compassionate, and he has made us a way to have a relationship with him, as if we hadn't sinned, even though if we were in a court of law, we would stand accused.

God has given us tools to fight sin. He's given us Jesus to be our guide, and our church motto is to be with Jesus, to become like Jesus, so that we can do what Jesus did.

The Holy Spirit is our conscience. He talks to us personally and permanently, if we would listen. And the Bible is our weapon to fight sin. Now, if these three things are readily employed by us, we've got then no excuse for sin.

And we have to face it. Sin is sin. It's all ugly. God doesn't like any of it. And yet we still do it. Why? Well, it's simple, really.

We don't always employ these three things, do we? We don't always listen to the guidance of Jesus, because we don't be with Jesus, we don't become like Jesus, then we can't do what Jesus did. We don't listen to that gentle hug and that tug of the Holy Spirit and say, come on, come on, Sandy, don't go there.

[17:05] And we don't pick up the Bible to help us to do the right thing. Now, I'm not saying we sin all day long. We don't do that all the time. I'm saying that sin still happens even to Christians.

And it doesn't happen. We do it. And so we need God's compassion. We need Jesus. David knew that compassion. When his sins reached a crescendo, after he'd had an affair with a man's wife, got her pregnant, tried to get the husband killed, that didn't work.

And then it finally did work. And he ended up taking her in his own home. There was nine months of lying, pretending to the world that this was never happening, but lying bare face to God.

Let's face it, we probably all do that somewhere along the line, don't we? Nine months seems a long time. But this is the compassion of the God David knew, and the God we know to be the only God that can do this.

He is gracious and slow to anger. Oh, am I grateful for that. Are you? I am. David was. He never harbors his anger. Oh, boy, that's a lesson I could learn.

[18:16] Sometimes it takes me an hour or two to cool down. He doesn't treat him as his sins deserved. You know, David killed someone. His sin deserved a lot more than he got.

And then he forgives the sins that we repent from. He knows that. If we repent, that we would be forgiven. And I love that he removed David's sin, and our sin that is repented as far as the east is

from the west.

And as we've said before, the east cannot be met by the west like the north and south. You get to the north pole, you get to the south pole. There isn't a west and an east pole. You just continuously go around.

So this means that you will never meet your repented sin face to face ever again. Isn't that a nice thought? So don't bring it back. This is the compassion we know of God.

And without Jesus, we would be undone. We would be lost. Job put it quite succinctly. So we're reading in Job 9, 32 to 35.

[19:18] And we've just gone through Job as a Bible study group. And it was really tough going. Now, bearing in mind this man had lost his health, his wealth, his children, his livestock, everything.

He was having a bit of an argument with God and with his friends. And this is what he said to God in the midst of this awful time. And we don't know how long it was, but it was awful. He said this.

He, that means God, is not a mere mortal like me. That I might answer him. That we might confront each other in court. If only there was someone to mediate between us.

Have you got it? If only there was someone to mediate between us. Someone to bring us together.

Someone to remove God's rod from me. So that his terror would never frighten me anymore.

Then I would speak up without fear of him. But as it now stands with me, I cannot. Job didn't. It wasn't Job's idea to send Jesus to earth. It was God's.

[20:18] It was Jesus' idea to send him to earth. To come to earth. Jesus had to be that person that mediated between us and God. To bring us together.

To remove rods. God's rightful rod of justice from us. It was all God's idea. And you know, God is holy.

He is just. He cannot and will not tolerate sin. But isn't it incredible that he's made a way for us? For that to be overcome?

We should be so grateful. This is the compassion of God. God, as a father has compassion on his children, we are his children. So the Lord has compassion on those that fear him.

Now you think, why fear? Job was fearful. Why fear? Well, let's put that into perspective. God is holy and just, as I've said. And rightly so, he asks us to fear him.

[21:20] But that fear is a reverence. A revering fear. And it, again, can be shown by being with Jesus, becoming like Jesus, and doing what Jesus did.

You can revere God by doing what our church motto says. Knowing this, we can understand this compassion in its right context, can't we?

And after all, we must remember, as David said, and as Job said, that God is God. And we are mere mortals. So this takes us on to the next part of this psalm.

As David is reminded of his mortality, we read in the final part of this psalm. Let's read together, verse 14 on. For he knows how we are formed.

He remembers that we are dust. The life of mortals is like grass. They flourish like a flower of the field. The wind blows over it, and it is gone.

[22:21] And its place remembers it no more. You and I were formed by God. You and I were created by God. Contrary to what the world will say, he, you and I, were his idea.

You and I were his design. Ecclesiastes say that we have a time of flourishing. A time when we are at our best. Usually noted when we've passed it.

But, like flowers in the field, we do grow old. We do lose our glory.

And we eventually die. That is a reality. It's not morbid. It's a reality. And the reality is that you and I have great, great, great, great, great, and even greater grandparents, aunts, uncles, and family that we have never even met.

And unless we've gone to the trouble of doing a family tree, and unless we live in the ancestral home, we don't remember them anymore because we didn't know them. And we don't remember their home anymore because we don't live there.

[23:34] They're in the past. But they're not gone to you and I, and they're not gone to God if they put their trust in Jesus. And they're not

gone to God or you and I if they go to that mediator, which is Jesus, that Job talked about.

One day, now this is a thought, one day, you and I will be one of those great, great, great, great, greats to the generations ahead. Now, here's an exciting thing.

We will see God's compassion not only in the faithful generations past, but in the generations ahead who also remain faithful as we read on. It's this, verse 17, where it says, Yes, join in, please do.

And his righteousness with their children's children, with those who keep his covenant and remember to obey his precepts. The Lord has established his throne in heaven and his kingdom rules over all.

Now, it may not feel like it here on earth right now that his kingdom rules over all, but it does. Yes, God knows what he's doing even if we don't see it and if we don't feel it.

[24:51] And this is a promise to anybody that has given their life to Christ, that we will be in that kingdom with him one day. And we won't be celebrating alone.

We will be with those great, great, greats. And it will be amazing. And there won't be bad times or boring times. You know, heaven isn't lonely, boring, sad or bad.

It is a great place to be. It is a place of celebration. I can't imagine how incredible it will be to see my savior face to face.

But you know what? I can't wait. I have to wait. But I can't wait. And my heart and my soul cries out to meet him face to face. And there will be celebrations that beat even WCF's celebrated birthdays. We can throw a party in our church. We can throw a great party. But there's a bigger party in heaven. That's for sure. And so we can understand now, really, can't we, why David wrote this psalm?

[25:55] Why he said, praise the Lord, O my soul, in my inmost being. Praise his holy name. Praise the Lord, my soul, and forget not all his benefits.

He's remembering not his benefits on earth and all the things he's done for him. And his crown of compassion is remembering and thinking of the crown of compassion that lies ahead of him when he meets him in heaven.

David had a lot to look forward to. And so do we. And he doesn't stop there. He calls everyone who belongs to God to praise him. So let's go to verse 20, Josh. Are you ready?

I want you to say this with oomph. This is a praise the Lord moment. So come on, let's do it. Praise the Lord, you angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word.

Praise the Lord, all you heavenly hosts, all you servants who do his will. Praise the Lord, all his works, everywhere in his dominion.

[26:56] Praise the Lord, my soul. Amen. Amen. David did a lot of praising in the Bible. You want to know how to praise the Lord?

Look at what David did. He knew the Lord from his heart. David loved to praise the Lord his God. This is the finish now. He knew why he praised the Lord his God.

Do we know why we praise the Lord our God? We should. Let's not forget his benefits. You know, David wore the crown of love and compassion.

And everyone can see it in the Bible. We should do the same so everybody can see it in our lives. Everybody could see that he wore his heart on his sleeve, didn't he?

David was a true heart on the sleeve guy, wasn't he? Well, what was his heart? It was for God. His heart was for God and he wore it on his sleeve.

[27:54] Let's be the same as David that way. God's compassion was mentioned four times only in that passage. But it ran through the whole passage like a seam of gold, didn't it?

And it runs through the whole of the Bible with a scarlet thread of love that Jesus gave us. And it's in that Bible that Job mentioned a mediator that we now have.

We benefit from his question to God. So is today the day that you put your trust in God too? Have you done it before?

And you've forgotten? John spoke about getting back to your first love last week. And it was just, it touched my heart so much. It's so important to get back to your first love of God.

So if you're in that place, go back. Go sit at his feet. Look out into the eyes of Jesus. His wonderful, glorious grace will outshine the dimness of this world.

[28:59] And the dimness of your heart will disappear. Look at the difference it made to Daniela Boitman's face and her countenance.

Did you see that picture? That's the difference that Jesus makes in our lives. One day it says in the Word that every knee will bow to Jesus. Whether they put their trust in him or not.

But those that did. Those that put their trust in the living God that David knew that we know. Oh, they will say just like David did. Praise the Lord.

Oh my soul. Amen. Amen.